

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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Left to right: Tammy Baldwin (official head shot); Chelsea Manning (campaign photo); Congressman Kyrsten Sinema (official head shot).



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QUEER AND PRESENT

Queer Visibility creators Kiefer Otto (left) and Odea.
Photo courtesy of Odea

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APRIL 8 - MAY 20

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- L.A. TIMES



by Bekah Brunstetter

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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.

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Above: WCT reviews The Explorers Club (on page 14).
Photo by North Shore Camera Club

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



POWER MOVE

U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky's power lunch focused on women politicians.
Photo of Schakowsky by Erica Demarest

THE ZENG'S THE THING



Singer/teacher Jonathan Zeng talks songwriting, Chicago—and his favorite snack—in an online version of In the Life.
PR photo

DUE NORTH

Bill Malcolm's latest value-travel column takes a look at Wisconsin.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Andre Leon Talley, Troye Sivan and Jamie Lee Curtis.

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Looking at LGBT Senate hopefuls

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

An historic number of openly LGBT people are running for the U.S. Senate this year: five. Two of those candidates are running in elections that are seen as the most competitive this year: Arizona and Wisconsin. And that competition is both good and troubling for LGBT candidates.

It's troubling news for the best known of the four candidates: incumbent U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin. She is facing fierce opposition spending from billionaire conservatives who apparently see an opportunity in the fact that Republican President Donald Trump won Wisconsin in 2016. The state had voted for the Democratic presidential candidate for the seven previous presidential contests, and the Senate seat Baldwin holds has been held by a Democrat since 1957.

But a competitive race is good news for a second LGBT U.S. Senate candidate: U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema. She's a Democrat from Arizona who is hoping to win over a predominantly Republican state for an historically Republican seat. Arizona has voted for a Republican presidential candidate in nine out of the last ten elections. And the last time a Democrat won a U.S. Senate seat from Arizona was 1988. Sinema was polling ahead of the Republican incumbent Jeff Flake even before he announced he would not run for re-election.

Two of the other LGBT U.S. Senate candidates this year are running for the same seat—a U.S. Senate seat for Delaware that a pro-LGBT Democrat, Tom Carper, currently holds. Carper's challenger for the Democratic nomination, Kerri Harris, is a lesbian military veteran and longtime community activist for people with low incomes. Carper's aspiring Republican primary opponent is a gay businessman and former executive at PayPal, Gene Truono.

The fifth LGBT U.S. Senate candidate, who announced her bid in January, is Chelsea Manning, best known for being convicted of leaking classified government documents to WikiLeaks. Manning seeks to win the Democratic nomination from incumbent Democratic Sen. Benjamin Cardin.

Republicans currently hold the majority of seats in the U.S. Senate, with 51. Democrats, and independents who caucus with Democrats hold 49. For Democrats to take over the Senate, they need a net gain of two seats.

The promising newcomer

Sinema could have the best chance of capturing one new seat for Democrats. A moderate Democrat from Arizona, she was a longtime member of the state legislature who developed some popularity even before winning her first term in the U.S. House six years ago. She has a pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps life story. For three years during her childhood, she and her family lived in an abandoned gas station. But she worked hard, was valedictorian of her high school, earned both a doctorate in social work and a law degree, served in the state house and

senate, and, in 2013, became the first openly bisexual candidate to be elected to Congress.

Sinema's political popularity is probably due in large part to her willingness to ignore party lines on issues critical to her constituents. The political analysis group fivethirtyeight.com says Sinema has voted "in line with" President Trump's position 57.4 percent of the time; that compares with Baldwin's 22.1 percent.

Several other election analysis sites (the Cook Political Report, CNN, Real Clear Politics and others) say Arizona—which currently has two Republican U.S. senators (Flake and ailing Senator



Left: Lesbian Democratic Senate candidate Terri Harris. Right: Gay Republican Senate candidate Gene Truono.

Photos from campaign websites

John McCain)—is now a toss-up. That's good for Sinema. But recent ABC polling shows an even rosier picture: Sinema beating any of the three Republicans seeking the GOP nomination.

While the other three fight it out until the August 28 primary, Sinema has a growing and healthy campaign coffer and can rise above it all. She's raised \$6 million—more than twice the money raised by all three of the Republican candidates combined. But when the final stretch begins in September and the Arizona seat is on the line, Republicans and conservatives are likely to pour money into stopping Sinema.

The tough incumbent

Republicans and conservatives are already pouring money into an effort to defeat incumbent Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin in Wisconsin.

The chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic

Party says conservative Republicans are "coming after Tammy Baldwin like no other" U.S. senate candidate in this year's elections. The Milwaukee Sentinel Journal says she's facing a "tough re-election," in large part because a "political network financed by billionaire industrialists Charles and David Koch has spent more than \$5 million" to oppose her re-election. (Federal Elections Commission records through March 31 put the number at \$3 million.) CNN and Politico say Baldwin's seat is one of the 10 U.S. Senate seats most vulnerable to switching parties in November.

For almost a year, there has been big money



that Baldwin's "favorability" rating has dropped from 40 percent to 37 percent since last year.

