

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Lucky Plush dancer on his personal journey.

Photo by Arvell White

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Victor Salvo (center) with Anthony Galloway (right).

Photo by Vernon Hester

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Pro-LGBT activists lobby Springfield



Organizer Erin Bailey.

Photo by Carla Clark

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Teen organizes Pride event in Mike Pence's hometown

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LGBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

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Above: WCT reviews Ghosts of War.
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online exclusives at
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STAR CHAMBER

The LGBT Chamber of Commerce held a meet-and-mingle event, with everything from a raffle to drag entertainment.

Photo of The Vixen (left) by Vern Hester

ROSS EXAMINED



Ross Marquand talks about his gay character on 'The Walking Dead.'
PR photo

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ELECTIONS 2018

LGBT candidates in U.S. House bids

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The following is the first in a series of articles examining how LGBT candidates and organizations are positioned to help Democrats take back the majority of the U.S. House and Senate this year.

Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan stunned many people with his announcement April 11 that he would “retire” from office next January. But he was just following a crowd of Republicans in Congress (more than three dozen) who had already decided they would not run again. Their mostly unspoken motivations seemed clear: They either felt they could no longer support their party’s leader —President Trump—or feared they could not be re-elected.

Ever since President Trump took office, polls have shown that voters would prefer that Democrats controlled the House and Senate. Asked which party’s candidate they would support in a Congressional election, they said Democrat. Even the Fox News poll said so.

The implications for LGBT people of having Democrats win control of even one chamber are profound. The Republican-majority Congress has completely blocked any consideration of pro-LGBT legislation, has approved anti-LGBT judicial nominees, and advanced bills with language that eliminates many protections for LGBT people. For example, the House approved a funding bill that included language reaffirming an executive order from President Trump that allows religious exemptions to federal non-discrimination policies. And Republican leadership in the House orchestrated the defeat of a funding bill with pro-LGBT language. The Senate confirmed a U.S. Supreme Court nominee (Neil Gorsuch) and 11 federal appeals court nominees opposed by LGBT legal groups.

LGBT candidates vying to be part of Congressional change are all Democrats, but one.

Some quick numbers:

—Republicans currently hold 237 of the House’s 435 seats; Democrats hold 193; and there are five vacancies.

—More than 10 percent of House Republicans (27) have announced, like Ryan, that they will not seek re-election in November. (That compares to five percent of Democrats (11).) Four Senate seats are being vacated by incumbent Republicans (compared to one Democrat).

—To become the majority in the House, either party needs 218 seats. So, for Democrats to become the majority, they need a net gain of 25 in November.

—There are 18 LGBT Congressional candidates this year—four incumbents and 14 newcomers. All but one of the newcomers are Democrats; none are Republicans; one is with the Green Party.

The chances for success by the newcomers can



Angie Craig.

Photo from campaign website

be calculated on such things as whether they are running to fill a vacant seat or against a strong incumbent, what the demographic and political make-up of their district is, whether they have put together a strong and well-funded campaign; and whether they have run for or held elective office before. So far, at least seven of the 14 show a strong chance of winning in November:

- Matt Heinz, Arizona (2nd District)
- Katie Hill, California (25th)
- Lauren Baer, Florida (18th)
- David Richardson, Florida (27th)
- Angie Craig, Minnesota (2nd)
- Chris Pappas, New Hampshire (1st)
- Gina Ortiz Jones, Texas (23rd)

While the other seven have significant obstacles to overcome, most have developed impressive campaigns and are still very much in the running:

- Jim Gray, Kentucky (6th)
- Pat Davis, New Mexico (1st)
- Rick Neal, Ohio (15th)
- Lorie Burch, Texas (3rd)
- Mary Wilson, Texas (21st)
- Eric Holguin, Texas (27th)
- James Partsch-Galvan, Texas (29th)

The next primary coming up is Rick Neal’s, in Ohio on May 8. A newcomer to politics and a former Peace Corps worker, he’s raised an impressive \$396,000, according to the Federal Elections Commission. His Democratic opponent has not reported any income yet to the FEC. But whoever wins the primary faces incumbent Republican Rep. Steve Stivers, who is unopposed in the

GOP primary and has already raised more than \$2 million for his re-election. Stivers is only a two-term, but he’s already chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee. Neal has an uphill battle.

Six LGBT candidates have important primary races May 22. Five of them are in Texas, where they each won the most votes in the first primary but not enough to win the nomination outright. Of those five, Gina Ortiz Jones has the best odds of winning. She won 41 percent of the vote, while her nearest competitor (and May 22 opponent) won only 17 percent. Her latest report to the FEC showed almost \$600,000 but in November, she’ll be up against an incumbent Republican who has raised twice that. But she—and Minnesota’s Angie Craig—have also caught the attention and support of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee’s efforts to win over Republican-held districts.

Two other LGBT Texas primary candidates May 22 are going into their run-offs having won the largest percentage of vote in the original primary. Lorie Burch won 49.6 percent of the vote and the endorsement of the Dallas News.

Eric Holguin came in second in his original Democratic primary, but the configuration of his district in Texas (the 27th) is in the unusual position of being challenged in an appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court on April 24. Plus, the incumbent Republican resigned April 6 due to a sex scandal. Lots can happen between April 24 and May 22 to affect that primary.

The fifth Texas LGBT candidate is James Partsch-Galvan, running as a Green Party member.

Also, facing a primary opponent May 22 is Jim Gray, the openly gay Mayor of Lexington, Kentucky. Gray ran for the U.S. Senate seat held by Rand Paul two years ago and lost by a significant

margin. But he’s probably the best known among the six Democrats on the May 22 primary ballot. If he wins, he’ll face a Republican incumbent, Andy Barr, and the Cook Political Report predicts Gray could give Barr a “tough reelection race.” What all these candidates need is money. Some of them are getting small contributions from several LGBT political action committees. A very few, like Craig and Jones, are getting help from the Democratic Party.

Individual citizens from any state can contribute to these campaigns. For donations of \$200 or more, the candidate must report the name, address, occupation, and employer of the individual contributor to the Federal Elections Commission.

Federal law limits how much any one person can give to any one candidate: \$2,700 per primary and \$2,700 per general election.

Individuals can also give \$5,000 per year to a political action committee, and that committee can then give \$5,000 per primary and \$5,000 per general election to individual candidates.

If five or six newcomer LGBT Congressional candidates win this fall, they will comprise the largest number of openly LGBT members of Congress in history. Currently, there are six such members in the House; but two of those, Rep. Jared Polis of Colorado and Rep. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, are running for other offices (Polis for governor and Sinema for the U.S. Senate). The newcomers, if successful, will join the existing four LGBT incumbents, who are all running for re-election and have strong chances of returning to office:

- David Cicilline, of Rhode Island
- Sean Patrick Maloney, of New York
- Mark Pocan, of Wisconsin
- Mark Takano, of California.

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Judge: Lawsuit over anti-trans Trump ban to go to trial

A federal judge in Seattle rejected the Trump administration’s claim that its “new” plan to ban transgender people from serving openly in the U.S. Armed Services is different from its 2017 directive, Bloomberg reported.

U.S. District Judge Marsha Pechman ruled that the two anti-transgender initiatives are basically the same, and decided that a lawsuit connected to the newer order must go to trial.

“The court wants to expose this bigoted ban for all of its ugliness at trial, and we are happy to oblige. If it’s a full record the judge wants, then it’s a full record we will give her,” Lambda Legal Senior Attorney Natalie Nardecchia said in a statement. “We look forward to putting the capriciousness and cruelty of this discriminatory ban against transgender people on trial, where it can be relegated for good to the trash heap of history, alongside other vile military policies that discriminated based on race, sex, and sexual orientation.”

The Bloomberg article is at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-14/trump-s-updated-military-trans-ban-is-same-as-before-judge-says>.

HRC releases HIV college guide

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation has released a new comprehensive guide for college administrators, staff and students outlining many of the critical steps higher-educational institutions can take to improve student health and well-being.

The release of the new guide—“HIV 101: A Guide to HIV Prevention, Treatment, and Care on College and University Campuses”—coincided with National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day (April 10).

As a group, college students experience heightened risk factors that can lead to contracting HIV, including engaging in high-risk sexual behavior and experimenting with drugs or alcohol. Nevertheless, according to the CDC, between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of schools in which students are required to receive instruction on HIV prevention decreased from 64 percent to 41 percent.

The guide is at <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HIV101-2018.pdf>.

LGBT-rights attorney sets himself on fire over environment

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Well-known Lambda Legal attorney David Buckel was found dead in a public park in Brooklyn, New York, on April 14, having apparently taken his own life in protest over the use of fossil fuels.

Buckel was on the staff of Lambda Legal, the national LGBT legal defense and education group, for more than a dozen years. For several of those years, he served as coordinator for its national marriage equality project. He also served as attorney on a number of high profile cases, including those involving Jamie Nabozny, James Dale, and Brandon Teena.

Buckel, 60, left the staff about 10 years ago and has been serving as Senior Organics Recovery Coordinator for the NYC Compost Project, hosted by Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The Botanic Gardens website included one article by Buckel, from 2016, that discussed the effort to compost the city's garbage. The Solid Waste Association of North America spotlighted his work managing



David Buckel.
Photo from Lambda Legal website

"the United States' largest community composting site that is run entirely on renewable energy."

Camilla Taylor, acting legal director for Lambda Legal, said "Our hearts are broken."

"This is a tragic loss for our Lambda Legal family and for the social justice movement," said Taylor. "Our hearts go out to all who knew him. David was a beautiful human being who was universally kind to everyone at Lambda Legal, committed to his clients, and devoted to our work."

The Park Slope Patch reported that Buckel's body was found in Prospect Park in Brooklyn on April 14 at 6:15 a.m. by firefighters responding to an alarm. The New York Daily News reported that a suicide note found at the scene in an envelope labeled "For the police" said: "My name is David Buckel and I just killed myself by fire as a protest suicide. I apologize to you for the mess." The News said Buckel's business card was stapled to the note and left behind a "longer, neatly typed explanation" of his apparent self-immolation.

The News said the envelope with the "suicide note" was found inside a garbage bag, which was placed in a shopping cart that was found near Buckel's body. It said the longer note said Buckel hoped his suicide "might bring some attention to the need for expanded actions, and help others give a voice to our home, and Earth is heard."

As a Lambda staff attorney in 1993, as a Lambda attorney, Buckel represented the mother of Brandon Teena, who was raped and murdered because she presented as a male. He later represented the victims of a number of other LGBT

people brutally attacked in hate crimes. Three years later, Buckel was pressing a case against a Wisconsin school district that failed to protect a gay student, Jamie Nabozny, from bullying. He won a \$900,000 award in damages. Then he assisted Lambda attorney Evan Wolfson in the James Dale v. Boy Scouts of America case that went to the New Jersey Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

"David was so earnest and caring, hardworking and dedicated, a truly good person," said Wolfson. "He worked with me on the Boy Scouts case, helping organize amici, and many other cases, and was a friend as well as a colleague over a couple decades."

In 1998, Buckel urged a federal district court in Utah to order a Salt Lake City school district to grant equal access to a gay student alliance and persuaded the Internal Revenue Service to grant tax-exempt status to a Rhode Island lesbian community group.

In 2006, he testified on behalf of Lambda Legal before the New Jersey Assembly's Judiciary Committee, urging members to oppose a bill that sought to establish civil unions, instead of marriage equality for same-sex couples.

As coordinator for Lambda's marriage project, Buckel spoke out in 2002 against a bill seeking to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban marriage for same-sex couples.

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Black women anti-rape advocates unite at UIC

BY LIZ BAUDLER

"After Rosa, Before #MeToo"—a panel of the history of Black women's anti-rape organizing efforts—was a chance for four powerful women to commiserate on a subject they knew intimately. Organized by Keisa Reynolds of the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) Women's Leadership and Resource Center as part of its "Take Back the Fight" programming, Reynolds was inspired by reading a piece about how #metoo was not benefiting Black women, and realizing the author seemed unfamiliar with Black women's crucial efforts in the fight against sexual violence.

school, I didn't even know rape crisis counselor was a job you could get," she said.

Activist Mariame Kaba remembered calling a sexual-violence hotline she found in the phone book, and asking to be connected to other teen survivors. "You are in crisis and you need to figure out what is wrong with you," she remembered being told. "We have no place for you." Both she and Scott-Boria had spent formative years inside Black Nationalist movements that were highly sexist: Kaba's consciousness was raised in college by Angela Davis' Violence Against Women and the Ongoing Challenge to Racism.

All of the women had to confront both miscon-

about domestic violence and rape were siloed, and among women of color, survivor identity was still developing. Working as a counselor in Logan Square, she found she "had to unlearn what they were taught," as clients treated her space more as a community center rather than for counseling. Caidor found that communities were already doing the healing and organizing she was supposed to provide. "Disabuse yourself of what you think people need," she advised the crowd, saying it was better for nonprofits to provide space and resources in communities of color than inserting themselves.

Scott-Boria, meanwhile, had been asked to grow the presence of rape-crisis services in Black communities, but she soon realized that to "create a consciousness around rape enhanced the criminalization of Black men." Furthermore, she found her task literally impossible because of the belief that funding should be spread equally throughout the state. And the conversation about

women were often victimized by white men, the conversation about intracommunity sexual violence "didn't exist," Kaba said.

Sides recalled observing her partner in a 40-hour training in which part of the agenda involved disclosing survivorhood. Initially Sides recalled wondering why the participants, all Black women, were using the training as "a therapy session." Her partner reminded Sides, no stranger to working in these worlds already, that this was an opportunity and space which Black women were rarely afforded. "Why didn't I see the beauty of what was happening there?" Sides asked, and went on to say the space probably was so effective because it was all Black and no one was offering justice, instead just the space itself.

Audience questions saw the women discussing R&B singer R. Kelly, soon to make an appearance at UIC's campus. While saying of Kelly, "that child molestor makes really good songs," Caidor critiqued Jim DeRogatis' journalism about Kelly, saying it seemed "self-interested," and recalling that on his radio show DeRogatis had once discussed Ike Turner's career without mentioning his spousal abuse. "Where were you for Tina Turner?" Caidor asked rhetorically. Kaba agreed, calling the DeRogatis's pursuit of Kelly "Ahabization," and wondering on a broader level how perpetrators can repair harm.

"If there's no way back, a lot of people are going to deny they're rapists," Kaba pointed out. She continued this point in response to a question about how to restore perpetrators to communities. "We don't have a culture that encourages people to take responsibility," she said, and pointed out that we should still reward people for being accountable. Fear of punishment, Kaba continued, leads to collusion, where communities hide their wrongdoers and nothing get solved. "Communities are not going to agree to throw their people to the state," Kaba said.

Sides pointed out that artists and storytellers like R.C. Riley and E. Nina Jay, who talk about their histories of sexual violence in their work, are finding ways to engage without organizing. Sides, who currently works at U of C, saw hope in a student she worked with who wanted to draft a curriculum to educate her rapist rather than go through a disciplinary process.

"People are starting to think beyond criminal justice," Sides said.

"Take Back The Fight: Resisting Sexual Violence From the Ground Up" runs through May 15 at UIC's Pop Up Just Art Gallery, 1344 S. Halsted St.



From left: Rachel Caidor, Vickie Sides and Keisa Reynolds at the panel.

Photo by Liz Baudler

Mary Scott-Boria—a former member of the Black Panther party and, later, a women's health organizer—remembered not feeling like she had a language to talk about the rape she'd experienced when she was 20. "I did it because I was a community organizer," Scott-Boria said of her early anti-rape work. "I didn't even think of myself as a survivor."

Scott remembered "stumbling" into anti-rape organizing, a feeling the entire panel concurred with. Two of the women, Vickie Sides and Rachel Caidor, did not even feel like organizers, though Caidor said in college her dorm room was the unofficial rape-crisis center. "When I graduated high

school, I didn't even know rape crisis counselor was a job you could get," she said. Activist Mariame Kaba remembered calling a sexual-violence hotline she found in the phone book, and asking to be connected to other teen survivors. "You are in crisis and you need to figure out what is wrong with you," she remembered being told. "We have no place for you." Both she and Scott-Boria had spent formative years inside Black Nationalist movements that were highly sexist: Kaba's consciousness was raised in college by Angela Davis' Violence Against Women and the Ongoing Challenge to Racism.

All of the women had to confront both miscon-

ceptions about the work they started to do and internal struggles within their various communities. While the other panelists recalled forming a community around the YWCA, Kaba remembered feeling isolated from other women of color in her non-profit work, and increasingly uneasy about the role the state played in her work. The cops were never the first thing survivors asked for, she said, often because they didn't want their partners incarcerated. Had she continued in a non-profit space, Kaba said, she would have eventually stopped doing the work.

Through her work with social service agencies, Caidor began to see the way conversations

Howard Brown's 'ChiQ' on April 28

Howard Brown Health will hold "ChiQ" (formerly Garden of Eve) on Saturday, April 28, 7-11 p.m., at South Shore Cultural Center, 7059 S. South Shore Dr.