As of April 4, the Americas PAC, a conservative political action committee based in Iowa, has spent \$3,325,05 against Baldwin's re-election and for one of her Republican opponents, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, one of Baldwin's key Republican opponents is businessman Kevin Nicholson.

In February, several news organizations reported that Nicholson's parents and brother had contributed the maximum allowable to Baldwin's re-election. But his sister has been posting crude Twitter messages against Baldwin and others.

"Maybe you should stick to opioids, scandals and lesbians," wrote sister Rebecca Steve, a resident of Texas. Nicholson reportedly asked his sister to stop the Twitter posts on his behalf.

Despite the pummeling Baldwin has been taking, the Cook Political Report says the seat is "likely" to remain Democrat. Baldwin has raised \$13 million in contributions and has benefited from another \$1 million in outside spending for her. She also stands to benefit from having two Republican candidates go through a harsh primary battle to win the GOP nomination. And Baldwin has the incumbent advantage. The question is Wisconsin: Is it moving into the red column or was the state's 2016 vote for Trump an anomaly?

The longshots

Two LGBT candidates are vying to carry their party's mantle into the November election for U.S. Senate in Delaware: Republican Gene Truono and Democrat Kerri Harris. It will be a long, uphill battle for both.

Incumbent Democrat U.S. Sen. Tom Carper has \$1.2 million in his coffers and, for the past two sessions of Congress, he's had a 100 percent pro-LGBT record, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

His Democratic primary opponent, Kerri Harris, has an impressive record of service to her country and community but has raised only \$23,000. She served in the Air Force, volunteered with numerous community service groups, including Habitat for Humanity, is a working mom, and co-founded a civil rights group.

Truono has raised only \$57,000 and loaned himself \$75,000. His original primary opponent had raised three times that amount but developed health issues and withdrew from the race. But that opponent has now thrown his support to a new Republican challenger, leaving Truono struggling.

Chelsea Manning's bid to win the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate seat from Maryland is also an uphill struggle, though she has raised more than \$70,000 since January when she announced her campaign. But her opponent for the Democratic nomination is incumbent Ben Cardin, who has raised \$3.6 million. He also has scored a perfect 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign's Congressional Scorecard concerning LGBT-related votes. Fivethirtyeight.com, a statistical site that focuses on elections and is led by openly gay analyst Nate Silver, says Cardin's likelihood of being re-elected is 95 percent.

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William Lloyd Barber (left) and widower Richard Brown.

PASSAGES

William Lloyd Barber

William Lloyd Barber—an educator and native of Raleigh, North Carolina, who was formerly of Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood—passed away April 20. He was 74.

After graduating from East Carolina University, Lloyd served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War.

During 1968-81, he was vice president of an education publishing company and was selected by the Department of Defense military dependent schools in Japan, Korea and Hawaii to develop an institute and K-3 curriculum in reading and mathematics. From 1983 to 2005, he was an elementary teacher in Evanston's District 65. During this time, he taught kindergarten (the first male to be hired north of Chicago in this capacity) and grades one, three, four and five.

In 1995, he was awarded a fellowship from the American Antiquarian Society to develop a presentation on the treatment of ethnic groups in early American children's literature, which was presented locally and nationally to various educational groups. In 1999, he received the prestigious Kohl Award for early childhood teaching.

After his retirement, he became an active participant of the Kohl Academy of Outstanding Teachers and the Art Institute of Chicago, serving on the diversity committee.

He was the beloved partner of 38 years and spouse of seven to Richard Brown (retired academic vice president, Newberry Library) brother of Leon and Edward Barber, and son of the late Worth Henry Barber and Irma Clara Barber (nee Moras).

Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois, 773-281-5058 or www.cremation-society.com

Corrections

In the April 25 issue, it should have stated that the playwright for Doppelganger is Matthew-Lee Erlbach; also, the production is running at Steppenwolf.

Also, Rachel Pepper wrote the article about Nina Packenbush that ran in the April 18 issue.

Windy City Times sincerely regrets the errors.

Report: Young LGBTQs twice as likely to be homeless as non-LGBTQs

Chapin Hall has conducted research that show that LGBTQ young adults are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness as their non-LGBTQ counterparts. The results have been compiled into a report entitled "Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America."

"Our study reveals the vulnerability of LGBTQ youth in our country today. They are at higher risk both before and during their experiences of homelessness," said Bryan Samuels, executive director of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago,

in a press release. "Given the evidence that our young people are in harm's way, we have an obligation to act to protect them. Fortunately, our findings point to solutions, too."

Among the findings are that:

—LGBTQ youth are among the most at-risk sub populations for homelessness. Young adults (18-25) who identify as LGBTQ experienced homelessness at more than twice the rate of their non-LGBTQ peers. Black LGBTQ youth, especially young men, had the highest rates of homelessness.

—Youth made decisions about seeking services based on the reputation of the agency providing the services. Safe and affirming systems and services are important to LGBTQ youth.

—Among youth experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ youth had twice the rate of early death as other youth. LGBTQ youth also experienced higher levels of adversity, including higher rates of assault and of exchanging sex for basic needs.

Suggested solutions in the report include training across the provider community; engaging LGBTQ youth as full partners in strengthening systems and services; adding/revising guidance in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Block Grant; and evaluating the most promising programs and interventions to determine their effectiveness for LGBTQ youth.

"Missed Opportunities" is at VoicesOfYouthCount.org/brief/LGBTQ-youth-homelessness/.

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LGBTQ moments happen at WE Day

BY LIZ BAUDLER

WE Day is the world's largest youth-empowerment event, and Chicago's version (on April 25 at the Allstate Arena) featured a local youth star and an adult LGBTQ icon.

In a short speech, Ava Santos-Volpe, the young activist behind Ava's Change4Youth, talked about both her inspirations for becoming an activist and why she wanted to help homeless youth.

"I live with two moms," said Santos-Volpe as she began. "If I hadn't grown up seeing my moms fight for their rights, I might not have learned to appreciate other people's perspectives."

Santos-Volpe remembered inviting Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim to speak at her school in fifth grade, and hearing about how many LGBTQ youth were homeless.

"My heart sank," she said, thinking that she couldn't imagine her parents not being accepted for who they were. She explained how Ava's Change4Youth uses old parking meters that artists redesign to collect funds to support these youth, and that a Youth Advisory board helps decide where those funds should go. She recalled "sleeping outside in the middle of a blizzard to learn what it was like to be homeless" and felt far more able to empathize with homeless youth than she ever had before afterwards.

In her speech, Santos-Volpe also recalled being afraid to give a big presentation two years ago. "Since then, I've decided that speaking up and raising awareness is something that I have to do," she said, adding that since then, she's

been a youth ambassador for the Women's March. "If you have the platform to speak out for those who can't, don't waste it," she said. "Ask yourself this: What's stopping you from being that voice today."

Chatting with Windy City Times earlier in the day, Santos-Volpe admitted to being nervous beforehand. "This is a lot bigger than the other things I've done," she said.

She was glad that other people at WE Day were talking about LGBTQ issues. "It's a really important issue and I think it's becoming more accepted, and that's amazing," she said. "It's making things more easy on me and my family."

Former NFL player Esera Tuaolo—who came out after his playing days and started an anti-bullying organization, Hate is Wrong—also addressed the WE Day crowd with his story.

"Hiding my sexuality was something that was engrained in me since I was a little kid," Tuaolo said, also explaining how his Polynesian culture had played a role in how he was treated. "Being a warrior was really the thing for a young man in my culture."

He recalled feeling like he had to be "bigger, stronger and faster" so no one would tease him or call him gay. This led him to football, which he said made people assume that he was straight.

"Every morning in college I would wake up, walk into that locker room, put on my pads and my helmet, and transform myself into something I wasn't—a stereotype of a straight man," he said.

The most difficult thing, Tuaolo said, was not



Ava Santos-Volpe and Esera Tuaolo at WE Day. Photos by Liz Baudler

being able to share anything with the people he loved. Even going to the Super Bowl, he felt, was completely tainted.

"My teammates were celebrating with their wives and their kids while I was living in the shadows," he said.

Reading a book by another gay former NFL player helped Tuaolo come out, and he now enjoys cooking, running his nonprofit and recently competing on The Voice. "It doesn't matter who you are, we all feel uncomfortable in our own skin sometimes," he said. "Times are changing, and times will continue to change. Find your voice, be who you want to be, and don't let anyone tell you any different."

In response, the young crowd roared.

Ex-Houston mayor at El Pride Brunch

As part of LGBTQ Pride Month, Equality Illinois will host a Pride Brunch on Sunday, June 3, with an appearance by Annise Parker, the former mayor of Houston and the first out mayor of a major U.S. city.

The brunch will take place at Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St., 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

As the keynote speaker at the 2018 Pride Brunch, Mayor Parker will discuss her role as President & CEO of Victory Fund.

Tickets are \$35 each; visit <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/pridebrunch/>.

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From left: Antonio Gutierrez, Egle Malinauskaite, Michael Jarecki at Tania Unzueta at event. Photo by Bronson Pettitt

'Undocumented and Queer' features young activists

BY BRONSON PETTITT

As if on cue, just as undocumented queer youth and activists in Chicago were wrapping up an event in the Chicago History Museum on April 24, a federal judge ruled that protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients were to remain in place.

The decision marked a major blow to the Trump administration's efforts to rescind the DACA program, and means the federal government must accept, for the first time since the rescission was announced in September, new applications from DACA-eligible youth.

The news hadn't yet broke during the "Undocumented and Queer" event, where young adults shared their stories of how they were brought to the United States as children and later came out as LGBTQ and undocumented.

Among them was Antonio Gutierrez, an immigrant-rights activist and organizer who was brought to Chicago at 11 from Guadalajara, Mexico, to be with his father.

The day after he, his sister and mother arrived in 2000, his father sat them down "to talk about what it meant to be illegal," Gutierrez said. "He presented it as something we should be very afraid about and the consequences of telling others about our status."