There will be dancing, performances by Jeezy's Juke Joint, light bites and community-building. DJ All The Way Kay and DJ Sandra Suave will provide music.

Admission is \$75-\$200 each; visit <https://howardbrown.org/event/chiq/>.

Pride event held in Pence's hometown

In Columbus, Indiana—the hometown of U.S. Vice President Mike Pence—a Pride event drew more than 2,000 people, according to a U.S. News & World Report article.

Erin Bailey (who identifies as bisexual) organized the event, believed to be the first ever held in the city, as part of her high school senior project.

Pence is known for his anti-LGBT initiatives. When he was Indiana's governor, he, among other things, signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which allows certain businesses to discriminate against LGBT individuals.

The article is at <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/indiana/articles/2018-04-15/more-than-2k-attend-gay-pride-event-in-vp-pences-hometown>.



Above: Columbus Pride organizer Erin Bailey. Below: Sister Sonata Innocent (Kris Roehling) and Sister Eva Maria (Paul Kenfield) of the Sisters of the Perpetual Indulgence.
Photos by Carla Clark



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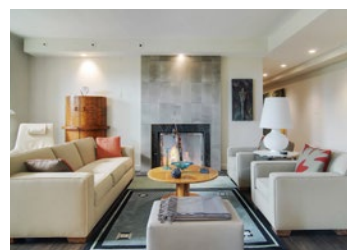
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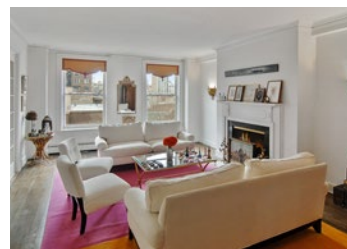
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Illinoisans lobby on behalf of curriculum bill

BY MATT SIMONETTE

More than 100 community members became advocates and activists April 11 when Equality Illinois rallied its supporters at LGBTQ Advocacy Day at the Illinois Statehouse.

The LGBT-rights organization usually brings community members to Springfield to lobby legislators and other elected officials on matters that are important to LGBT Illinoisans. This year, the principal focus is legislation that would introduce LGBT history into the state's schools.

About half the participants were from central and southern Illinois, according to Equality Illinois CEO Brian Johnson.

"The focus was connecting legislators with constituents to talk about our inclusive curriculum bill," he told Windy City Times. "We know from stories how important it is LGBTQ youth learn about our community's contributions to history. We've been telling that to legislators, but actually having legislators hear that directly from youth, parents and LGBTQ people, [about the importance of] learning about our role models in

school and in history, is really powerful."

Among those who met participants at the training session included Democratic lieutenant governor candidate Julianna Stratton and 5th House District representative candidate Lamont Robinson. Participants were able to meet with, among others, Gov. Bruce Rauner, state Rep. Nicholas Smith (D-Chicago) and state Sens. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant (D-Plainfield) and Scott Bennett (D-Champaign).

"We're one of the few historically marginalized communities that can't pass down our own histories down from one generation to the next in our own families," Johnson said. "We're not 'born into' the community. We have to learn about our forefathers and foremothers in the movement in the same way that everyday learns about it—in the public square. ... We're just trying to write that law, so that all Illinois kids, regardless of their sexual identity, will get an understanding that LGBTQ people have always been part of history and have always been part of making our current society the great place that it is."

—Vernon Hester contributed to this story.



Left: The rotunda in the state capitol. Above: Anthony Galloway leading the training seminar. Below left: Charles Nelson II and Lamont Robinson Jr. in discussion en route to the capitol. Below right: Senator Jennifer Bertino Tarrant meets with her public.

Photos by Vernon Hester



Left: On the way to the capitol. Right: Victor Salvo, far right, with participants.



Left: State Representative Nicholas Smith meets with lobbyists. Right: Preparing to lobby.



Left to right: Otis Mack, Victor Salvo and Brian C. Johnson address the crowd.

Photos by Vernon Hester

Poet J.D. McClatchy passes away at 72

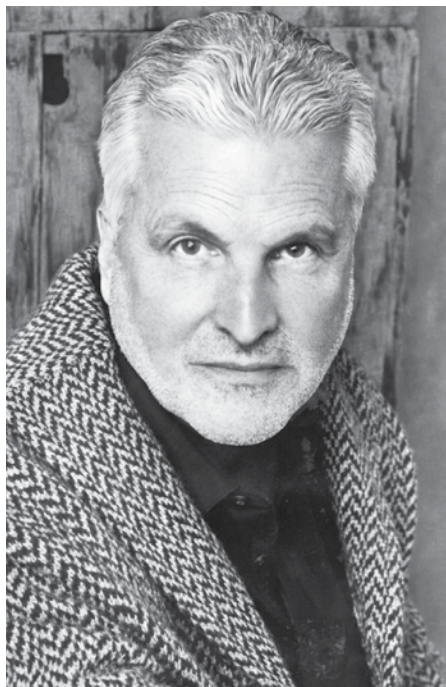
J.D. "Sandy" McClatchy, the acclaimed poet at literary critic, died April 10 at his home in Manhattan following a long battle with cancer. He was 72.

McClatchy was the author of eight highly praised volumes of poetry, including *Hazmat*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His most recent, *Plundered Hearts: New and Selected Poems*, was published in 2014.

He was also the author of several collections of essays, and the editor or co-editor of some dozens of volumes, including works by James Merrill, Thornton Wilder and Edna St. Vincent Millay; and he was a significant translator of opera libretti, from *The Magic Flute* to *Miss Lonelyhearts*.

McClatchy was a longtime editor of the *Yale Review* and served as president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In addition, he was the literary executor for the poets Anthony Hecht and Mona Van Duyn and co-executor for James Merrill.

He is survived by his husband, Chip Kidd, associate director of cover art at Knopf, as well as three sisters: Edith Pahl, Joan Brennan and Elizabeth Davis.



J.D. McClatchy.
Photo by Marion Ettinger



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Officials: Lesbian mom who drove family off cliff was drunk

In California, Mendocino County authorities said that a woman who drove herself, her wife and their adopted children off a cliff in the family SUV in March was legally drunk, according to SFGate.

A toxicology report concluded Jennifer Hart had a blood-alcohol content of more than 0.08 percent and that her wife, Sarah Hart, and two of their children had Benadryl in their systems.

At least five members died, with authorities searching for three others. Among one of those three is 15-year-old Devonte Hart, whose photo crying into the arms of a police officer during a Portland, Oregon, protest of the police shooting of Michael Brown went viral.

Among those who died in the crash are the mothers of the family, Jennifer Jean Hart and Sarah Margaret Hart, both 38, and their foster children—Martin, 19, Abigail, 14, and Jeremiah, 14. Devonte, Hannah, 16, and Sierra, 12, were still missing. However, the body of an African-American female was found April 7 in the vicinity of the crash site, and it may belong to one of the missing children.

Three days before the discovery of the crash, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services tried unsuccessfully to contact

the family following a report of abuse/neglect.

The SFGate item is at <https://www.sfgate.com/crime/article/Mother-who-drove-family-off-cliff-in-Mendocino-12832958.php>.

Center's 'Human First' gala April 21

Center on Halsted's annual "Human First" gala will take place Saturday, April 21, Grammy-Winning music legend Jody Watley is scheduled to perform live at the Center's gala on Saturday, April 21, at The Geraghty, 2520 S. Hoyne Ave.

Cocktails and a reception will start at 5:30 p.m., with awards, dinner, performances and dancing commencing at 7 p.m.

This year, the Center is honoring four outstanding civic leaders known for their important contributions to the LGBTQ movement. The Human First Award honorees include Marcia Lipetz, Victoria Raymont, Dr. Tom Klein and David Gitomer. The ACLU of Illinois is the recipient of the 2018 Community Spirit Award, and Executive Director Colleen K. Connell is accepting the honor on behalf of the organization.

In addition, Grammy-winning singer Jody Watley is slated to perform live. Also, long-term supporters of the Center and elected officials planning to attend include Michael and Cari Sacks, Laura Ricketts and Brooke Skinner Ricketts, Illinois gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker, Illinois state Sen. Heather Steans and Chicago Ald. Tom Tunney.

Visit CenterOnHalsted.org/hf/.



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Dr. Margo Jacquot talks career, Juniper Center, LGBTQ initiatives

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Dr. Margo Jacquot—the founder/owner/director of the Juniper Center—has been serving the community through her Park Ridge-based psychotherapy practice for more than 20 years.

The Juniper Center is a counseling and therapy center that specializes in issues related to trauma recovery, addiction treatment, diverse sexuality and gender identities, and relationship and family therapy. It is one of the largest woman-owned counseling and therapy practices, with 25 therapists and five locations across Chicagoland.

"The Juniper Center is a longtime leader in providing appropriate and affirming therapy for people who are LGBTQ," said Jacquot. "Whether or not someone is seeking counseling for an issue specific to their sexuality or gender identity or they simply want therapy for another matter, they can find help at our LGBTQ-knowledgeable and welcoming practice. Our Center for Gender and Sexuality was developed to provide informed, accepting therapy for LGBTQ individuals, couples

and families of choice and creation." nesses understand state laws, but more importantly it talks about how to create an inclusive environment for customers."

When asked why she started the Juniper Center, Jacquot said she wanted more flexibility in her schedule because she and her wife Beth Wyman were in the process of adopting their first son. Jacquot explained she is a believer that you can do it all and do it all well and that is why she wanted to dive in to both being a businesswoman and a parent at the same time. When their second son came along two years later the business was booming so she hired her first associate and it has grown from there.

Recently she received two awards, including the Gold Stevie Award from the Stevie Awards for Women in Business. She was also named one of the Enterprising Women of the Year by Enterprising Women print and digital magazine (read by more than 1 million women in the United States and 185 countries).

The Stevie Awards honor women and women-led organizations from around the world. Jacquot got the top honor as Female Entrepreneur of the Year for consumer service businesses with 11-2,500 employees. Enterprising Women named Jacquot a winner in the category related to business that generate between \$1 million and \$2 million in annual revenue.

When asked how she felt about receiving both awards, Jacquot said, "I was shocked, thrilled, delighted and really proud of the work the team has done. It was not about me as much as a recognition of work that the team has done over the years. I am so proud of them. I know with awards the focus is on you as the business owner. Of course I have a vision behind my work, but I could not do it without a big, solid team."

"Dr. Jacquot demonstrates impressive leadership in the national community," said Stevie Awards President Michael Gallagher. "She is tackling a number of 'hot' topics in current events, including LGBTQ-focused care and brain science, while delivering critical services to her clientele. Her thoughtful leadership around inclusion is relevant and important in today's climate."

"Dr. Jacquot is a wonderful example of an enterprising woman who understands that it is not enough to just run a strong business," said Enterprising Women Publisher/CEO Monica Smiley. "As important as that is—we recognize women who really stand out as strong community leaders—no one wins this award without demonstrating their commitment to mentoring the next generation of young women. It is an honor to shine the spotlight on Margo and recognize her amazing accomplishments."

The journey for Jacquot (who grew up in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood and graduated from Lane Tech High School) toward psychology



Dr. Margo Jacquot (back row, red jacket) with most of the Juniper Center team.

Photo by Allene Quick



Dr. Margo Jacquot.

Photo from The Stevie Awards

and families of choice and creation."

The center also conducts free LGBTQ-focused education trainings in a variety of settings.

"A talk I have given more recently at chambers and professional organizations is 'What is all this gender business, and what does it have to do with my business?'" said Jacquot. "It helps busi-

nity Youth Assistance Foundation that works on addressing drug use by children and teens. She also served as the Illinois Psychology Association SOGI section chair for a year and is currently the treasurer and a member of the ethics committee.

Jacquot also helps other mental health practitioners start their own practices including sharing what she has learned and hosting monthly free meet ups at the Park Ridge location.

Additionally, Jacquot likes to run every day and spends her free time hanging out with her wife and kids including their weekly dinner outings on Friday nights.

When asked what she wants to convey to the entire LGBTQ community, especially in today's political climate, Jacquot said the community is strong and has made a lot of progress but that could be stripped away if LGBTQ people do not stick together.

"We have to make sure that we as a community do not get fractured into the individual letters because we are stronger as a group," said Jacquot. "It has been incredible to watch the evolution of the amazing LGBTQ communities we have in the Chicago area. There are so many organizations, places and opportunities for people to feel welcome and at home. For me to be able to be an out, lesbian entrepreneur and to have the reception that we have had is pretty remarkable if you look at history over time. I am really excited for the future of this community."

See <https://www.thejunipercenter.com/> for more information.

Activist Ja'Mal Green set to announce 2019 mayoral bid

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Activist and advocate Ja'Mal Green, a prominent participant in Chicago's Black Lives Matter movement, is set to officially announce a campaign to be mayor of Chicago.

Green, who heads the Majostee Allstars Community Center in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, was set to make an official announcement at a speech at Roosevelt University April 18.

"Over time, I've been going into communities all over the country," Green explained. "I travelled for Bernie Sanders, as a surrogate for him, and I've been in a lot of of communities here in the city of Chicago, mentoring young people and as an activist on many issues," he said. "Taking in all the problems and the many things that haven't been done, I talked to some people that I thought would be good candidates to run, and they all declined. I asked myself, 'Who is going to run? We can't afford to have this mayor another term.'"

Green added, "There is not one community Mayor Rahm Emanuel has taken care of well—not the

Latino community, not the Black community, not the white community, not the LGBTQ community. There's no community I can say he's really behind. I felt like [I] had the best chance at getting him out of office."

Green, 22, has been active in protests against police violence and, in 2016, was arrested in a demonstration at Taste of Chicago. He ultimately pled guilty to a misdemeanor charge of resisting arrest, accepting a plea bargain to avoid a prolonged trial, he said at the time. Policing is one of the issues that Green said he would want to focus on and, as mayor, he would push for licensing and insuring city police officers as among the means to hold Chicago Police Department (CPD) accountable.

He explained, "You'd have police officers having to get a license, a licensing committee that would revoke or suspend a license based on those infractions, and it would go along with their pay. ... Insurance companies would be able to assess the liability and figure out whether they want to insure them or not."

Green added that such a system would ulti-



Ja'Mal Green.
Photo from Green

mately save the city, which has had to pay out vast sums for wrongful police actions, "hundreds of millions of dollars."

Another key concern is education, and Green said he will propose a program that offers Chicago Public Schools graduates three options: community college, vocational programs or an "entrepreneurial boot camp."

The programs would be free, he added, "as long as you gave hours back to the City of Chicago. Basically, your payment is community service or city engagement throughout your time, depending how much money the city is spending on you. That would make tomorrow's leaders. People would not be waiting around or sitting around, trying to figure out what to do next."

Among Green's goals for the Chicago's LGBTQ population would be pushes for anti-bullying initiatives in schools as well as engagement to reduce anti-LGBT stigma in churches.

"We've got to bring religious leaders and the LGBTQ community together," he said. "If you are a church and are 501(c)(3), and are banning people because they are different, how are you preaching a message of 'We're not to judge,' or 'Come as you are?'"

Green pointed to the low turnout for younger voters in the March 20 primary election and added, "Young people want to see something new."

He maintained that he can offer just that, adding, "As mayor, we would have an administration that is inclusive and bridge the gap between all these communities."

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Photo: James Craftfield

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CHICAGO HOUSE

Prevent Blindness' Jeff Todd discusses organization, LGBT activism

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

For the past 15 years, Jeff Todd has worked as the director of public health and chief operating officer of Prevent Blindness (the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization) and, recently, the board of directors named him president and CEO. With this appointment, Todd, who identifies as gay, becomes the organization's first openly LGBT leader.

"As I look to the future of Prevent Blindness, my interest lies in continuing to support both increasing access to eye care for those who are at highest risk and with greatest need, while also ensuring that we continue to be a go-to source for basic eye health information for the general consumer," said Todd. "Prevent Blindness has been a powerful patient advocate for sight since 1908 and I am honored to be able to lead this organization into its next chapter."

"Through his tireless efforts to develop and strengthen vision programs, create new strategies and focus on helping both adults and children obtain the access to quality vision care services we all deserve, Jeff has demonstrated his ability to lead Prevent Blindness and maintain the organization as a trusted advocate for all Americans," said Prevent Blindness Board of Directors Chair Torrey DeKeyser.

"We focus on improving the nation's vision and eye health by educating the American public on the importance of taking care of their eyes and vision, promoting advances in public health systems that support eye health needs and advocating for public policy that emphasizes early detection and access to appropriate eye care," said Todd. "We believe all children should be afforded the benefits of sight as they grow and learn,

all adults should be educated about proper eye health care and have access to that same care including attention to issues surrounding the aging eye and no one should needlessly lose their sight due to unsafe practices."

When asked what accomplishments he is most proud of during his time at Prevent Blindness, Todd noted his work to establish the organization's National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health. He explained that too many children begin their schools years without proper eye care and often get mislabeled with behavioral problems.

"We owe it to our kids to make sure they are equipped to start off their education without preventable challenges," said Todd. "This is a public health problem that can be addressed, but there has not been sufficient coordination. Several years ago, our advocacy efforts led to the development of this center with the support of limited federal funds. As a result we are now providing technical assistance and training across the country that is having a great impact."