That conversation stuck with him through the years, but it wasn't until a meeting with his high school counselor to discuss college that he disclosed his status for the first time to anyone outside his family.

"Until that point, my undocumented status was always something personal to me, as much as my queerness," Gutierrez said.

His counselor's only advice was to ask if he'd contemplated returning to Mexico for college. But the next day, she pulled him out of class after discovering he was to be the valedictorian that year.

"I know that was not the same support that many counselors were giving to undocumented students applying to college" at the time, Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez would go on to earn an architecture degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology and later take a job at an architecture firm. But due to a payroll change, his employer discovered his status, and "regardless of how much she wanted to keep me in the firm, she couldn't."

To complicate matters, Gutierrez was ineligible for DACA because of a DUI in 2010—two years before DACA took effect in 2012.

"I felt very defeated," he said. "But that's when I decided enough waiting for others and politicians to make decisions about how I wanted to live my life."

So he joined the Immigrant Youth Justice League and organized marches, fundraising events and rallies.

Like Gutierrez, Egle Malinauskaite was brought to the U.S. as a child. While her parents had business visas, she and her brother came from Lithuania, undocumented.

Turn to page 9



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COMPASS

Safe Schools Alliance makes noise with variety-show fundraiser

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Breaking the silence with loud celebration, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance presented “Night of Noise: Celebrating the Past; Looking Toward the Future” at Uptown Underground on April 29.

“We’re excited that this is the second year we’ve had our Night of Noise extravaganza,” said Mary Morten, board chair for the Alliance and president of Morten Group. “It’s really a way to come together with lots of different folks who want to support the Alliance and do an incredible variety show.”

In its second year, Morten said, almost all of the performers in this year’s show returned from last year’s show. Performances showed different talents, from tap to spoken word to comedy skits to singing and poetry.

“I think what’s most exciting for me, around Night of Noise, is that it really emphasizes the celebratory nature of embracing and celebrating our identities, whereas the Day of Silence is more about focusing voices that either don’t feel safe or supported in their respected communities or really lifting up and honoring the voices that

have been silenced as a result of discrimination,” said Alliance Youth Engagement Manager Nat Duran.

The light-hearted night of entertainment and fundraising brought in about 125 people and was appropriate for all ages. The celebratory variety show consisted of performances from Reggio McLaughlin + the Tap Crew (and McLaughlin as a solo act), August, Bea Cordelia, GayCo, Jace Smith, Richard Streetman, the Goodman Youth Poetry Ensemble and members of the Alliance’s Youth Committee.

“Really, people across all kinds of identities have come together to support the Alliance,” said Morten.

A raffle was also held with a variety of prize packages that contained things such as tickets to theater and ballet performances, gift certificates, dinners, and other prizes from many donors. Providing more information and sharing personal experience, the Alliance’s Youth Committee shared a few words, along with a past Alliance Action Camp participant.

“I think it is most exciting for me when I’m attending these fundraising events to know the



Reggio McLaughlin + The Tap Crew.
Photos by Melissa Wasserman

direct impact of those fundraising efforts,” Duran said, adding that applications for Action Camp, a five-day sleepaway camp for LGBTQ youth leaders and allies from across the state held in August, have been coming in. “It takes an incredible amount of work, but it’s also a pretty magical experience for both the young folks and the adults who help cultivate that space.”

The event’s sponsors included Navigant, Grant Ellis Miller, Morten Group, Casey and James Hor-

ton, Early to Bed, Jackie and Daniel Frett and Joshua Schwartz.

“We build relationships,” said Duran. “Whether it’s with performers, whether it’s with people attending these events, whether it’s with the young folks who go through our programming and then wanting to be engaged with the Alliance—to me, that is a testament to that.”

For more information on the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, visit ILSafeschools.org.

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Ian Merrill Peakes & Chean Cross, photos by Jeff Scortino



Left to right: Richard Streetman, Bea Cordelia, Jace Smith.



Left: Goodman Youth Poetry Ensemble. Right: IL Safe Schools Alliance staff and AmeriCorps VISTAs.

Inaugural LGBTQIA roundtable June 14

The Illinois Diversity Council is partnering with the LGBT Chamber of Commerce to host its first-ever LGBTQIA roundtable aimed at creating awareness and advocacy for workplace equality.

The event, "Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging: Advocating for LGBTQIA Equality in the Workplace," will take place Thursday, June 14, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., at the chamber, 3179 N. Clark St. This forum connects the LGBTQIA community, D&I allies, corporate and business resource group leaders to collaborate on strategies that strengthen workplace cultures.

See IllinoisDiversityCouncil.org.

Non-binary support group to meet May 23

Two nonbinary community members are facilitating a support group for adults who identify as nonbinary and is interested in attending a two-hour meeting every Wednesday for 10 weeks beginning May 23.

The group will be held Wednesdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. at 1147 S. Wabash Ave. Facilitators are asking for a \$10 suggested donation to pay for snacks.

The group is for nonbinary folks who want to engage in a group dynamic for sharing their gen-

der experiences, discuss successes and difficulties, and share resources with other nonbinary folks. During the first meeting, group members will decide what topics are valuable to their current life circumstances.

This is the second nonbinary group that Mare Fanslow (they/them) and Jes Scheinpflug (they/them) will co-facilitate. The first group ran for eight weeks from January to March in Uptown.

For more information and to access a related application, visit www.jessss.com/nb-support.

Cosby guilty of assaulting lesbian

In Pennsylvania, a jury found Bill Cosby, 80, guilty of three counts of drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, an out lesbian, in 1994.

At the time, Constand was a Temple University employee he had mentored.

The prosecution painted Cosby as a deceiver while the defense attempted to portray him as the deceived.

Five other women (including former supermodel Janice Dickinson) told jurors they believed Cosby did the same things to them throughout the 1980s.

Cosby is facing civil actions from several accusers, many of whom are suing him for defamation.

He faces up to 10 years in prison on each count, but would probably serve them concurrently.

UNDOCUMENTED from page 7

Years later, Malinauskaite came out as undocumented during a high school poetry reading, inspired by Coming Out of the Shadows Day, an event when undocumented youth came out in public.

"The purpose of the poem was for me to say how much the term 'illegal alien' was like this dark cloud over my head. And people finally understood, 'wow, this person came out as undocumented,'" she said.

With her eyes set on medical school, she was ineligible for financial aid due to her immigration status and took a year off from school. But shortly after that, DACA took effect, she qualified, enrolled in school and graduated with a biomedical engineering degree.

Since then, she's worked to create scholarships for students ineligible for financial aid. These local efforts and organizing are paying off, activists said.

"A lot of us are used to thinking about [immigration] as a federal issue," said political strategist and organizer Tania Unzueta. "Actually, the reality is that our cities, states, schools and a lot of the organizations we work with have the power to change their own policies to be more welcoming and protect undocumented immigrants."

Local actions include activists' work to expose the harm of Chicago's Gang Database, which wrongfully includes immigrants and people of color alleged to be in gangs.

After the 2016 election, Gutierrez and other activists created efforts such as the Albany Park Defense Network to protect immigrants from ICE raids and hold officials accountable.

"When neighbors are aware of each other, we can really thrive together as a community, we can defend our own," Gutierrez said.

At a time when immigration "has been like a roller-coaster," immigration lawyer Michael Jarecki called on others to get involved by volunteering to work with and donating to immigrant-rights groups, providing translation and interpreting services and offering shelter for immigrants weaving their way through the courts.

And, of course, for the LGBTQ community to support DACA recipients.

"The whole reason DACA exists is because LGBTQ individuals, or at least the model as it was mentioned, was shaped off of coming out of the closet for LGBTQ individuals," Jarecki said.



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Hundreds attend 'ChiQ' fundraiser

BY VERNON HESTER

Howard Brown Health presented ChiQ, a benefit aimed at raising funds for healthcare and wellness in the LGBTQ community, April 28 at the South Shore Cultural Center.

The event, which has evolved from the original '90s and early 2000s Lesbian Community Cancer (later Care) Project Coming Out Against Cancer events, then into the Garden of Eve, featured two DJs, a burlesque troupe, a raffle, a silent auction, an open bar and a buffet. The sold-out affair, with more than 350 people, also served as a new chapter in LGBTQ history with many members of LCCP, the original organization behind what is now ChiQ, attending; LCCP merged with Howard Brown Health in 2007.

In a story in Windy City Times about the last Coming Out Against Cancer in 2006, then-LCCP Executive Director Jessica Halem said, "The annual benefit serves two primary goals. First, it is a fabulous way for women and men to enjoy the company of thousands of LCCP supporters. Second and most important, the money raised helps provide critical services and programs for women."

The focus of ChiQ has remained consistent as funding from the event will enable Howard Brown Health to continue to provide gynecological care, alternative insemination, breast and cervical cancer screenings, HIV and STI screenings, and prevention and wellness education for all women.

The festivities began with a performance by burlesque troupe Jazzy's Juke Joint, which delighted the crowd with several striptease performances while DJs Sandra Suave and All the Way Kay provided a wall-to-wall soundtrack of old and new dance tracks. Howard Brown Health Chief Operating Officer Kristin Baker and Director of Geriatric Education Cecilia Hardacker greeted the crowd and then introduced married couple Melody Gaal and Jennifer Jacobsen, who spoke about how they were greatly assisted in starting a family with the services at the health center. Jacobsen proudly displayed her baby bump as members of the audience cheered the couple on.

With so many former supporters and members of the original LCCP in attendance, despite the dancing and frivolity there was a lot of remembrance from the difficult and dark days of the '80s and '90s. Maureen Sweeney and Corinne Kawecki spoke about being among those who helped launch and run the agency, which was founded in 1990.

"It was a completely volunteer organization," Sweeney said. "In the beginning we had the hotline in our home and we would do direct care. There were about 20 of us and we worked with a lot of AIDS patients at [Gay] Horizons. When there were so many people diagnosed with cancer we waited for a response from Horizons but when it didn't come we had to do something."