Over the years, Todd also launched the Prevent Blindness Focus on Eyes Health National Summit and oversaw the annual Eyes on Capitol Hill patient fly-in to advocate eye health with lawmakers across the country.

Public health and community engagement have been the focus of Todd's work since he was in college. He was raised in the small college town of Hanover, Indiana. Todd's father was a circuit court judge and his mother ran a nursing home; his twin brother is a high school principal and former teacher and his sister is a nurse. He received his bachelor's degree in business from Indiana University-Bloomington, his master's degree in communications from Butler Univer-



Prevent Blindness' Jeff Todd.

Photo by Kieffer Photography

sity and his law degree from Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis.

Todd started his career as a fellow in the Indiana governor's office (under Evan Bayh), where he got an inside look into public service via his work with state agencies including the Department of Personnel, Department of Commerce, secretary of state's office and the Criminal Justice Institute.

From there, Todd worked on the Governor's Commission for a Drug-Free Indiana as associate director for field operations and later became the Center for Youth as Resources' (Washington, D.C.) deputy executive director and National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (Bethesda, Maryland) director before moving to Chicago to work for Prevent Blindness.

Todd is also the chair of Vision 2020 USA, a subset of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight (a joint program of the World Health Organization and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness), a global initiative that works to eliminate avoidable blindness. He is also a Jonas Children's Vision Care at Columbia University Medical Center advisory board member and past

chair of the American Public Health Association Vision Care Section.

In addition to these leadership roles, Todd has been a tireless LGBT activist his entire adult life. This began in law school where he co-founded the school's still active Lambda Law Society.

"Being a part of a community—any community, for me, involves contributing to it in personally meaningful ways," said Todd. "While in Indiana, I was also a volunteer at an LGBT youth-service organization, and was engaged in an LGBT political action committee. In Washington, DC, I provided pro-bono legal assistance to the Whitman-Walker Clinic."

For the past eight years, Todd has been a Howard Brown Health board member.

"I joined largely due to my appreciation for the organization's work with the Broadway Youth Center, but quickly became captured by the organization's overall mission of eliminating disparities in health care for our community all across the state and beyond," said Todd. "In my time on the board, we have increased our revenue exponentially and added numerous sites allowing us to increase access to LGBT-affirming care. I am proud to have been affiliated with this growth and am beyond impressed with the organization's current direction and leadership."

When Todd is not working or volunteering, he can be found traveling the globe and checking out what Chicago has to offer, including the bike trails in warmer months.

"Loss of sight is often cited as the number one health-related fear, and yet taking care of our eye health is so often overlooked until it is too late," said Todd. "We think we only need to address eye health when we need new glasses, but many eye-related health issues begin without immediate symptoms. I encourage everyone who has not gotten an eye exam recently to schedule one. If you have financial restrictions, give us a call at 800-331-2020 and we will do our best to help you out."

See <https://www.preventblindness.org/> for more information.

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Log Cabin Republicans claims to be locally 'reactivated'

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Illinois affiliate of the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) has been "reactivated," according to Chicagoan Morry Matson, who announced April 10 that he had been elected as the state president.

The Illinois chapter "has been dormant the past few years," Matson said. "It hasn't been active. We have restarted and are back in business."

Matson said that about 50 people are involved with the chapter: "It's got down, so we want to boost membership and are rebuilding right now."

Getting "as many Republicans elected as we can" elected is a top priority, Matson added. "But this year is strictly a membership drive for us. Next year, we want to start on opening new chapters across the state. ... We want to remind Gov. [Bruce] Rauner that we still need to work on workplace discrimination. It's still a problem in Illinois. Adoption, health costs, health insurance, keeping the cost of pills down—that's important in the gay community."

He further emphasized that the organization worked on issues statewide, not just in Chicago.

Matson said President Donald Trump has not



Morry Matson.
Photo from Matson

repealed marriage equality. However, Trump has appointed many conservative federal judges, including to the U.S. Supreme Court, and they could overturn progress on LGBT issues, including marriage. In addition, many of Trump's cabinet-level leaders have rolled back progress on LGBT issues within their domains.

Matson said LCR "does not agree with [Trump's] transgender [persons]-in-the-military policy. We want to work with him on that. There are things that we want to bring to his attention, and Gov. Rauner's as well. Like most presidents, you don't agree with them 100 percent on everything—that's why we're here. We want our voices heard and we're a very active part of the Republican Party. The Democrats don't have the monopoly on the gay community. There are conservative gay people and we're fighting just like other gay organizations are."

He added that he would praise Trump for "many things" he's done so far: "Certainly the help with taxes—that certainly helped our household. A lot of the gay people on our board are married and some are raising kids. That affects them personally. Also, he is trying to work on lowering the costs of medications."

Matson reiterated that Trump is "not touching marriage equality. He knows it would offend a great many of the people who support him."

LCR plans on having tables at local events throughout the summer and fall, he added. "We're no longer the secret society anymore—we're going to be very open and visible."

Lambda Legal's Clark to head TPAN

TPAN (Test Positive Aware Network) announced that it has hired Christopher Clark to serve as the organization's chief executive officer. Clark will begin April 30.

Clark joins TPAN following more than a decade of service at Lambda Legal, the national legal organization dedicated to achieving the full recognition of the civil rights of LGBT and HIV-impacted people. Since 2016, Clark has served as Lambda Legal's Midwest regional director, responsible for the management of the Chicago office and the coordination of fundraising and public policy strategies in a 10-state Midwest region.

In his management position, Clark developed a national *pro bono* project designed to develop relationships with law firms and attorneys across the country. He also coordinated the Chicago and Midwest fundraising efforts, including high-profile ticketed events, individual and corporate solicitations, and foundation grant proposals.

TPAN provides services for those vulnerable to and living with HIV and related health conditions. Its mission is to save lives and empower those affected by HIV. It also runs a national magazine, Positively Aware. See TPAN.com.

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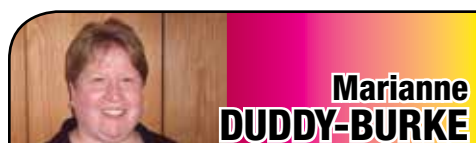
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**Marianne
DUDDY-BURKE**

LGBTQI Catholics see mixed record in first five years of Francis papacy,

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA, recently issued the following statement in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the election of Pope Francis:

On March 13, 2018, Catholics and many others in the world marked the fifth anniversary of the election of Jorge Bergoglio as Pope. What have these five years meant for LGBTQI and Ally Catholics? What can we expect from the next phase of Francis' papacy?

From his first appearance in St. Peter's Square, where he asked the people of the world to pray for him, to his famous "Who am I to judge?" comment in response to a question about whether a gay priest could be holy, Pope Francis has set a tone that many people find hopeful and engaging. Beyond that, he has also done much that many find inspiring, including his habits of personal simplicity, frequent presence among marginalized communities, advocacy for refugees and migrants, calls for nonviolence, and urgent appeal for increased global environmental stewardship in the encyclical *Laudato Si*.

In addition, he has been something of a disruptor of an entrenched and often out-of-touch Curia, demoting cardinals seen as flaunting wealth and power, and raising up new, pastorally focused bishops in under-represented parts of the Church. Furthermore, Francis has encouraged dialogue and dissent, while acknowledging that the Church lives in a complex and rapidly changing world.

Moreover, this pope has broken a number of barriers on LGBTQI issues. Francis is the first Pope to use the term "gay." He has said that Christians should apologize to gay people, and apparently supported an early draft of a Vatican report on the 2015 Synod on the Family, which said that gay people have gifts the Church needs and acknowledged that there can be grace in same-sex relationships. He met with a transgender person and his fiancée, has friends who are gay and married, and has called on the Church to better accompany families with LGBTQI children.



The Advocate's controversial cover featuring Pope Francis.

However, for LGBTQI people and our families, early hopes that Francis' openness would result in wide pastoral embrace or even changes to longstanding condemnatory dogma have not been realized. He has made inflammatory and hurtful statements, and has maintained inadequate and harmful traditional teachings on sex, gender, relationships, and marriage. The Pope used his personal authority to promote a successful anti-LGBTQI referendum in Slovakia, which prevents same-sex marriage and adoption in that nation.

Additionally, Pope Francis has made numerous ill-informed comments condemning "gender ideology," and even said transgender people are as dangerous to society as nuclear weapons. In Uganda, although condemning the death penalty simply for being LGBTQI, he referred to LGBTQI people as criminals. He quickly surrendered to conservative outcry about the gay-positive language in the early draft of the 2015 Synod on the Family report, resulting in a document that offered no tangible steps toward greater inclusion of or support for our community.

A number of Catholic Church leaders have been vocal in support of pastoral inclusion of LGBTQI people and families, and some have even questioned whether Catholic teaching and pastoral practice must change in light of changing realities in the world (e.g., legalization of same-sex marriage in

many countries). Clearly, Francis' leadership style has made space for this to happen. The Pope seems untroubled by the fact that Church leaders are taking a variety of approaches to LGBTQI issues. This could lead to the development of new models of pastoral care that may spread to other areas. But will bishops who deny pastoral care and sacraments to LGBTQI people, or support the firing of LGBTQI people from Catholic institutions simply because of their identity or because they have exercised the civil right to marry, as recently seen in the United States and elsewhere, face any censure?

It remains the case that gender complementarity is still the foundation of the Church's official approach to human relationships, that homosexuality continues to be named an "objective disorder," and that same-sex relationships are still labeled "intrinsically evil." Consequently, the Catholic Church led by Pope Francis continues to see LGBTQI people as persons unable to fully embody the Divine, who are subject to what Church leaders call "just discrimination," and who can justly be denied any appeal to canon law.

These doctrines continue to drive legal and cultural oppression in many parts of the world and leave LGBTQI people in danger of being targeted for violence; imprisoned as criminals; denied access to health care, housing, education, and employment; and forced into marriages with opposite-sex partners that can be destructive to both adults and to the children they may produce. These teachings contribute to mental-health problems, addictions, vulnerability to suicide, and isolation from the broader Church community.

Pope Francis is clearly a man and a leader moved by the needs of the poor and marginalized. If in the remaining period of his papacy he can come to understand the damage that the Church's dogma and practices regarding sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity do to individuals, families, and entire communities, there may be an opportunity for real change. To that end, we call on Pope Francis to meet with LGBTQI people and families, at the Vatican and during his travels around the world, in order to come to know our hopes, dreams, challenges, joys, and gifts.

On the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' election to the papacy, we offer, once again, to enter into respectful dialogue with him and other Catholic Church leaders, so that they can become more keenly aware of their responsibilities to the LGBTQI community, to our families, and to the Church of which we are an integral part.

Marianne Duddy-Burke is executive director of DignityUSA.



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WCT reviews the production 33 to Nothing.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

DANCE PROFILE

Getting to know Lucky Plush dancer Aaron-Raheim White

BY JOANNA FURNANS

How does one go from being a quiet young boy with an unstable home to being a successful Reiki master-teacher and MFA in dance? This isn't a rags-to-riches story, energy healers and dancers being on the lower rungs of the economic hierarchy in this country. But Aaron-Raheim White—a dancer with Chicago dance-theater company Lucky Plush—has a story steeped in self-discovery, proclamation and authenticity.

White was born to a teenage mother in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. His early years were spent between apartments, shelters, great aunts' and grandmothers' houses. As a kid, he kept quiet and stayed under the radar amidst an extended family of cousins. By the time he was in the second grade, school was the main source of consistency in his life and he developed a deep appreciation and attachment for his teachers. This was especially true when he started taking dance classes from Deirdre Dawson—a former dancer with Chicago's renowned Joseph Holmes Dance Theater—at age 14.

"She gave me this gift that I am forever grateful for," White recalled. "I had no idea that I knew how to dance or that I would like it. It was so specific and required focus to attain mastery. I liked that. I was constantly being challenged and held accountable. I was a great kid, I kept good grades and did all the things, but I didn't feel like people were holding me accountable or really showing up for me, not like Ms. Dawson was. She

was always there and she kept me on track. When I slacked, she brought me back. Everybody else just assumed that I was fine because I was one of the good ones. So I kinda got overlooked because I was the good one."

Coincidentally, or not, this was right around the time that White came out as gay. Proving a strength of character well beyond his years, White declared his sexuality in an environment that was far from accepting. He explained, "Growing up, watching TV, I saw gay people but they were always white. And whenever they came out it was always 'We love you, we accept you, it will be fine, la la la.' I knew that being Black and gay was absolutely unheard of. And most of my family was drug dealers and gang-bangers so the idea of there being a gay person in the family was just unheard of. So there was never space for me in that way."

"When I accepted my gayness," White continued, "it was the first thing I knew for sure. Once I knew, I couldn't un-know. So when I came out, I came out with such a force that I kind of kicked the closet open," he said laughing. "I refused to be silenced because most of my life I had been silent. I knew what my voice was."

Fast-forward some tough and terrific years, to a scholarship to the dance program at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign (UIUC) followed by a master of fine arts degree from the prestigious New York University Tisch School of the Arts. White remained in New York City dancing, touring, teaching and studying to become a

Reiki master-teacher. The energy work may sound like it comes out of left field but, for White, there is a strong connection between prayer—which he learned to rely on as a child in his grandmother's home—meditation, magic and healing.

"Prayer has been something that has kept me going. Whenever things got to be too much I always knew that I could talk to Spirit, I could talk to Goddess, I could talk to God and just release anything that I had on me so that I could lighten up..."

I know that magic exists; it just ain't woo-woo like we think it is. Magic got me into healing. Reiki is magic to me because it's a wrinkle in time and space of a person's body. You are changing the energy and the way that it functions in order to allow for healing, wholeness, groundedness and fluidity."

With these foundations in place, White eventually realized he was ready to leave New York. He didn't necessarily intend to return to Chicago but a chance encounter with Lucky Plush company members while teaching a master class back at UIUC led to drinks and karaoke, which led to a company class, followed by an invitation to rehearsal, followed by an offer to hire. That last development happened two years ago.

"What I really enjoy about working with Lucky Plush is how it commands and demands so much of me artistically. Meaning, how much I am required to be able to think quickly, to respond authentically and to live in the present moment," White said. Arguably, Julia Rhodes—founder and artistic director of Lucky Plush—requires that presence from her audience as well, as she delivers highly charged cultural messages disguised with a bit of quick wit. Her work is never punishingly political but it certainly does touch on the relevant social issues of our time.

White is clear about the significance of his representation on stage. "[Performing] is an opportunity for people to see a Black, queer, masc-presenting-femme on stage living as a person. Just my presence alone helps to dismantle some of their misconstrued ideas about what it means to be me, in my body, and how I exist in the world. Even if the choreography or piece doesn't address that directly, my presence addresses that thing. And I absolutely love shaking people up."

Lucky Plush presents "Tab Show" Thursday-Friday, April 26-27, 7:30 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. Purchase tickets at HarrisTheaterChicago.org or 312-334-7777.



Aaron-Raheim White.

Photo by
Arvell White

THEATER REVIEW

Our Great Tchaikovsky

Playwright/Performer: Hershey Felder;
Music: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
At: Steppenwolf Theatre Upstairs,
1650 N. Halsted St.
Tickets: 312-335-1650 or
Steppenwolf.org; \$55
Runs through: May 13

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Hershey Felder has built up an impressive multi-hyphenated career as a pianist-playwright-performer-composer. From his one-man Broadway show *George Gershwin Alone* to others like *Monsieur Chopin* and *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, Felder has dedicated much of his artistic output to heralding the lives and music of history's great composers.

But with Felder's latest show, *Our Great Tchaikovsky*, the heterosexual Canadian artist adds to his resume the job title of LGBTQ activist. And it's simply by doing what he has always done.



Hershey Felder
in *Our Great
Tchaikovsky*.
Publicity photo

Our Great Tchaikovsky is now receiving a rich and illuminating Midwest premiere in Steppenwolf's cozy Upstairs Theatre (just across the street from his usual Chicago home at the Royal George Theatre). What's so compelling is that Felder is committing an act of political defiance just by performing a stage biography of the iconic and gay Russian composer Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893).

In 2013, the Russian government passed a globally condemned law banning the spread of "gay propaganda." As a result, Russia's ministry

of culture has gone on the offensive to deny the homosexuality of Tchaikovsky (despite the well-documented proof in his correspondence arguing otherwise).

From the start of *Our Great Tchaikovsky*, Felder builds some mystery by appearing as himself rather than his usual practice of portraying historical figures. It seems that Felder received a Russian request asking him to turn his attention to dramatizing the life of Tchaikovsky.

Which is what Felder then proceeds to do. Af-

fecting a booming Slavic accent as Tchaikovsky, Felder mixes basic biographical and artistic facts with wowing piano playing of snippets from works ranging from the 1812 *Overture to Swan Lake*. There's an abundance of humorous anecdotes along the way, ranging from Tchaikovsky's habit of applying pet names to everyone in his life to his amazement at the fanaticism of his American fans.