"That first time we had a benefit, Coming Out Against Cancer, was at a place that isn't around anymore. ... It was at 1800 North Clybourn," Kawecki said. "We were so surprised, we had so many people there and we took in about \$30,000. With that money we were able to set a budget and do more advocacy work and outreach. It was a sincere group of strong women. ... We came at a time when women wanted to see things happen."

Hilary Marsh and Mary Jo Graden had a different kind of memory of past events. Marsh said, "We had had our first date the week before but we were going to Coming Out Against Cancer with other friends, not together. It was so funny because ironically we wore the same exact outfits and it turned out to be our second date. So now, this time around it's our tenth anniversary and (ChiQ) is at the same location 10 years later."

Graden added, "Back then, there were 2,000 women at this event ... the entire community was here ... It was a huge deal. Everyone was here and they had the whole building [ChiQ was held in just the ballroom] with something going on in the other rooms."

The event also featured photos and images from Windy City Times and Gerber/Hart Library archives.



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com), except where indicated. See more photos with online version of this story.



Corinne Kawecki, Maureen Sweeney and Suzanne Kraus, three of the founders of LCCP.
Photo by Vernon Hester





Hilary Marsh and
Mary Jo Graden.
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LEE
LYNCH

THE AMAZON TRAIL

The terlet

When I objected, starting around the age of four or five, to commercials on the radio, I had no idea what the future of marketing would hold for us all. Why, I asked, was “The Lone Ranger” interrupted to sell Silvercup Bread? Was it because of his silver bullets? Well, yes, it was considered a terrific marketing tie-in. I hated ads then and I hate them now when the once open internet has become a mammoth shopping mall for which we pay with our privacy.

At a rummage sale yesterday, I snagged a couple of Red Star Lilies. When I asked Google to tell me about the plant, what I got was sellers who shared some information along with their big fat click-here-to-order ads. The same happened with browser DuckDuckGo, but at least no companies grabbed my height, weight, and IQ to use in further marketing. You really have to know to use sites like Wikipedia and WikiHow (and support them directly with donations) so they don't have to push ads or sell your information to survive.

Some of my favorite lines from the poet Wordsworth can be found at www.poetryfoundation.org. “The world is too much with us; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers; / Little we see in Nature that is ours; / We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”

Now, doesn't that just sound like Facebook, which has been carelessly selling our affectional and political preferences for years and years? I used to think, what the heck, I have nothing to hide. I can't get much more out than being a lesbian writer who proudly uses her legal name. As the internet has gotten more powerful, though, anyone who's read George Orwell's prophetic 1984, is noticing the potential for extremely sordid uses of our information.

Like electing the Unfortunate Current Occupant (UCO). Unfortunate for us, that is.

And now, the census wants us to bare all. According to pewresearch.org, the US Census will ask if we're married to or in a domestic relationship with a person of the same binary gender. Given that UCO, his all too “competent” V.P., his narrow-minded Attorney General, and the wacko conservatives in Congress, are in power, this data, whether in the hands of Snapchat or the federal government, is especially fraught for gays and other target groups. I'm going to fess up on the census, but not without feeling like I'm signing up for Saddam Hussein's Golden Hit List.

It's like a neighbor said of our community newsletter, “No religion! No politics!” From the state of our planet, getting along is not something we've got down pat at all. I was brought up by parents

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother |
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Census question.

Image from Lee Lynch

who considered both subjects to be private. I'm of a generation which shouts our politics and spiritual beliefs on bumper stickers and T-shirts. Who knows what's next? If we don't at least try to vote, we'll be forced to show our colors: pink or Black triangle badges and tattooed ID numbers.

If our votes count any more. How about, in this consumerist society, we get receipts—paper ones—for our votes so no one gets into office through a back door. If little mom-and-pop stores can manage this, if the cash register industry has made it so very easy... Never mind: Just because we pull the right levers and get accurate receipts, doesn't mean the hackers won't hack us over into the column that pays the most.

My sweetheart and I, a bit despairing, switched obsessing about the state of the world to spiffing up our home a little, making equipment more accessible and shrinking our footprint. Not that it can get much smaller, as we own an infinitesimal fraction of an acre just large enough for our manufactured home, a one-car garage, and a margin of space for the birdbath, some bushes and young trees.

We're quite excited about our shiny new faucets, though. They have lever handles that don't require twisting and grasping. It's much easier now to decrease the flow of water. One is deliciously art deco. After that, my sweetheart tackled what we came to affectionately call our bathroom fixture, with a nod to Norman Lear's Archie Bunker: the terlet. With back and knee problems, it's not as easy as it once was to sit down and get up from anything.

Manufactured homes are notorious for small bathrooms. Not as small as the one in the 27-foot trailer I used to live in, but palatial it ain't. The terlet is lower than the standard 15 inches tall, a so-called

normal height designed to accommodate everyone from kids to basketball players, all able-bodied. Ridiculous! To our good fortune, a friend down the street, who recently fractured his leg in a few places, extolled his 17-inch commute. Ours is now on order.

Then there's the outside. We added cinderblock pavers to the driveway, so passengers will no longer step out into the Oregon mud. We moved the birdbath to replant, in a sunnier spot, the three-foot Western hemlock we've been nurturing since it wasn't much more than a twig. Now that I can't use a shovel anymore, we've been scouting garage and store sales for big, colorful flower pots our Red Star Lilies can inhabit.

Our little toothpick house, as my sweetheart named it, is shaping up, maybe not a showplace, but a homey, lived-in, always-in-progress, sometimes higgledy-piggledy, much beloved Pacific Northwest homestead.

Making all these decisions has given us months of distraction from the UCO. Advertising had not a whit of influence on us; we did it all without resorting to internet coaxing. We did use the web to comparison shop and order what we needed since nothing we wanted was available in our rural community. The internet, like the government, should belong to the people, not corporations and marketers who offer top dollar for our consumer profiles.

Commodifying everything from the halls of Congress, to supposedly private messages to loved ones, to “The Lone Ranger,” “we lay waste our powers.” When our very identities are for sale, really, so little is ours.

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Hitting a high note?

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WCT reviews the production *Memphis*.

Photo of Aerial Williams (center) and cast by Michael Courier

'Queer Visibility' project kicks off

BY KERRY REID

While the rallying cry "We're here! We're queer! Get used to it" has been in currency at protests since at least the early '90s, that degree of openness hasn't been available to everyone in the LGBTQ community. But if two young Chicago artists have their way, at least a few more real-life stories about queerness will take shape on stage next year.

Choreographer Kiefer Otto and singer/songwriter Courtney Robinson (who performs under the stage name Odea) met at Columbia College Chicago and quickly became friends and roommates. A couple of years later, they decided to explore a collaboration outside of school.

Odea said, "Kiefer asked me 'What do you want it to be about?' And what I thought about—and what came out right away"—was 'I want it to be about queer visibility in a straight world.'"

That was the seed for a storytelling music and dance performance piece, *Queer Visibility in a Straight World*, that Otto and Odea are just now beginning to work on. They're launching a Kickstarter on May 1 and the first piece they put together, *Empty Room*, premiered in February with Simantikos Dance Chicago.

They've also put together a website (QueerVisibility.net) where a video of *Empty Room*, choreographed by Otto to a song by Odea, can be viewed. (Benjamin Curtis-Beard filmed and directed the video.)

In the song, Odea sings about the experience of "drowning in a sea of love, but still can't have our own without a fight." In an interview, she said, "I grew up in the church, and that was very difficult for me because being visible was 'You may not be accepted.'"

But she also said "We definitely don't want [the show] to only be about people who are struggling. We understand that there are struggles. But we also want to connect with a larger community and present this in a way that shows the joys of being in a community."

When asked about using the term "queer," Odea said, "I understand that some people may have reservations about it. Especially older people, because they went through a time when they were called that. We wanted to use that word as an opportunity to take it back."

Otto added, "I think that for me personally, if it had been *Gay Visibility in a Straight World*, it would have been different. We wanted to be able to include everybody in the community and that word is now being reclaimed and includes everybody on the spectrum."

The story-gathering process is in its early stages. But Otto has enlisted the assistance of his partner, who is a speech and language pathologist. "He's helping us figure out how to have the dialogue and ask certain questions and how to facilitate those conversations."

They are also reaching out to various LGBTQ youth centers and organizations, though they emphasize that they're not only interested in youth stories. Said Otto, "We're trying to find a few organizations that can be a safe space for the people telling their stories, so we can meet them where they're at."

Otto cited longtime San Francisco choreographer Joe Goode, whose self-titled performance group has long specialized in combining spoken word, song and visual imagery with movement, as an influence: "In general, with body movement, I'm trying to learn about that person and how they're telling their story. So if they're timid

and talking like this [and here he closes his arms and bends forward in a protective posture], that would play a part in it."

Similarly, Odea told *Windy City Times*, "I really want to hear the words they're saying and be able to use them and spin them directly into the song. It's listening to what they're saying and more importantly, paying attention to the energy behind what they're saying."

They also hope that hearing these stories (which may, in the future, live on in digital form on the website) will foster understanding from those outside the queer community. "Just having people gain insight is a step," said Odea. "I think people just don't know about it because they don't interact with [queer] people."

"It's a way of telling history," added Otto. "The public schools we went to for sure didn't teach anything about queer history, gay history, trans history. And I don't think it happens very often now."

As they gather stories, raise funds and scout locations for the show next June, Otto and Odea keep their hopes high that *Queer Visibility in a Straight World* will "grow into something bigger," as Odea put it. "We don't know what that is yet. For now, we're planning the show for next year. And after the writing process is done and after we've talked to everyone, we'll have all these people who shared their stories there and can honor their presence."



Queer Visibility creators Kiefer Otto (left) and Odea.

Photo courtesy of Odea

THEATER REVIEW

Jesus Christ Superstar

Playwright: Andrew Lloyd

Webber (music); Tim Rice (lyrics)

At: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr.

Tickets: 312-827-5600;

LyricOpera.org; \$49-\$219

Runs through: May 20

BY KERRY REID

Lyric Opera closes its season with the North American premiere of Timothy Sheader's celebrated 2016 London revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which is slated for a U.S. tour in 2019. It's big, bombastic, glittery, sweaty—but also a little empty at the center.