Through it all, Felder doesn't shy away from from Tchaikovsky's homosexuality and his depressive and "introverted" behavior as a response. Felder also delves into how historians look for details of Tchaikovsky's life in his timeless music, and how biographers are still arguing about the sinister theories behind his premature death.

As written, Felder's *Our Great Tchaikovsky* would be against the law to perform in Russia today. So that makes the show and Felder's amazing performance all the more vital and relevant.

Our Great Tchaikovsky points out the contradictory ramifications of Tchaikovsky's status as both a national Russian musical hero and a global gay historical icon. Thank heavens for Felder and his efforts to prevent the current Russian regime from trying to push Tchaikovsky posthumously back into the closet.

THEATER REVIEW

33 to Nothing

Playwright/Composer: Grant James Varjas
At: A Red Orchid Theatre, 1531 N. Wells St.
Tickets: 312-943-8722;
ARedOrchidTheatre.org; \$30-\$35
Runs through: May 27

BY KERRY REID

On the heels of Steep Theatre's *Birdland*, A Red Orchid Theatre takes its own dive into the grungy waters of the rock-'n'-roll lifestyle. But unlike the narcissistic globetrotting star in Simon Stephens' drama, Grant James Varjas' *33 to Nothing* focuses on a band confronting the reality of never hitting the big time—or even the medium time.

The premise is that we're seeing the nameless

band during a practice session for an upcoming gig. But everything is just a little off, as the squabbles about the song tempos stand in for deeper disagreements and disappointments that take off in explosive directions over the 90-minute run.

The lead singer/songwriter/keyboardist, Gray (Aaron Holland), tosses back copious amounts of vodka and tosses acerbic barbs at his ex-lover and guitarist, Bri (Steve Haggard), about whom he's written (and re-written) several songs. The married couple of bassist Alex (Annie Prichard) and guitarist Tyler (Amanda Raquel Martinez), who were friends with Bri and Gray, respectively, before the band came together, deal with feeling shut out from the creative process and the lives of their old comrades. And the drummer, Barry (Jeff Kurysz), just wants to make it through the set while dealing with multiple calls from their

girlfriend.

The story seems as familiar as a favorite pair of Converse All-Stars in the broad outlines. But somehow Tyrone Phillips' heart-on-sleeve, hard-rocking staging, with assists from musical director John Cicora (the actors play the instruments), feels fresh and honest. For starters, the gender and racial identities of the characters are simply presented as facets of who they are, not sources of conflict.

The conflicts that matter here are about heartbreak, betrayal and the sheer exhaustion of trying to play hard at night while working "real jobs" during the day.

It also helps that (unlike in *Birdland*) we actually hear several of the songs, also written by Varjas. And they're good. Maybe not insta-classic good, but definitely songs that would make you pay attention in a bar. We believe that this band

could have broken through—if only they had caught the right breaks a few years earlier.

The dialogue blends big recriminations with the sort of goofy shorthand asides and gibes that longtime collaborators effortlessly use. (In one hilarious moment, the band responds to Barry taking the umpteenth call from a girlfriend by crooning Kiss' "Beth.")

Holland's Gray is charismatic (and aggravating) as hell, but like the best lead singers, he's balanced by the rest of the ensemble. *33 to Nothing* offers a defiant and sometimes sorrowful anthem in praise of finding your voice with people who know that the same old song still matters.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Gentleman Caller, Raven Theatre, extended through May 27. You can see this play because it's so literary or because it's so gol-durn romantic, but you should also see it because it's going to launch its author and actors to stardom beyond our city limits. MSB

The Rosenkranz Mysteries: Physician Magician, Royal George Theatre, through May 6. Magic is the attempt to exercise of control over a chaotic universe, but the good doctor's soothing voice keeps the darkness at bay and the power struggle benign. MSB

The Beauty Queen of Leenane, through April 22. Martin McDonagh's scalding drama pits a cruelly, manipulative monster of a mother against her "spinster" daughter. The Irish playwright's brand of comedy can be dark as pitch and sharp enough to scar—or, it can leave you laughing out loud. Funny or tragic, *Beauty Queen* is a winner. CES

—By Barnidge and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

Ghosts of War

Playwright: adapted by William Massolia,
from the novel by Ryan Smithson
At: Griffin Theatre Company at
The Den, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: \$30-\$50
Runs through: May 6

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

At the very outset, our narrator warns us, "I am G.I. Joe Schmo. They will not make movies about me. There will be no video games revolving around my involvement in the war. When people write nonfiction books about the Iraq war, I will not be in them."

He's probably right, too. SPC Schmo, you see, is a United States Army reservist (a "weekend warrior" to his active-duty counterparts). He is

a soldier allowed to live as a civilian until his skills are needed, at which time he is ripped from his comfortable domestic surroundings and relocated wherever his unseen overlords deem appropriate—in this case, a remote outpost in the African desert, where, for a year, his unit is charged with bulldozing the sandy soil into vehicle-friendly roads and filling craters left by bombs. More frequently, the targets of attacks than the initiators thereof, their peripatetic activities make for protracted intervals between crises to contemplate the global privilege they represent.

Indeed, the predominant emotion nowadays felt by youths spurred to fight for their country appears to be, not hatred of the enemy, but a suffusive sense of guilt. Joe enlists after viewing the wreckage of the World Trade Center, he marries his girl friend before shipping out to ensure her widow's benefits should he not survive, he is horrified at the poverty and squalor

he finds overseas. Upon returning home, he is haunted by memories of the suffering he has witnessed, his sole respite lying in disclosure of his deeds and surrender to the nameless deities said to banish atheism in bunkers.

Ryan Smithson's memoir-turned-novel underwent considerable revision before its publication for the Young Adult market, and William Massolia's page-to-stage adaptation likewise reassembled to render the solo show a companion piece to Griffin Theatre's oft-revived *Letters Home*. Director Jason Gerace and actor Sam Krey succeed in diminishing the sentimentality inherent in a reminiscence launched by the speaker displaying his furry-toy lucky charm, but peacetime audiences content to wallow in the myth of daughters and sons emerging from battle's strife the better for the ordeal would do well to consider its consequences when the inevitable next crusade is declared.



Charin Alvarez
and Caroline
Neff in *Lettie*.
Photo by Liz
Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

Lettie

Playwright: Boo Killebrew
At: Victory Gardens Theater,
2433 N. Lincoln Ave.
Tickets: 773-871-3000;
VictoryGardens.org; \$15-\$56
Runs through: May 6

BY KERRY REID

Sometimes a role fits an actor so seamlessly it feels as if it were written specifically for them. That's the case with Caroline Neff and *Lettie*, now in a gripping world premiere at Victory Gardens. In the title role, playing a woman released from prison after seven years on drug trafficking charges, Neff's signature blend of deadpan wit and raw vulnerability reveals layer after layer of Lettie's damaged-yet-defiant psyche as she attempts to go straight and win back the love of her teenage children.

Those children have been raised by Lettie's sister, Carla (a terrific Kirsten Fitzgerald), and Carla's husband, Frank (Ryan Kitley). In the wordless first encounter between the two women at Lettie's halfway house, we see the vast fraught distance between them and sense that, while the bridges haven't been burned, they're ready to explode at the drop of a match.

Boo Killebrew's play, directed with surehanded sensitivity by Chay Yew, shows us that, for ex-cons trying to go straight (and ordinary working people of all stripes, really), incendiary events are always one accident, one missed curfew, one

bad decision away. And always, there's "that little box" on forms for jobs and housing, indicating one's Scarlet Letter status as an ex-con.

Lettie's made bad choices, for sure. Her sullen eldest, River (Matt Farrabee) literally bears scars from his mom's past selfishness. Her daughter, Layla (Krystal Ortiz), who has taken that name rather than the "Louisa" her mom gave her, seems on the surface to be a success story, earning both straight As and a role in "Annie." But it's clear that life with Carla and Frank has bred its own resentments and doubts for Lettie's kids.

Resentfulness as a character trait can grow wearisome, even in a 90-minute play. But Killebrew skillfully parses out all the characters' fears. Even Frank, who initially is more chip than shoulder when it comes to dealing with his sister-in-law, shows his vulnerable side.

In what could be a clichéd "wise Latina" sidekick role, Charin Alvarez shines as Minny, another ex-con in the welding training program Lettie's ended up in (presumably by chance, as Lettie has no aptitude or interest in it). Minny's life has contained even more tragedy than Lettie's—and she initially delights in pointing out that white women like Lettie get "the best stuff" when it comes to rehabilitation. But she's also learned the hard way that sometimes in life, you don't get what you want, or what you need.

Lettie doesn't offer inspirational pabulum about rebirth. No phoenix arises from the ashes of Lettie's life. It's just one day after another, realizing that, as Minny tells her with clear-eyed tough love, it's not about moving forward. It's about just moving along.

SPOTLIGHT

When the Joffrey Ballet takes on Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the performance will be a world away from Shakespeare's original. For one thing, Swedish indie rocker Anna von Hausswolff accompanies the ballet for three songs. For another, Ekman's telling of the Bard's into-the-woods rom-com incorporates a celebration of Scandinavian Midsummer holiday rituals, quasi-Pagan celebrations that herald the end of winter with bonfires, dancing, music and (apropos of a story partially set in an enchanted



forest) magic. April 25-May 6 at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Parkway; \$34-\$77; Joffrey.org

Caption: Royal Swedish Opera performing *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Hans Nilsson

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THEATER REVIEW

9 to 5 The Musical

Music and Lyrics: Dolly Parton

Book: Patricia Resnick

At: Firebrand Theatre at the

Den Theatre, 1329 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: \$20-\$45; FirebrandTheatre.org

Runs through: May 20

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Here are two things about Nine to Five that have changed since its debut as a 1980 movie and reboot as a musical in 2008: Even without composer/lyricist Dolly Parton joining in, the show has never sounded better than it does in Firebrand's revival. Secondly, the nearly 40-year-old story of three women who shanghai their company from a predatory boss has become less daffy and more poignant.

In the olden days of the 1980s, scenes between CEO Franklin Hart Jr. and his secretary, Doralee, were funny—like watching the Road Runner outsmart Wile E. Coyote is funny. Sexual harassment was an occupational hazard, like catching a cold from a co-worker was. Inevitable no matter what you did. Now? Those same scenes will make you want to take a shower. And stab the so-skeevy-he-pollutes-the very-air boss in the eye with a Number 9 pencil.

The women of 9 to 5 The Musical only deploy



Anne Sheridan Smith, Sharriese Hamilton and Sara Reinicke in 9 to 5 The Musical.
Publicity photo

lethal weapons (guns, stilettos and lassos) in their THC-induced fantasies. But they do fight back. And although their fight has an improbably happily-ever-after fairy-tale ending, it's satisfying, nonetheless.

France has brought the orchestra to the forefront for much of the production. Under music director Andra Velis Simon, the cast plays instruments along with the quintet that makes up the onstage band. Strings dominate (Ricardo Santiago on guitar, Chel Hernandez on guitar and bass, Simon on keyboards and Sarah Weddle on percussion), which gives the score an alternately soaring and finger-picking bluegrass sound. In triumphant numbers, including "Let Love Grow" and "Change

It," the show feels like going to church should. The audience is listening to clarion calls for empowerment, delivered with raise-the-rafters vocal prowess and a jubilation that reaches the soul.

Of course, none of this would work if France's cast wasn't up to the task. If you're going to strip down the music, you need voices that can evoke the power of an orchestra. Suffice to say Hamilton is nicknamed "Slayrriese" for good reason. She brings a richly shaded lilt to Backwoods Barbie and a roar to the anthemic Joy to the Girls. As the uber-competent Violet, Anne Sheridan Smith has a Lyric Opera-worthy soprano that gets an operatic workout in "Dance of Death," and her tentative office romance with Joe (Michael Tur-

rentine) will make you believe that love can indeed conquer all.

Cheated-on Judy (Sara Reinecke) inevitably stops the show with "Get Out and Stay Out," but Reinecke stops it, lights it on fire and then burns down the whole damn thing. (Not literally, but it did remind me of the Molotov cocktail scene in 3 Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri.)

France has also turned the office lady villain—Hart's suck-up secretary Roz—into a figure who garners understanding and empathy. Veronica Garza's Roz is a woman in love who will not back down. Her declaration of love ("Heart to Hart") is a combination of burlesque, torch song and uncompromising obsession. It is also one of the most hilarious things I have seen in a musical—ever.

As Hart, Scott Danielson brings just enough menace to the show to balance its inherently sunny humor. He's all in, even when trussed up like a prize Berkshire pig in the 4-H Finals at the Missouri State Fair.

Here's another way Firebrand's production differs from the movie and all the previous productions that have played hereabouts: The cast looks like Chicago. And that precisely absolutely everything I have to say regarding actors' bodies and skin tones. A show that looks like Chicago and feels like now? Take that to church people—or rather, to the box office.

THEATER REVIEW

Another Jungle

Playwright: Kristin Idaszak

At: The Buena at the Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway

Tickets: \$25

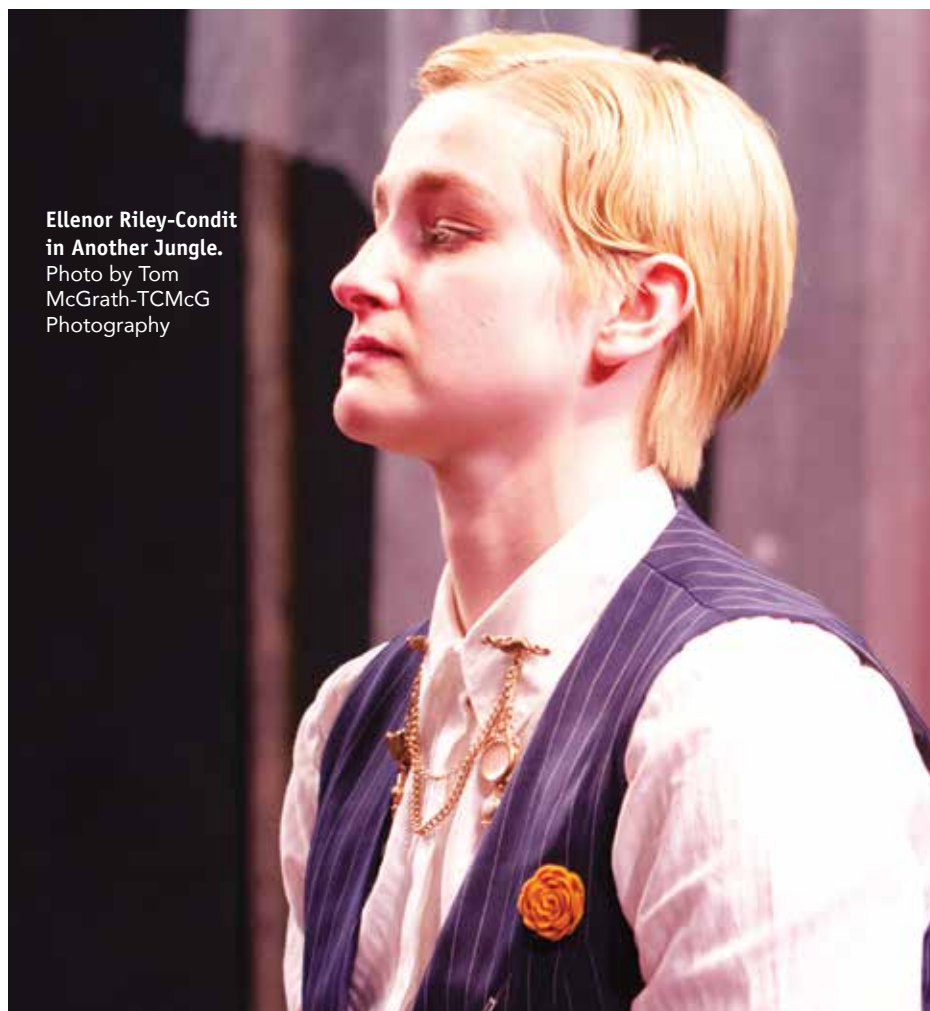
Runs through: April 29

BY JAMES R. WILKE

Produced by Cloudgate Theatre in collaboration with The Syndicate, playwright Kristin Idaszak's thought-provoking Chicago-based play Another Jungle starts its world premiere this month. Inspired by Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel The Jungle, which revolutionized food safety in its time, Another Jungle attempts to refocus back on Sinclair's original intent to expose the exploitation of Chicago's immigrant working class in the early 20th century, while acknowledging how such abuses still persist today.

A play within a play, the audience has come to see a new play about the strife of Polish immigrants working in Chicago's early 20th-century slaughterhouses, only to find the play cancelled and its writer, played by Ellenor Riley-Condit, attempting to save the production by presenting a slideshow about her Polish immigrant heritage in its place. Through flashbacks to earlier in the evening, the audience sees how the play fell apart, including an eerie rape scene gone too far in an attempt to re-enact the darker parts of the writer's tragic family history.

While adept at carrying the play, Riley-Condit's portrayal of the writer feels overcalculated at the beginning, only becoming believable once the



Ellenor Riley-Condit in Another Jungle.
Photo by Tom McGrath-TCMCG Photography

action develops. Gregory Geffard, however, portrays the stage manager so convincingly that one forgets he is acting. Equally, Paula Ramirez's rendition of Ines, an actress and the writer's lesbian lover, shows great understanding of the subtleties of conflict with someone you love. And Rich Holton as Mike, an actor portraying a villainous sweatshop boss, pokes great fun at actors who take their craft too seriously.

Audience members are cautioned that this play includes depictions of sexual assault, as well as strong language and animal carcasses. Fight choreographer Gaby Labotka, and actors Ramirez and Holton are to be commended for simulating an attempted rape scene that is frighteningly realistic. Set designer Shaun Renfro and lighting designer Jared Gooding should also be applauded for a stage evoking a Chicago slaughterhouse that draws parallels to the set of a horror movie. And director Tara Branham's innovative blocking reconfigures of The Buena stage, with the action at the center of the intimate space and audience members seated facing each other at the two sides. Surprisingly, seeing the reactions of audience members seated across only adds to the production's impact.

Another Jungle raises many questions surrounding corruption, abuse of the working class and minorities, and the parts these issues play in the fabric of Chicago history. It also casts a sharp lens on the question of where the line sits between consent and rape. While Idaszak offers no clear answers to these questions, perhaps the continued discourse is just as important, as our city and society still struggle toward reconciliation of these important issues.



Yvonne Strumecki (far left) and Matt Crowle (center, holding bracelet) South Pacific.
Photo by Brett Beiner

THEATER REVIEW

South Pacific

Playwright: Rodgers & Hammerstein
(music/lyrics/book) and Joshua Logan (book)
At: Drury Lane Theatre (Oakbrook Terrace)
Tickets: 630-530-0111;
DruryLaneTheatre.com; \$47-\$62
Runs through: June 17

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Wherever U.S. military men and women fight bullies today—Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and The Niger (and wherever else secretly)—they are discouraged from intimate involvement with the locals ... but sometimes it happens. Oops! I mean, our troops fighting in French Polynesia during World War II were discouraged from intimate involvement with locals, but sometimes it happened.

This Rodgers & Hammerstein classic will be 70 years old in 2019, yet its emotional and social stories remain regrettably pertinent and fresh, with racism central to the two love stories (one ending happily and the other not). Perhaps resonating more than ever before is the commanding officer's remark that he cannot promise a better world if the United States wins, but he know it will be worse if the country loses.

This production mostly sparkles on the strength of superior musical values. All principal voices are golden and knock the famous Rodgers & Hammerstein songs outta' the park under musical director Roberta Duchak. The eight-person orchestra also sounds richly full under conductor Christopher Sargent, with outstanding keyboard programming by Ethan Deppe replicating the score's significant harp part and full string section (supplementing one real violin). I question a tempo here or there, but that certainly most people—especially if they have never have seen South Pacific.

As expat French plantation owner Emile de Becque, powerful baritone Robert Cuccioli has the looks, stature and voice and sings his gorgeous songs with ease. De Becque is fervent and gracious but a bit stolid, but that's the writing and not the playing. As his inamorata, U.S. nurse Nellie Forbush, Samantha Hill projects down-to-earth charm with all the appropriate emotional nuances. Austin Colby has good looks to spare and a strong, lyrical tenor voice as doomed All-American Boy Joe Cable. As Bloody Mary, the colorful Tonkinese entrepreneur, Yvonne Strumecki

is utterly sterling and to the manor born. In the comic role of Luther Billis, Matt Crowle is a deserved crowd favorite who nonetheless never overplays and also offers nuance, especially at the end.

It's not an outstanding dance show, but Otis Sallid's choreography does what it needs to do, especially in comedy numbers such as "There Is Nothin' Like a Dame" and "Honey Bun." Director Victor Malana Maog grasps the material strongly and moves things briskly and cleanly, but three times during intimate songs he annoyingly separates the singer from the person being sung to, which weakens the moment.

FYI: Even cutting one song ("My Girl Back Home") and one dance sequence, South Pacific runs almost three hours. (The Drury Lane website says it's two hours and 25 minutes.) It's never been a short show, but it's never been more worthwhile.

BOOKS

Nina Packenbush talks 'Girls Like Me'

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Nina Packenbush's first novel, *Girls Like Me*, breaks new ground with the story of a pregnant queer teenager, Banjo. Recently named as a recommended title by the In the Margins 2018 Book Awards, Packenbush says she wrote *Girls Like Me* "for myself, my friends, all of the queer teen parents out there, as well as anyone who has ever felt like they don't fit in." The book was also recently nominated for a Lambda Literary Award.

"Queer teen parents absolutely never appear in books, movies, or T.V. shows," Packenbush told Windy City Times. As a prior teen mother herself, she felt a special commitment to create an authentic character that would resonate with a more marginalized readership. And surprisingly, Packenbush says that her book is the first to explore the experience of pregnant, queer identified teens.

Banjo's story is a heartfelt narrative accurately reflecting a young person's struggle to begin to reconcile some serious life issues. These include grappling with her lover's recent suicide, her unexpected pregnancy, a complicated home life, and the condescending attitude of judgmental adults. "I was really passionate about writing a book that didn't shy away from the tough stuff,"

said Packenbush. "I think these are all issues that teens are facing every day." Subsequently, she handles some difficult aspects of the story—such as Banjo's mental-health hospitalization, and her self-harm tendencies, with a sensitive, youth oriented perspective. And although Packenbush wrote this novel with a teen readership in mind, it has strong crossover appeal for adults.

Packenbush stated "wanting to shed some light on how trauma impacts mental health." Yet her book is neither didactic nor a pity party. *Girls Like Me* is filled with light, life and hope, and if Banjo struggles, she is also clearly resilient, and determined to survive. As Banjo courageously looks inward, finding strength in her family, friends, and new therapist, she forges ahead in learning to use new coping skills benefiting herself and her unborn child. Banjo's emotional growth during the book also becomes the glue that unites and begins to heal her previously fractured family, consisting of an older sister, her nephew and lesbian mother.

"I am a grown-up queer teen mom and my oldest daughter was a teen mom," said Packenbush. "I've experienced friends taking their own lives, poverty, and many of the other things that Banjo and her friends experience. I've taken bits and pieces from my own life, bits and pieces from the lives of my friends, and bits and pieces from the lives of some teenagers I know, and then filled in the rest with a large dose of fiction."

Packenbush said she hopes readers take two messages away from *Girls Like Me*. She stated, "I want pregnant and parenting teenagers to realize that they are good enough parents. I want them to see that even if their lives aren't perfect,

they can still parent if they want to." Secondly, she hopes that readers see that teens "don't need judgment and shame, they need celebration and support. Teens have the right to choose to parent, and if they do, we as a society need to be there for them."

Although *Girls Like Me* is a stand-alone novel, readers will definitely be rooting for Banjo by books' end, and wonder how she and her family fare in the future. Packenbush confirms that she has been working on a sequel, which will provide a welcome opportunity for readers to follow Banjo's story further. For as mothers of any age know, in fiction and in life, pregnancy will only be the start of Banjo's journey.

Rachel Pepper is the author of several books about pregnancy and parenting, including Transitions of the Heart: Stories of Love, Struggle and Acceptance by Mothers of Transgender and Gender Variant Children. She can be reached at Rachel-Pepper.com.



Nina Packenbush.
PR photo

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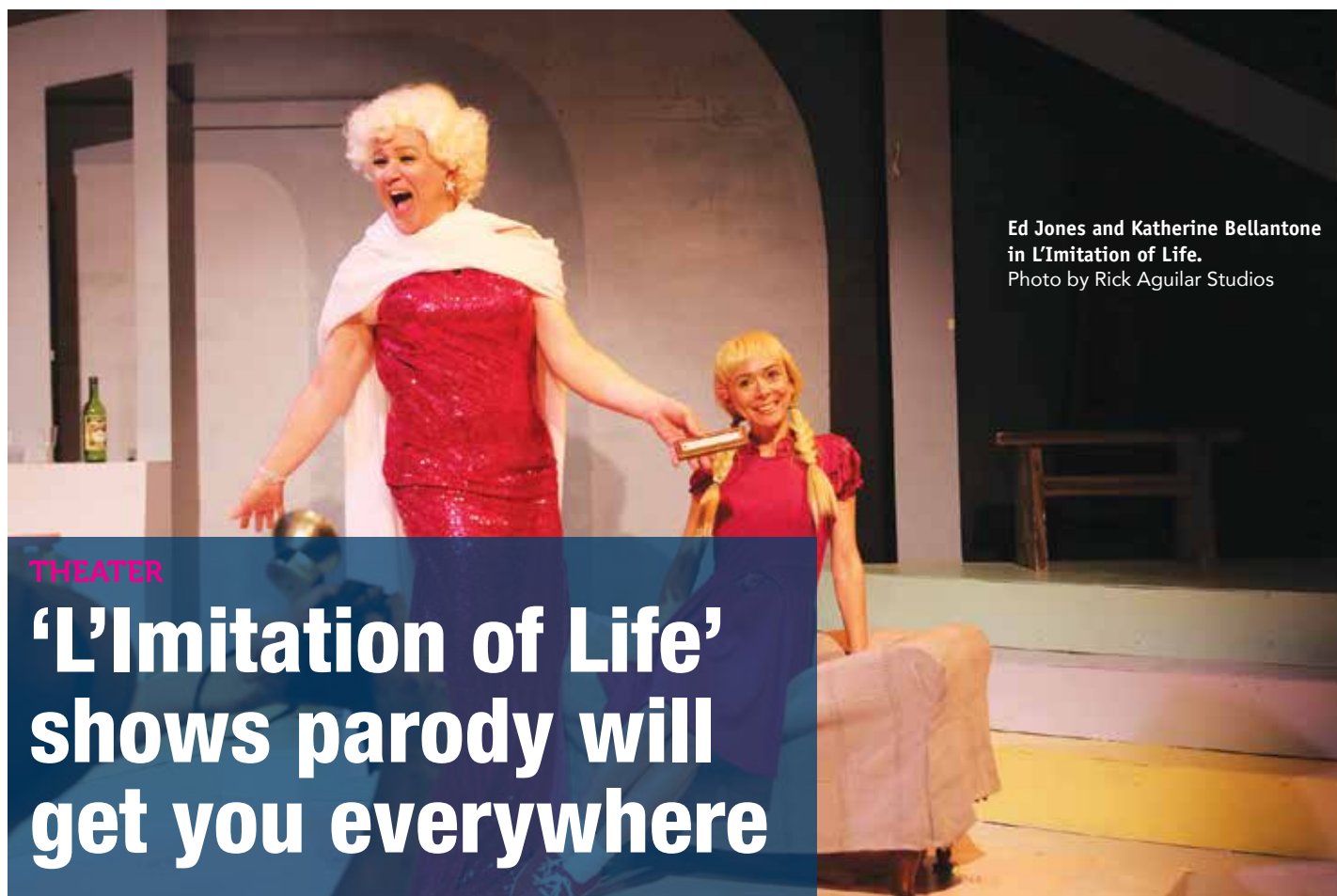
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Ed Jones and Katherine Bellantone
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Photo by Rick Aguilar Studios

THEATER

'L'Imitation of Life' shows parody will get you everywhere

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Hell in a Handbag productions are the gaudiest you'll find in Chicago, with camp parodies ranging from *Golden Girls* to a revisioning of *A Miracle Worker*, with a drag queen Helen Keller.

The company returns with a remount of its 2013 production of *L'Imitation of Life*, playwright Ricky Graham's take on the film of (almost) the same name, *Imitation of Life*. It has frills and melodrama, but it also puts the struggles of poor women of color at the forefront and defends any woman who must subvert cultural norms just to get by.

This parody of the 1959 film follows two single mothers as they struggle to raise their daughters. Annie Johnson (Robert Williams) is an African-American mother who has been turned out of her home with her light-skinned daughter. She meets Lana Turner (Ed Jones, as the production opts to skip the character name in Turner's case), a widow and struggling actress with a daughter of her own. The four successfully cohabit, with Lana acting as breadwinner, and Annie as maid and caretaker for both daughters. Trouble comes as Lana achieves stardom, and the girls enter their teens. Lana's daughter, Suzie, falls for one of her mother's boy toys, and Sara Jane, having seen how the other half lives, wants to disown her mother and take every advantage afforded her when passing as white.

Windy City Times asked director Stevie Love, and actors Robert Williams and Ed Jones, who portray this productions' leading ladies to tell us what makes this show unique and relevant to

theatergoers today. "We did this show five years ago, and we had a white woman playing the role of a Black character, Sara Jane," Stevie Love said of the remount. "We wanted to make sure that would not be the case for this production. We needed a person of color in the role. We also wanted two women to play Sarah Jane and Suzie,

it brings something new and real to the world."

Robert Williams reveled in the down-to-earthness of the role of Annie. "Playing this chocolate skinned woman who is not able to hide her ethnicity, obviously, in my growing up, being an American, there is all kinds of weight to that," Williams said, "Annie has to help a child who,

PFP's 'His Greatness' in Dublin in May; fundraisers planned

Pride Films and Plays' Chicago premiere production of Daniel MacIvor's *His Greatness*—inspired by a 'potentially true story' during the declining days of Tennessee Williams—will be performed at the 15th Annual International Dublin Gay Play Festival that will take place May 7-20 in Dublin.

The entire original cast of last fall's production will travel to Dublin and will perform the play May 14-19, with two performances on May 19.

Two special benefit performances will be staged in Chicago to help defray expenses for the company to travel to Dublin and perform at the festival. On Wed., April 18, at 7:30 p.m., Pride Films and Plays will present an "all-star" staged reading of *The Women*, by Claire Boothe Luce, performed entirely by men. The cast will include Chicago Ald. James Cappelman (46th Ward), David Cerda, Ed Jones, David Zak, Danne W. Taylor, Casey Chapman, Kevin Bishop, Markle-

Beau, AK Miller, Manny Ortiz, Christopher Sylvie and Oscar M. Munoz in the Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway.

There will also be one farewell benefit performance of *His Greatness* on Monday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the Thrust Stage at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Admission will be \$25-\$50 for the April 18 event, and \$25-\$30 for the May 7 benefit; visit Stage773.com or call 773-327-5252.

Also, those wishing to support the production's trip to Dublin can contribute directly at <https://www.gofundme.com/send-his-greatness-to-dublin>.

'The Roommate' June 21-Aug. 5

Steppenwolf Theatre Company will present the Chicago premiere production of *The Roommate*, by Jen Silverman and directed by Tony Award winner Phylicia Rashad.

The Roommate begins previews June 21, and the production runs through Aug. 5 in Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St. The production will feature ensemble members

though she doesn't understand how the world works, still understands enough about the unfair way they're treated."

As Lana Turner, Ed Jones is both living out a fan dream and honoring a friend who introduced him to the film. "This is one of my favorite movies. I was reintroduced to it by my gay, movie-buff friend, Kevin," Jones said. "Kevin was there for my first drag role, and he was very encouraging. We lost Kevin to the AIDS epidemic, but I am dedicating my performance to him."

Love, Williams and Jones are all Hell in a Handbag Productions alumni and have returned for countless shows. "We do parodies of movies and subjects we love," said Jones. "We don't ever make fun of them, we truly enjoy these parodies because we love the subject matter and who were portraying." Williams became an ensemble member after he was cast in his very first Chicago production. "They're a big group of freaks, and I am happy to be one among them," Williams said. "For them, being different is a positive, never a negative."

For these seasoned performers, their production blurs the boundaries between camp and realism. "You can't perform in this show, you've to be the character," said Williams. "Annie and her daughter are the real people in this incredible fantasy world."

"You will laugh, but beyond that, you'll feel torn about your place in the world like Sara Jane, or you might question the things in your life that perpetuate racism," said Love.

"I hope that our audiences are inspired to check out the original film," Jones said. "Anyone who hasn't seen it would gain an appreciation for it. The movie had its' premiere in Chicago, and the Hollywood story surrounding the production is really captivating."

Hell in a Handbag Production's *L'Imitation of Life* runs April 7-May 6 at the Stage 773 at 1225 W. Belmont Ave. For tickets and more information, visit Stage773.com.

Ora Jones (as Robyn) and Sandra Marquez (as Sharon).

Single tickets (\$20-\$93) are currently on sale through Audience Services at 312-335-1650 or Steppenwolf.org.

Bridge Dance Festival through May 6

The Bridge Dance Festival—the culmination of four years of Japanese focused programming at Links Hall, 3111 N. Western Ave., including the National Performance Network Asian Exchange, Beyond the Box and Links to Japan—is taking place through May 6.

It features Links Hall commissioned works by Kaori Seki (Tokyo) and Darrell Jones (Chicago), and J'Sun Howard (Chicago); and it re-engages Chicago-based Kabuki artist Rika Lin's Beyond the Box series, which fuses traditional forms and innovative experiments. The festival also features two international touring works, 100 Light Years of Solitude and *Enmei* (Long Life).

See LinksHall.org.



Paul Dykstra in front of McCormick Place.
PR photo

Getting to know American Beauty Show's Paul Dykstra

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Later this month, Cosmetologists Chicago will kick off its annual America's Beauty Show for salon professionals. The first, as it was called at the time, Midwest Beauty Trade Show took place in 1924 and now the show has 450 exhibitors, 70,000-plus professional gate admissions, more than 60 classes for continuing education hours and more than 80 classes for product knowledge education.

Led by CEO Paul Dykstra (who is also a classical pianist), Cosmetologist Chicago consists of the beauty show and subsidiaries—The International Nail Technicians Association, The American Association for Esthetics, CIDESCO USA and the Certified Nail Professional program.

"Cosmetologists Chicago is a unique organization of salon professionals here in Chicagoland," said Dykstra. "Founded in 1912 by a group of salon owners as the Chicago and Illinois Hairdressers and Wigmakers Association, it today boasts more than 15,000 professional and student members."

Dykstra came to the organization because, as he said, he could type fast because all pianist have coordinated fingers.

"I applied for a job at the time that computer word processing and data processing were becoming the norm," said Dykstra. "I had studied word processing so I had another marketable

skill and the rest is history. I interviewed in Nov. 1986, and have been here ever since."

As for this year's beauty show, Dykstra explained that attendees will find a new exhibit hall; more education opportunities; four demonstration theaters on the main floor; fashion from the runways of London brought to the United States by the company label.m; The Beauty Changes Lives gala (to raise funds for cosmetology school training in all disciplines); two competitions: The Andis Fabulous Fades and the Major League Barber Crazy Hands Barber; and even domestic violence and sexual abuse awareness training (required for all salon professionals for 2018 licensure renewal); among other new additions to the weekend's events.

While Dykstra's journey toward Cosmetologist Chicago was due to the practical skill set he had, his love and passion for the piano and classical music was formed at an early age. Dykstra was raised in a small agricultural community in southeastern South Dakota, where much of his family were independent farmers.

"While there was little cultural exposure, we were fortunate that our school district had music teachers who inspired us with the beauty of music," said Dykstra. "Three exceptional teachers were Larry Lyngstad, instrumental; Ethel Cooper, vocal and Ruth Van Gerpen, piano. At the time I was in high school, another friend and I were accepted to study in Yankton College Conserva-

tory of Music's preparatory program. Our mothers switched weeks and drove us 80 miles for lessons until we could drive ourselves.

"I did not start playing the piano until sixth grade and took to it like I had played my whole life. I had found my 'personal football field.' When I was accepted into the preparatory program, and then later majored in piano performance in undergraduate and graduate school, I knew I had found my cultural and artistic self. Further study at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Austria, confirmed my focus as a pianist on collaborative piano—as a chamber and vocal music specialist."

In addition to his role within Cosmetologists Chicago, Dykstra is also the Symphony Orchestra of Chicago's Lira Ensemble (America's only full-time professional performance organizations dedicated to the music of Poland) founder and former conductor. Dykstra's many roles at the Lira

Ensemble over the years include conducting the professional female ensemble, developing the full symphonic orchestra and various administrative tasks. These days he focuses exclusively on collaborative piano in the ensemble.

The Lira Ensemble has performed the orchestral and operatic music of Polish composers including Chopin, Moniuszko, Paderewski, Bacewicz, Szymanowski, Ptaszynska and more at Chicago's Symphony Center, Hershey Auditorium in Pittsburgh, the Ford Center for the Performing Arts in suburban Detroit, at SUNY-Buffalo and many other major venues throughout the United States.

In addition to his work with the Lira Ensemble, Dykstra has performed throughout the United States, Canada, Poland, Germany, Austria and West Africa.

Dykstra was also the musical director at Temple Shalom of Chicago for 25 years.

"I was hired when I first moved to Chicago to conduct the professional choir for the High Holy Days of the Jewish calendar and quickly became a member," said Dykstra. "One of the nation's largest Reform congregations, the temple has a stellar reputation for outstanding musical performances. It is one of the most cherished musical experiences of my lifetime."

When Dykstra is not working, he can be found spending time with husband Bob Beach (whom he met in January 2000 and married October 2016) attending Broadway in Chicago plays and musicals, traveling to various beaches and across Europe, going on cruises with their friends, cooking and growing herbs in their aerogarden.

"For any salon professionals out there who have not heard of this show, I encourage them to attend," said Dykstra. "We truly bring the world of beauty to our back door every year. Why would any pro skip it?"

The show will take place April 28-30 at McCormick Place, and is for salon professionals only. See <https://www.americasbeautyshow.com/> for more information. To register for the show, visit <https://abs2018-attendee.streampoint.com/>.

Trans show part of Chicago Fashion Week

A transgender-themed show will be part of Chicago Fashion Week, which will take place April 23-30. (FashionBar is presenting the weeks' events.)

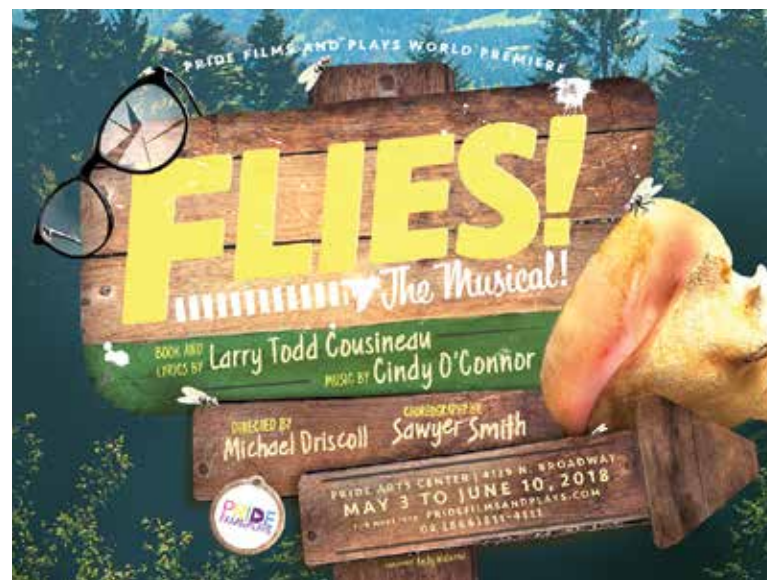
Among the events is "Trans, Media and Fashion," which will take place Sunday, April 29, 4-8 p.m., at EvolveHer, 358 W. Ontario St. The

show will feature designs by Angela Wang.

Some of the other events include "The Modern Minimalist" (April 22), which local TV news anchor Diane Pathieu will host; "Student Showcasing Fashion Installation" (April 25), which Tony Long will host; and the "Ready to Wear Show," (April 28), which will be held at Baderbrau, 2515 S. Wabash Ave.

See <https://www.fashionbarchicago.com/pages/chicagofashionweek-registration/> for more information. Tickets can be purchased at Eventbrite.

CULTURE CLUB



Annie Leibovitz at Chicago's Standard Club.
Photo by Victor Hilitski



PHOTOGRAPHY

Annie Leibovitz clicks with audience at MCA event

BY TONY PEREGRIN

"You will learn the most by looking back at your work," said Annie Leibovitz, the legendary and influential portrait photographer, to a sold-out, well-heeled crowd at an April 11, 2018 luncheon marking the 50th anniversary of Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA).

Taking stock of your past work was something Leibovitz learned from Bea Feitler, a former art director for Ms. Magazine, Harper's Bazaar, and other publications. "That advice made a lot of sense to me," said Leibovitz. "I published a book that covered the first 20 years I worked—1970 to 1990—and later I made A Photographer's Life: 1990–2005, which included the years when I was with Susan Sontag."

Leibovitz revealed to the 500-plus Chicago audience that it had recently occurred to her that a great deal of work had accumulated since 2005—and that she was compelled to "stop and take a look and make a new book." That book, a massive tome titled Annie Leibovitz: Portraits 2005–2016, offers a survey of 150 iconic works that capture the most fascinating and influential figures of the last decade.

Unfortunately, curating this latest collection of portraits grew wildly out of focus for Leibovitz after Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election.

"I knew what the end of the book would be,"

said Leibovitz, "It would end with a portrait of Hillary Clinton in the White House. I spent a lot of time imagining what desk Hillary would choose to be her desk in the Oval Office. Was one of Eleanor Roosevelt's desks available? Then Hillary lost. I called Phaidon, my publisher, and said "without Hillary Clinton, I am lost...I don't have it in me [to finish the book.]"

"The years 2005 to 2016 now seemed like a discrete era," said Ms. Leibovitz, reading an excerpt from her artist's statement in the new book. "They were the years when Barack Obama held high public office, as a senator and then as president. And I guess you could say they were years when the culture was shifting in ways that we didn't quite take in. I wasn't thinking about any of that when I decided to do the book. I just wanted to assess what my work looked like."

The 150 color and black-and-white photographs featured in Annie Leibovitz: Portraits 2005–2016 are a panoply of actors, artists, athletes, musicians, and politicians including former President Barack Obama, Caitlyn Jenner, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Rihanna.

The book also features photos of more notorious subjects. "There are several creeps in the book," admitted Leibovitz, who name-checked Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood ("This photo was really cool ... until that chair moment") and others in this category, perhaps most notably, President

Trump. The 2006 Trump photo features the future president and the first lady, with Donald posing in a luxury sports car parked next to his airplane, and a clearly pregnant Melania decked out in a gold bikini and high heels. "I didn't make any of this up," said Leibovitz, referring to the staging of the photograph. "They loved it—of course."

Leibovitz, a longtime Rolling Stone and Vanity Fair photographer, offered the following advice for novice shutterbugs: "I always say to young photographers—stay close to home," she said referring to taking picture of people and places with which you are familiar. While Leibovitz has published photos of her own family, including her three daughters, these days she prefers to focus her lens outside the home.

"I made a conscious effort to live my life with my children and to not put the camera between me and them," she said. "Although I see what could become a photograph of my children every single day. I didn't stop seeing them, but I stopped taking them."

'Big Package Auction' April 21 at Center

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus will present The Big Package Auction '18, hosted by the hilarious musical duo Amy & Freddy, on Saturday, April 21, 5–8 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

There will be comedy, music, gourmet food, cocktails, and silent and live auctions—the latter featuring all-male package models.

Admission is \$95–\$150 each, with tables for \$750; visit <https://www.cgmc.org/2018-events/bpa/>.

Lavender Country performing April 26

The LGBT artist Lavender Country will be performing in Chicago at The Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia Ave., on Thursday, April 26, at 9 p.m.

Lavender Country is a band featuring Patrick Haggerty, a lifelong social-justice activist and a man who many consider to be the first out gay country singer. Haggerty wrote and recorded the Lavender Country album in 1973.

Opening acts will include Andrew Sa and His Organic Sound as well as DJ Latham.

Admission is \$10; visit <https://www.hideoutchicago.com/event/1650904-lavender-country-chicago/>.

P'town hosting women's events

ProvincetownForWomen.com announces the dates for a perennial favorite: Single Women's Weekend. The weekend will be May 18–20.

Combined with ProvincetownForWomen.com's other events (Memorial Day Weekend on May 24–28, Women of Color & Friends Weekend on May 31–June 3, Girl Splash on July 17–21 and Women's Week on Oct. 8–14), these events

Since ending Annie Leibovitz: Portraits 2005–2016 with an image of Hillary Clinton as the first U.S. woman president was no longer an option, Leibovitz selected a photo of Robert Smithson's colossal Spiral Jetty, an official Utah state work of art, as the final bookend to her latest collection of images. The Spiral Jetty, which resembles a question mark, is perhaps a fitting end to the book as it seems to urge the viewer to contemplate what's next.

The inaugural MCA Women's Board Luncheon raised \$305,000 for the board's Learning Studios. MCA organizers anticipate raising \$1 million through annual "Visionary Luncheons" over the next five years, with each year featuring a different keynote speaker.

Annie Leibovitz: Portraits 2005–2016 is the photographer's follow-up to her two landmark books, Annie Leibovitz: Photographs, 1970–1990 and A Photographer's Life, 1990–2005. The new collection, which is 316 pages, is available at the MCA gift shop and local bookstores.

are expected to draw more than 15,000 women.

—Single Women's Weekend offers nearly 20 diverse events, including Speed Dating, dance parties, a wine tasting, and a single's scavenger hunt.

—Memorial Day Weekend has the Mega Pool Party and three huge night parties at the Crown & Anchor, and it's co-produced by ProvincetownForWomen.com and LesbianNightLife.com.

—Girl Splash has unique offerings, such as Girl Splash Idol; a traditional Cape Cod clam-bake on the Beach; one of the few lesbian beaches in the country; an all-lesbian sunset Champagne sail, dune tour and sunset beach fire; and more.

—Women of Color & Friends Weekend includes dance parties, a pool party, a gospel brunch, a tequila-and-wine tasting, and more. See WomenofColorWeekend.com.

—Women's Week will mark its 35th anniversary with more than 150 events, including comedy acts, live musical performances, literary panels, a fun run, golf tournament, art openings, book signings and more. See WomensWeekProvincetown.com.

A full schedule of events is available at ProvincetownForWomen.com/single-womens-weekend/events-schedule.

Julia Sweeney's show to start April 24

The Second City announced that SNL vet Julia Sweeney's one-woman show Julia Sweeney: Older and Wider will move to the theater's e.t.c. stage for a six-week run April 24–May 30.

Sweeney is a writer, actor, comedian, director and monologist who is perhaps most recognized as a Saturday Night Live cast member from 1990 to 1995, during which she created the androgynous character Pat. Sweeney is also known for God Said Ha!, which she staged across the country as well as on Broadway, at the Lyceum Theater.

See SecondCity.com.

GLAAD Media Awards honors Spears, Parsons

The GLAAD Media Awards took place April 12 in Los Angeles, with comedian/actress Wanda Sykes as host.

GLAAD honored Britney Spears, Jim Parsons and outstanding LGBTQ images in film and television at the 29th Annual GLAAD Media Awards at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

Halle Berry, Chloe Grace Moretz, Ryan Murphy, Adam Rippon, Gus Kenworthy, Rachel Bloom, Wilson Cruz, Trace Lysette, Anthony Rapp, Jazz Jennings, Tommy Dorfman, Zeke Smith and Ben Feldman were among the special guests, a press release stated.

Spears received GLAAD's Vanguard Award by

standing Film-Limited Release), Black Panther: World of Wakanda (Outstanding Comic Book) and Transgriot (Outstanding Blog), among others.

Out scribe Roxane Gay was among those who wrote Black Panther: World of Wakanda.

Logo will exclusively air the ceremony on Wed., April 18, at 7 p.m. CT.

Other winners (in areas such as music) will be announced at the GLAAD Media Awards New York on May 5.

The USA Today article is at <https://www.usa-today.com/story/life/entertainthis/2018/04/13/glaad-media-awards-kevin-spacey/513763002/>.



Anthony Rapp (left) and Wilson Cruz at the GLAAD Media Awards.

Photo by Getty Images for GLAAD

surprise presenter Ricky Martin. The Vanguard Award is presented to media professionals who have made a significant difference in promoting equality and acceptance of LGBTQ people.

Writer/producer/director Ryan Murphy presented Parsons with the Stephen F. Kolzak Award, which is presented to an LGBTQ media professional who has made a significant difference in promoting LGBTQ acceptance.

According to USA Today, Sykes joked about politics, movies and being queer. However, she also mentioned actor Kevin Spacey, who has been accused of sexual misconduct—and who chose to come out as gay shortly after the accusations became public.

Spacey was referenced again when Star Trek: Discovery stars and on-screen couple Anthony Rapp (the first person to come forward and accuse Spacey) and Wilson Cruz shared the stage.

Special honorees included Britney Spears and Jim Parsons. Other award winners were NBC series This Is Us (Outstanding Drama Series), Fox show Brooklyn Nine-Nine (Outstanding Drama Series), Disney Channel's Andi Mack (Outstanding Kids & Family Programming), A Fantastic Woman (Out-

'Stars on Ice' on April 29, with Adam Rippon

Out Olympian Adam Rippon will be among the figure skaters featured when the Stars on Ice tour comes to the Allstate Arena on Sunday, April 29, at 4 p.m.

Other skaters on the tour include 2018 Winter Olympian and two-time national champion Nathan Chen; ice-dance gold medalists/Dancing with the Stars competitors Meryl Davis and Charlie White; siblings/Olympians Maia & Alex Shibutani; world silver medalist Ashley Wagner; U.S. champion Mirai Nagasu; U.S. champion Jason Brown; world silver medalists Madison Hubbell & Zachary Donohue; U.S. champion Karen Chen; and U.S. silver medalist Vincent Zhou.

For tickets (which start at \$25 each), visit StarsOnIce.com/get-tickets.html or Ticketmaster.com.

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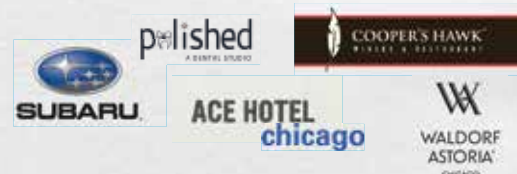
DINING OUT FOR LIFE CHICAGO

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

When you go to dinner or drinks that night, you'll be giving to TPAN. Proceeds from the participating restaurants below will support TPAN's programs serving people living with HIV and related conditions:

Andersonville Brewery	The Gage	Replay Andersonville
Andies Restaurant	Hamburger Mary's	Replay Lakeview
Angelina Ristorante	Heaven on 7	Revival Social Club
Ann Sather	Honey Butter Fried Chicken	Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery
Anteprima	Hopewell Brewing Company	Rocks
Appellation Wine Bar & Restaurant	Hopleaf Bar	The SoFo Tap
The Barn	Howl at the Moon	Svea Restaurant
Big Chicks	Hydrate	Tweet Let's Eat
Byron's Hot Dogs	Kit Kat Lounge	urbanbelly (West Loop)
Cellars Bar & Grill	& Supper Club	urbanbelly (Wicker Park)
Cherry Circle Room	Lady Gregory's	Venici Italian
Chicago Diner Lakeview	Lark	Veranda Restaurant & Coffee
Chicago Diner Logan	Las Mañanitas	Vincent
The Dawson	The Lobby Restaurant at Peninsula Chicago	Virgin Hotel Cerise Rooftop
The Dearborn	Mia Francesca	Virgin Hotel Commons Club
Drew's on Halsted	Moody's Pub	Wakamono
Elixir Lounge (Andersonville)	Nookies Edgewater	Wilde Bar & Restaurant
Elixir Lounge	Octavio Cantina & Kitchen	Wishbone North
Found Kitchen & Social House	Old Irving Brewing Co.	Wood
Francesca's Bryn Mawr	Peckish Pig	Zanzibar Café
	Pingpong	
	Purple Pig	

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Ted Allen talks Dining Out for Life, 'Chopped' and 'Queer Eye'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Ted Allen was originally introduced to the country when he was one of the original quintet in Bravo network's television program *Queer Eye* for the Straight Guy, which ran 2003-07.

After appearing on *Top Chef* as a judge, Allen (who still has ties to the Windy City, years after writing for *Chicago* magazine and living here throughout the 1990s) became—and still is—host of the popular Food Network shows *Chopped* and *Chopped Junior*. He is also one of the spokespeople of the annual event Dining Out for Life (taking place Thursday, April 26), which returns to Chicago after a three-year absence to benefit local HIV/AIDS organizations.

Windy City Times: Do you remember what restaurants you used to go to while you lived in Chicago?

Ted Allen: Yeah, I sure do. Initially, I lived on Belmont and Broadway [in Lake View], right above a bar called Reflections. There was a diner in the same building; first, it was called Ricky's and then it was called Nicky's. It might be a Chipotle now.

Like everyone else, I used to go to Leona's. When I worked for *Chicago* magazine, because of the dining coverage, I got to go to places like Thai restaurant Arun's and Charlie Trotter's a couple times. There was a nice Italian place called Bella Vista; it was by Belmont and Sheffield. I also like all the Rick [Bayless] spots, like Topolobampo—that's been open for 20 years. I remember R.J. Grunt's.

Chicago is the first city that really exposed me to really fine dining, mainly because of the *Chicago* magazine connection. Every job I've had has been necessary for the next job—and that magazine taught me a lot. Having never been a chef, I needed some kind of education for what I do now.

I still have very strong ties to Chicago. I have a group of friends that I'm still pretty tight with. My partner is actually in business with one of those friends, and we own a couple buildings in Andersonville—just little three-flats. That cements our connection to the city permanently. So Chicago is playing a material role in my retirement. *[Both laugh.]*

WCT: And this is your 10th year as spokesperson for Dining Out for Life?

TA: At least. It might be my 11th.

The great thing is that Dining Out for Life, even though it's in [more than 40] cities, had not been in New York City until this year. So they have a few restaurants in New York involved this year, and I will actually get to dine out myself. Back in the day, the way I could do it is if I happened to be in Philly or another city. It raises an extraordinary amount of money in one day.

I'm presenting at the James Beard Awards on



Ted Allen.

Photo by Dave Jackson

May 7 in Chicago. The theme this year is "Rise," as in "rise to the occasion." (An example is Chef Jose Andres going to Puerto Rico after the hurricane, when our federal government couldn't be bothered to do its job in that department.) So, just today, I was writing language and answering questions about how I feel about the culinary world's contribution to the community—and what I wrote was something I've said for years: "Whenever you're trying to raise money for charity, restaurants are the first place you go to, whether they're offering free dinners or free wine." Chefs take it for granted that [charity] is their duty, and it says a lot about the culinary culture.

WCT: Something you just said blew my mind—that this is New York City's first year for Dining Out for Life.

TA: Yeah. I don't know the official reason. Ironically enough, the city of New York—be-

ing ground zero for HIV/AIDS, when the first epidemic struck and when it was white, gay male disease—already had competition for fundraising dollars when [Dining Out for Life started].

WCT: And it was gone from Chicago for three years.

TA: As a matter of fact, when Bella Vista existed, Dining Out for Life was my reason for going there. I was spending more money on dinner than I should've spent, at least 20 years ago.

WCT: Congrats on Chopped, by the way. How many episodes have been filmed—about 500?

TA: It's been about 675, including *Chopped Junior*. We're very likely to make it to 10 years; we're at about nine.

WCT: On the show, do you ever hear food combinations and think, "There's no way they can make something edible out of this?" I saw one episode in which two of the ingredients for an appetizer were stone-crab claws and vanilla cake frosting.

TA: Ah! Well, when it comes to *Chopped*, there's usually a way to utilize all four ingredients; you just have to pick how prominent a role those ingredients play in a dish. Crab does have a natural affinity for vanilla, which makes other things taste sweeter than they really are. The problem is the sugar in the frosting, so you could address the sweetness with lemon juice or champagne.

That's the thing about being the chefs. You can practice, and get a perspective on how short 20 minutes [can be] and how fast you need to move—that way you can figure out how ambitious to be, although you have to temper that with incredible constraints. With those ingredients, you have a problem to solve—and think creatively while having blazing lights in your face.

WCT: If I saw those ingredients, I might have to tap out.

TA: And that's the difference between editors and chefs. *[Interviewer laughs.]* To be a chef, you have to have a healthy ego; it's an interesting mix of creativity and confidence.

I just read that an English chef Heston Blumenthal just discovered that caviar has a remarkably yummy affinity for white chocolate—which sounds like a *Chopped* basket. But if you think

about it, there's that salty-sweet combination.

WCT: I have to ask about the new *Queer Eye*, of course. Was it surreal meeting the new guys?

TA: Well, not only that, but the cutest one, Antoni [Porowski], worked for me for three years.

It's surreal, but it's also validating to see it come back—and the casting was done by the same people who created it in the first place. Anthony told me he wanted to go for it, but he's also cooked for me and my partner, and he's passionate about furniture as well. Back then, the people didn't just hire cute hunks—and they didn't this time, either. They really wanted people who knew what they were doing and who would listen and be sensitive. And you see that. It's a powerful experience who's down on his luck to have five pretty accomplished people come in and help them this way.

It's nice to have happiness and love, as opposed to all that anger and bullshit we get from Washington with that ... occupant of the White House who has no business being there. The new show is well-cast and -produced, but it makes me feel good about that first show that was done so long ago.

WCT: Who are three of your favorite chefs?

TA: Wow ... there are so many. I can at least tell you about some who are significant to me. One is from Chicago, and her name is Sarah Stegner, who I believe has her own restaurant now [Prairie Grass Cafe]; but when I was there, she was the chef at the Ritz-Carlton dining room.

There's also Tom Colicchio, who I used to work with when I was judging *Top Chef* back in the day. I don't like criticism of chefs that's filled with sarcasm; you have to remember that you could make or break people's livelihoods. Criticism should be done in a professional and serious way—and Tom taught me that.

I could rattle off hundreds of other chefs I admire, like Michael Anthony, at Gramercy Tavern; or Rick Bayless, who accomplished something extraordinary in his career by widening people's understanding of Mexican food.

Several dozen restaurants are taking part in this year's Dining Out for Life. See <https://www.diningoutforlife.com/chicago>.

Siskel showing 'Best of Black Harvest'

The Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago announced increased funding for The Best of Black Harvest West with a grant of \$8,000 as part of an overall package of \$18,000 from The Allstate Corporation to support the Black Harvest Film Festival.

This grant specifically supports the expansion of the Black Harvest Film Festival's pre-festival series The Best of Black Harvest to create The Best of Black Harvest Film Festival West, presented in partnership with the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and BBF Family Services.

There are screenings presented monthly through May; showtimes vary from screening to screening.

The actual Black Harvest Film Festival will

take place Aug. 4-30. The call for entries ends June 8.

All screenings are free and open to the public; visit SiskelFilmCenter.org/blackharvest.

Springfield drag show April 28

On Saturday, April 28, the Phoenix Center will present Springfield Pridefest Club LaCage Drag Show at the Hoogland Center for the Arts, Theatre III, 420 S. Sixth St., Springfield.

This event is chaired by Deanna Knight. The show will feature top Springfield drag performers, many who are past and/or present title holders including: Mimi Vancartier, Sara Belle Knight, Mahogany Knight, Vincent Knight, Jacquelyn D. Knight, Calexus Carrington Steele and Karmen Mann.

Admission is \$15-\$35; visit HCFTA.org.

BOOKS

In 'Red As Blue,' Ji Strangeway creates universe of possibilities

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Ji Strangeway describes the 1980s in Denver as the “dark ages,” explaining that she grew up surrounded by evangelical-sponsored billboards filled with messages of hate and intolerance and people who were equally bigoted.

Strangeway said being LGBT and Asian-American only made her childhood and teenage experience harder.

“I was suicidal,” she said, adding that even though her family didn’t ascribe to the religion around them it still infiltrated her self-image. There was no “it gets better” campaign back then and Strangeway said there weren’t any images on television, in books or films that could give her any hope for the future.

“I wish I could say I had a role model but I don’t and I think that’s one of the reasons I felt so fired up about writing this book. I didn’t have any role models and it was very dark and you feel very alienated when you don’t have anyone to represent or make you feel normal, even.”

Even today, Strangeway said she doesn’t see

the LGBT role models that speak to her and her experiences reflected in popular culture. So, Strangeway is using her talents as a filmmaker and writer to create her own.

Strangeway just published “Red As Blue,” which she describes as a hybrid graphic novel that includes elements of a screenplay as well as illustrations.

“It’s a teen love story about two girls struggling with forbidden love in what I consider to be the dark ages of the 1980s,” Strangeway said. “They are just discovering the magic of first love and their true sexual identity in the process.”

Strangeway said the novel is very much a reflection of the time period it is set in and the environment at that time though she said the issues it tackles remain relevant to teenagers today.

The coming-of-age story explores issues of gun culture, teen suicide, social class, and gender and sexual identities.

Strangeway draws on her own experiences to create the universe of the novel, which she said was somewhat cathartic, but she said what has been most cathartic is getting to talk about the



Ji Strangeway.
PR photo

story and knowing its out there for young people to discover.

“Writing about it is a nice creative release in terms of transforming that energy into something beautiful and meaningful, but I think the unexpected thing that came out of it is when it was completed and being able to talk about it,” she said. “The cathartic feeling is even greater, because it’s no longer just about you after that. And that is the best catharsis I can think of, when you have something to offer that may touch other people going through the same thing or just giving them a better understanding of hu-

manity because of it.”

Strangeway said it helped her to create the main character June Lusparian with distinct differences from herself. For instance, rather than making June Asian-American, Strangeway decided to make her Mexican-Armenian.

While the intersectionality of ethnicity and being LGBT is an important aspect of the story Strangeway wanted to tell, she said ultimately she wanted the story to be about being LGBT in an unaccepting and often painful environment.

But she also wanted to give teens today hope. Strangeway has created a world where the outsider and the cheerleader can fall in love, which is a narrative she could never have fathomed back in the 1980s.

Strangeway added that creating an environment of possibility in her story is important, because that is what young people need to see to give them hope.

“Especially when you are young, you are highly influenced by what you see and your very insecure so you want to fit in and you hear all these things and I think it’s very damaging to a person’s individuality and how they feel about themselves.”

While LGBT representation has grown dramatically since the 1980s, Strangeway said there needs to be a much more diverse storytelling.

“We have a long way to go in terms of the arts because we have so many tastes and we need so many more LGBT people doing cool, great stuff in books and film. We need to be out there more.”

The book is available at: <http://redasblue.com/>.

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Ai-jen Poo is Co-Founder and Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, and Co-Director of Caring Across Generations. An award-winning activist, thought leader, social innovator, and a leading voice on domestic workers’ rights and family care advocacy, Ai-jen recently joined Meryl Streep on the red carpet at the Golden Globes to say #TimesUp.



Mónica Ramírez is the co-founder and President of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, the first national farmworker women’s organization in the U.S. Mónica authored an open letter to Hollywood published in *TIME* magazine which sparked the creation of #TimesUp, which has raised more than \$20 million to support lower-income women seeking legal justice.



Andrea Pino is co-founder of End Rape on Campus, and co-author of “We Believe You: Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out.” Andrea was one of the first students to publicly file a Title IX complaint against a university for mishandling her sexual assault report. Her work and personal journey is prominently featured in the Emmy-nominated film, *The Hunting Ground*.



MODERATOR

Laura S. Washington is a *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist and a political analyst for ABC-7 Chicago.

Women2Women launches with party

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Women were heard loud and clear at Women2Women's (W2W) launch party at EvolveHer on April 14.

Women2Women is a place where women can share their evolving journeys as women who love women.

It sets out to help people break down each other's barriers and share all of a person's components including "our desires, our tears, our fears and blocks towards more meaningful relationship and alliances." As the site states, "we believe in the power of understanding, collaboration, and love to spread equality."

Brissa Del Mar is the creative mind who founded W2W and a self-described human connector. She is also the owner and CEO of Breeze Art Creatives,

a creative director and photographer. She started engaging in the LGBTQ community by connecting with different kind of women in the community in 2016.

"My passion for human connection, learning the gap that exists in the LGBTQ community, where there is not a specific place for women to get together, share their journeys, a space that is safe to have raw conversations, share things that we are passionate about to lead a support system, collaborations, to support one another to be the best we can be as we celebrate each other and grow together," said Del Mar of what inspired her to create W2W. "It is an invitation to connect with one another and support our individual and collective goals."

Del Mar said that W2W will have five to seven videos weekly featuring women who have shared



From left: Angela Wang, Brissa Del Mar, Rena McDaniel and Teresa Sandoval.

Photo by Melissa Wasserman

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their journey with her.

"There will be different topics as labels, sexuality, relationships [and] career," she said. "The content, it is very intentional, meaning that it will be engaging in the way the viewers will connect with that woman's journey and maybe it will inspire, empower and motivate them in their life by taking action to go create something they are passionate about, or feel that they are not alone, that there is support out there, or inspire them to share their journeys."

"It's different, it's unique and it's going to take time, but give it an opportunity, give it a chance, give yourself a chance to tell your story and to know that your story matter and you matter," said W2W's Tamara Allen.

W2W will officially launch online on April 19 with an additional social-media presence. Del Mar said W2W will also be hosting more events in the future.

The event was held at the creative workspace EvolveHer, which launched in January. EvolveHer Founder Alicia Driskill said she felt like there were so many great women's groups, but no place for women to come together. Looking to cover everything across the board, closing the gap between business and wellness, Driskill elaborated, saying she wants to support women and the next generation of leaders. The space welcomes a wide-range of members, businesses, groups, and events.

"I'm very excited about it," said Driskill of hosting the W2W launch party at EvolveHer. "I'm an ally and want to support Brissa and Women2Women. I think it's really important for us to come together and to give women a place to be able to talk and make connections and build future relationships, so I hope this night allows people to connect and just feel comfortable and really having great and building relationships that'll stick around for a long time."

The April 14 event kicked off with an opportunity for women to have conversations and

network. Then Chicago singer/songwriter Elisa Latrice performed, which led into an introduction of W2W, including a video teaser. Rena McDaniel, Angela Wang and Teresa Sandoval, who will be featured on W2W and were seen in the video teaser, spoke to the group in attendance. The event also held an engaging speed conversations activity.

"I don't think there's a lot of spaces where queer folks, specifically women, can share vulnerable stories like this," said McDaniel, a gender and sex therapist and owner of Practical Audacity. "I think most of the time and socializing in queer circles, it's very bar-focused, it's very alcohol-focused, which great, fun and good, but there's not often an opportunity to really get down and dirty with where people are coming from and what their journeys have been."

When sharing her own journey on W2W, McDaniel said Del Mar has an ability to get in and ask the hard stuff.

"It was a unique experience and really vulnerable and I'm glad I had the opportunity to do it," McDaniel added.

Sandoval added that it is important to share personal stories. Women and women who love women are a minority, she explained, and being heard is the only way to make progress as well as provide support along the way.

"I think the more women who share their stories and the more views of different journeys that people have, it just only helps our community because it shows that there's no one correct journey," said Sandoval, an event producer at General Assembly. "We all have our different stories and there's so many women who are out there, who maybe have gone through something similar and they can help you and support you. It's just about building those connections."

To learn more about W2W, visit Women2Women.space and [Facebook.com/WEwomen2women/](https://www.facebook.com/WEwomen2women/).



BILLY Masters

"You know, and I will get fired for this, but I'm never going to say that I don't. I will get fired for that. By the way, they're both pretty substantial, I think."—**Donald Trump Jr.** answers **Adam Carolla's** question, "When you and your pops are in the shower, who's got the bigger package?" In the first place, who is in the shower looking at their father's penis? In the second place, ICK!

Last week, the Point Foundation held a gala in NYC. In case you don't know, this organization provides scholarships to members of the LGBTQ community—often after they have been ostracized by their families. This gala not only celebrated Point scholars and alumni, but also recognized leaders in the LGBTQ community. The person who got the most attention was **Ronan Farrow**, who apparently came out. Did I miss something? Hasn't he been out for years? As far as I'm concerned, this was a non-story. But, eh, people who don't read BillyMasters.com probably thought it was news.

The next night, I celebrated **Marilyn Maye's** 90th birthday—and she performed for at least 90 minutes! The capacity crowd at 54 Below included many familiar faces, including **Tyne Daly**, **Christine Ebersole**, **Liz Callaway**, **David Hyde Pierce**, **Bob Mackie**, **Marc Shaiman**, **Scott Wittman** and oodles of others. Auntie Marilyn's entire run sold out moments after it was announced. It was extended, and then the extension sold out. And this was not simply an evening of nostalgia—Maye's singing is better than ever. Powerful, insightful, and touching. You can see some clips from the show on BillyMasters.com. I was glad to be there as Maye kicked up her heels—literally!

My dear friend **Jenifer Lewis** is continuing her tour of the country in order to promote her book, *The Mother of Black Hollywood*. While I was in NYC, she was in Baltimore. And since she was in the neighborhood, she zipped to our nation's capital to catch **Patti LaBelle** in concert. Of course, Patti had to bring Jenifer onstage, who had to be coaxed into joining LaBelle for "Lady Marmalade." You can catch the video on BillyMasters.com.

Then Jenifer and I rendezvoused in Fort Lauderdale, where I joined her at several of her events. In addition to meeting with hundreds of fans who came out to see her, buy books and take photos, she put a day aside to meet with the students from Parkland and Liberty City to discuss what they had been through. More than anything else, Lewis listened as they shared their stories of survival. It was an emotional and cathartic meeting.

The week before, **Gus Kenworthy** was in the area as the honorary grand marshal for South Beach Pride. And he wasn't alone—he was joined by beau Matthew Wilkas. We're told that some of the revelers were a bit "handsie" with the snowboarder, but I don't think he minded. "Stoked to check 'Crowd Surf' off my bucket list, today!" Some of my friends tell me that more than a few hot guys got invitations to some "agreed upon" private meet-and-greets with Gus and Matthew



Ronan Farrow coming out wasn't exactly news, Billy says.

From Farrow's official Facebook account

... and why not?

I'm seriously thinking of organizing a boycott of *Dancing with the Stars*. I really am pissed off. I know I keep harping on it, but **Greg Louganis**—one of the most decorated and awe-inspiring athletes of all time—has been begging to be on the show for years. Crickets. Is it ageism? Homophobia? Who knows. But when this *Dancing with the Stars: Athletes* edition was announced, it seemed a perfect fit. Who is a more accomplished athlete in history than Greg Louganis? But once again, he was not even considered.

Laverne Cox also found her current beau on Tinder. She stated, "I'm a Tinder girl. When I broke up with my ex, I went back on Tinder, because I feel like if you want to date, you have to be on the apps. You have to be on the apps to be in the game." Apparently she met her man nine months ago and has kept him on the down low. But last week, she posted a photo of them together in bed on Instagram, without sharing too many details. Smart girl—and, he's hot!

Rumor has it **Kevin Spacey** could be in legal hot water. The LA District Attorney is reviewing an extensive sex crimes case against Spacey filed by the LA County sheriff. The charges stem from an encounter the actor had with a man in West Hollywood back in October 1992. The investigation began in December, and the case has enough evidence to warrant review by the DA. Stay tuned.

A case with far less merit is the one against **Dustin Lance Black** for shoplifting. My God: He wasn't content being Roman Polanski—he now has to become Bess Myerson! Allegedly, DLB was shopping at Woolworths in Australia—let that little tidbit sink in for a minute. A gay man. An Oscar winner. Shopping in a Woolworths. Now THAT'S a crime! While he was browsing, he was being shadowed by store security. He posted, "OMG! Was just stopped and accused of shoplifting @woolworths in the Gold Coast! Then out of countless folks with bags a search was demanded of mine. Thanks for the warm welcome to #AUSTRALIA @woolworths! Respect customers' privacy much? Shame."

We have time for a teensy weensy "Ask Billy"

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question. Justin in Chicago said, "Is it true that **Tom Daley** had a dick slip while diving? Tell me more—and show me the dick."

Well, it wouldn't be the first time his body has been featured prominently on BillyMasters.com. But it is true. The incident in question happened at the Commonwealth Games in Australia (site of that infamous Woolworths). When Tom hit the water after his dive, his penis slipped out of its pouch. And, yes, of course, we'll post it on our website.

When we're promoting the little things, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Even in this tawdry column, you can walk away with knowledge. For instance, who knew there were still Woolworths? You'll find far more tawdry tidbits on BillyMasters.com—the site that features all creatures, great and small. If you have a question, you can always send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before DLB shows up someplace wearing a hot tiara! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Nude Dude Food; Big Jones' revamp

BY ANDREW DAVIS

What's the first thing to know about the photogenic and very fit guys of **Nude Dude Food**? "We don't cook nude—any more," joked Ryan Van Voorhis, who is part of Nude Dude Food along with Seth Bradley. "We used to take off our pants once in a while, but since we've been getting more media coverage, we want to keep things tasteful. So shirtless with aprons is as far as we go—but guests are welcome to do whatever they like."

The duo originally met when they were 15, although, obviously, they didn't form their successful business until years later. "We've been best friends since driver's ed," Van Voorhis said. "We're from Peoria, and we moved [to Chicago] after undergrad."

Although they didn't initially dive into culinary endeavors once they moved here, they always "had a passion for food and wellness and healthy eating," Van Voorhis said. "Combine those with our health issues [including Van Voorhis' battle with Crohn's disease], and that's what led to



Nude Dude Food's Seth Bradley (left) and Ryan Van Voorhis.

Photo by Josh Kaplan

what we have today. A lot of things just fell into place."

"We had been cooking at home, and have been entertaining family for 10 or 15 years," Bradley added. "That feeling you have when you share with friends and family? We wanted to take that into other people's homes. At the same time, we also take into account people's dietary restrictions, food allergies and health issues."

"Then, we wanted to make things approachable, so we took our shirts off—and things happened very quickly," said Van Voorhis. "We wanted to be a picture of health, but we also wanted to add some sexiness."

Things have been so successful, actually, that the two were able to devote their energies to the business full-time in 2016. But there's more to their success than showing muscles.

"If you look at our webpage, you see that we

take pride in how the food looks," Van Voorhis added. "We use locally sourced ingredients—and we try to make those ingredients shine," Bradley said. "The most important ideal we try to get across is to cook and eat honest food. Treat yourself better."

And there are additional benefits for guests. For example, according to Van Voorhis, for bachelorette brunches, "women may feel more empowered that men are cooking for them. Also,



Big Jones' fried chicken.

PR photo

we love to teach techniques, ingredients and other things about cooking to guests." (Nude Dude Food also conducts a range of events, including house dinners, corporate events and "The Naked Happy Hour.")

But it's not just about eating—especially for these guys, who also make physical vitality part

of their marketing. "We've always worked out, but we've had to heighten [exercising] now," said Van Voorhis. "We're in the gym often now—not just for exercise, but because it's a stress reliever. We have to practice what we preach." Bradley, avid climber, added, "It's motivating to set these fitness goals. The older I get, I discover that flexibility and mobility are more important, as opposed to strength training."

By the way, this may just be the beginning of Nude Dude Food, as it garners exposure (ahem) across the country. "We are expanding," Van Voorhis revealed. "We're looking to hire some more dudes as summer nears and as we travel." They also are looking to start other branches. "We're figuring out how to expand on a nationwide basis," Bradley added.

See NudeDudeFood.com.

Big Jones' big changes

Southern restaurant Big Jones (5347 N. Clark St.; <https://bigjoneschicago.com/>), in the heart of Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood, has undergone some serious changes.

The spot recently went through some comprehensive kitchen renovations and dining-room enhancements, and now has an open-kitchen concept. In addition to these physical changes, Executive Chef Paul Fehribach has changed the menu, exploring the roots of Southern cuisine in additional regions like Africa and the Caribbean. A recent media event highlighted dishes including pork-shoulder bark, flamin' hot cheese straws, vanishing bread (which disappeared very quickly), black-eyed pea beignets, gullah oyster rice, crawfish pie and rabbit roulade—but don't worry: The fried chicken (amnog the best in Chicago) is still there.



TOUCHE

Trident's annual Cupcake Wars, Sun., April 15.
Photos by Daddy G

WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., April 18

Poetry Reading: From the Inside Quietly

Eloisa Amezcua with special guests Jose Olivarez and Xandria Phillips 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

LGBT Chamber of Commerce Yelp 101

Free workshop on Yelp for Business Owners 10:00pm - 11:30pm Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce 3179 N Clark Chicago <http://business.lgbtcc.com>

Thursday, April 19

Bon Foster 45 years of fighting for justice. Honoring Patricia M. Logue, founder and former managing director Lambda Legal Midwest Regional office and associate judge, circuit court of Cook County. Remarks by Rachel B. Tiven, Lambda Legal CEO. Open bar by Sidetrack, food by Jewel. \$150 6:00pm - 10:00pm Morgan Manufacturing, 401 N. Morgan St., Chicago, IL 312-663-4413 <http://lambdalegal.org/bonfoster>

Managing Multiple Relationships, Including the One with Yourself Producer and Curator, Emily Dahlquist in discussion with Zoe Ligon of Spectrum Bou-

LOOK OF DAVID
Monday, April 23

David Sedaris will present a reading at Evanston's Nichols Concert Hall.
PR photo

tique and Coriama Couture of Sex KiKi and Queer the Air on the power of pleasure, dating beyond the binary, and managing multiple relationships including the one with yourself. Part of a series, Free. RSVP online 7:00pm - 10:00pm Soho House Chicago, 113 N. Green St, Chicago <http://www.couplegoals.club/>

Friday, April 20

BTQ Book Group 3rd Fridays 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

Interactive Reading: Performing Revolutionary Nicole Garneau will present an interactive evening of performative engagement with her new book, *Performing Revolutionary: Art, Action, Activism*. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Saturday, April 21

Andersonville Flower & Garden Show With more than 30 participating businesses, the neighborhood will be bustling with spring merchandise, floral displays, fresh plants and flowers for sale for Earth Day. 10:00am Andersonville <http://andersonville.org>

Center on Halsted's Human First Gala 5:30 pm Cocktails and Reception. 7:00 pm Awards, dinner and dancing. Black tie optional. Free parking on site. 7:00pm The Geraghty, 2520 S. Hoyne <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/HF?erid=7551555&trid=45584e94-377e-4b5a-b12d-0960d289ae63>

Gerber/Hart Library Exhibit Opening: Gay is Good - Homophile Activism before Stonewall Opening remarks by LG-BTQ historian John D'Emilio, a brief discussion by exhibit curators, and wine and desserts. Silent auction, benefiting the

Library. Exhibit will detail the the 1920s through Stonewall homophile movement. Through September. \$10. 7:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago 773-381-8030 <http://www.gerberhart.org/> Tickets: <http://form.jotform.com/80803752322148>

Sunday, April 22

Sober Horizons Group of Alcoholics Anonymous All persons with a desire to stop drinking are welcome. 9:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St. <http://www.chicagoaa.org/about-caso>

Monday, April 23

Authors Barrie Jean Borich and Jeremy Mulderig Reading from and discuss their latest books, *Apocalypse, Darling* and *The Lost Autobiography of Samuel Steward*. 6:00pm Seminary, 5751 S. Woodlawn Ave., Hyde Park <http://www.semcoop.com/event/book-launch-jeremy-mulderig-and-barrie-jean-borich>

An Evening with David Sedaris Bookends & Beginnings Books of Evanston sponsors the humor writer reading from new, unpublished diary entries, talking about what he's reading right now and signing books. \$68 plus fees. 7:30pm Nichols Concert Hall 1490 Chicago Ave Evanston, IL 60201 <http://www.ticketmaster.com/event/21005457FC8C0D55?did=read>

Tuesday, April 24

Reading and Book Signing: The Female Persuasion Meg Wolitzer 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Wed., April 25

League of Women Voters of Chicago discussion A Tale of Two Cities: Bridging Chicago's Opportunity Divide What we can do to make one Chicago. Annual luncheon and panelist discussion moderated by WBEZ reporter and author Natalie Moore. league@lwcchicago.org 11:00am - 1:30pm Union League Club of Chicago 65 W Jackson Blvd., Chicago

LGBTQI+ Cancer Support LGBTQI+ Cancer Support is a drop-in group for LGBTQI+ folk who have been impacted by cancer, including those who are living with cancer, family members, and friends. These drop-in nights occur on the fourth Wednesday of the month. 6:00pm - 7:00pm Howard Brown Health Sheridan, 4025 N. Sheridan, Chicago <http://howardbrown.org/event/lgbtqi-cancer-support/2018-03-28/>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A GUY NAMED KYLE WHO OPENED A GAY BED & BREAKFAST IN THE PICTURESQUE HARBOR TOWN OF NORTHPORT...

HOLD ON. A "GAY" BED & BREAKFAST? DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE NOT WELCOME THERE?

I THINK WE NEED TO REPORT THIS TO FOX NEWS IMMEDIATELY... AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HYPOCRITICAL LIBERAL STALINISM.

RELAX, FOLKS... EVERYONE'S WELCOME HERE. I JUST HAPPENED TO MARKET MY B&B TO THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT STAND OUT FROM THE OTHER LOCAL B&Bs.

IF YOU ASK ME, HE DID IT SO HE COULD FIND A BOYFRIEND.

IN FACT, A NUMBER OF FOLKS WHO WERE SHORT-TERM GUESTS HAVE TAKEN UP LONG-TERM RESIDENCIES AT THE B&B...

...LIKE CHICAGO-BORN BUSINESSMAN LANCE...

PARTIALLY-CLOSETED MINOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER BRAD...

AIN'T EXACTLY THE SHARPEST TOOL, EITHER.

YOU'LL MEET THEM ALL IN THE WEEKS AHEAD... AND SOME OTHER RESIDENTS, TOO...

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PrideFest Milwaukee headliners announced

PrideFest Milwaukee will welcome the B-52s, Jussie Smollett, and Daya to the Miller Lite Main stage this June 8-10 on the Summerfest Grounds.

Also, PrideFest enters its 31st official celebratory year and 22nd year at the Summerfest Grounds by launching a kickoff party June 7.

PrideFest Milwaukee 2018 is held at Henry W. Maier Festival Park. Additional guests and entertainment schedules will be announced soon at pridefest.com.

Driehaus appoints new executive director

Chicago's Richard H. Driehaus Museum has announced the selection of its new executive director, Richard P. Townsend.

The appointment came after an extensive national search by the museum's board of trustees. Townsend, who will be responsible for the leadership and overall vision of the museum, will take over Monday, April 2.

Townsend's most recent directorship was at New York City's Museum of Biblical Art.

The Driehaus Museum will celebrate its 10th year this June. Recent exhibitions have featured Downton Abbey items, French posters of the Belle Epoque and masterpieces by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The current exhibition, "The Art of Seating: 200 Years of American Design," features chairs created between 1810 and 2010.

See DriehausMuseum.org.

'Waa-Mu Show' May 4-13 at NU

The 87th annual Waa-Mu Show—Northwestern University's student-written and -orchestrated musical presented in collaboration with the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts at Northwestern University—will take place May 4-13 at Cahn Auditorium 600 Emerson St., Evanston.

Undergraduate student co-chairs Maxwell Beer, Sarah Ohlson, Andrew Restieri and Kaja Burke-Williams—all Northwestern seniors—lead the 2018 production, under artistic director David H. Bell.

Patrons can reserve the seats for the production Manhattan Miracle, a fictionalized account of the origins of the American musical.

Online sales for Manhattan Miracle have begun, and phone orders begin Jan. 2, 2018. See <https://wirtz.northwestern.edu/waamu> or call 847-491-7282.

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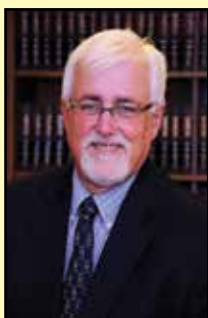


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