Sheader's production doesn't inject obvious parallels to our own celebrity-driven political culture—possibly because the United Kingdom hasn't yet elected a reality-TV star as prime minister. It works best when it's operating at opposite poles. In the large ensemble scenes, as in

the exhilarating opening, the sheer mass excitement of the crowd shows us how easy it is to get caught up in the beat of new sounds—or new ideas. Drew McOnie's choreography turns the chorus into a pulsating organism that seems on the verge of exploding.

And in the rare quiet reflective moments—particularly in Jo Lampert's simply stunning take as Mary Magdalene with “I Don't Know How to Love Him”—the tension at being caught in the space between a man and his movement snaps into poignant focus.

But it's in the confrontational numbers—and boy, does this show love those—that the tension dissipates, even as the volume increases. Heath Saunders' Jesus and Ryan Shaw's Judas blow the roof off their songs, but the essential conflict between them, which is the emotional and dramatic fulcrum of the story, gets lost in the rafters (as do some lyrics in the ensemble numbers).

Yet if it's spectacle you crave, ask and ye shall receive it here. The modernist minimalism suggested by the girdered multi-level boxes of Tom Scutt's set serves as counterpoint to Lee Curran's flashing lights and the showers of glitter.



Jesus Christ Superstar caption: Jo Lampert and Heath Saunders.

Photo by Todd Rosenberg

When Shaw's Judas takes those 30 pieces of silver, they're represented by silver glitter coating his hands. During the sadistic flagellation scene of Trial by Pilate/39 Lashes, Saunders' bloodied torso gets covered in gold glitter, tossed by those who formerly worshipped him as if they're dousing his wounds in salt.

In fairness, there's a lot about this musical that has always struck me as more about posture than provocation. Judas' line “You'd have managed better if you'd had it planned” can be taken two ways. Should Jesus have done a better job preparing his followers for just how hard real change is? Or is that asking him to substitute pragmatism where idealism should be? I don't think Sheader has a point of view on that, and it would be more interesting if we saw him tilt the scales a bit in one direction or another.

One thing's for sure: It's not boring. Like the title character, this *Jesus Christ Superstar* serves a generous visual feast for its followers, er, audience. And it's worth remembering that the musical started life as a concept album—a prog-rock opera, if you will. On its own terms, it succeeds brilliantly.

THEATER REVIEW

Memphis

Playwright: Music and lyrics by

David Bryan, book and lyrics by Joe DiPietro

At: Porchlight Musical Theater at the

Ruth Page Center for the Arts,

1016 N. Dearborn St.

Tickets: \$33-\$60; RuthPage.org

Runs through: June 10

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The pantheon of musicals documenting the triumph of rock-and-roll as a multicultural phenomenon transcending global boundaries—a catalogue encompassing *The Buddy Holly Story*,

Hairspray, *Jersey Boys*, *Million Dollar Quartet* and practically everything written by Jackie Taylor—has now been expanded to restore Dewey Phillips, Tennessee's real-life pioneering prophet, to his rightful place in a myth too long dominated by East Coast imitators Alan Freed and Dick Clark.

Our forgotten hero's fictional counterpart is young Huey Calhoun, a ninth-grade dropout living with his mother and working as a stockboy at a modest Memphis department store. In his off-duty time, he strolls Beale Street—a dangerous proposition for urban white citizens in 1951—enticed by the music emanating from the “colored” clubs. His curiosity takes him to DelRay's basement bar, where he is promptly smitten by the proprietor's singing sister Felicia. Soon Huey has introduced “race music” to the customers at

his place of employment, then to the local radio station where he soon hosts his own show, and finally, to the burgeoning new medium of television. As his star continues to rise, so does his faith in the power of fame to overcome the social/legal obstacles engendered by entrenched bigotry. Musicals always have happy endings—don't they?

Capitalism and Jim Crow are hardly original impediments to true love, but Joe DiPietro's book articulates the difficult choices engendered thereby with a candor echoed by David Bryan's period-invoking score encompassing such inspirational anthems as the yearning “Music of My Soul,” the steadfast “Memphis Lives In Me” and the exhortive “Say A Prayer,” melodically referencing early gospel and jump-band harmonies,

augmented by efficient (if occasionally lead-footed) expository soliloquies.

Black Ensemble alumnus Daryl Brooks' direction of a vibrant cast, led by Liam Quealy and Aerie Williams, for this Porchlight production offers audiences another opportunity for gratitude over the company's move to the Ruth Page arts center. The cozy auditorium's close-up actor-to-audience proximity facilitates an empathetic excitement permeating every corner of the room right up to the rousing hand-clapping finale “They Can't Steal Your Rock-and-Roll” (but look for the Shirelles-styled “Someday” to be the song warbled in the car on the way home).

THEATER REVIEW

The Explorers Club

Written by: Nell Benjamin

At: Citadel Theatre,

300 S. Waukegan Rd., Lake Forest

Tickets: \$40

Runs through: May 27

BY KAREN TOPHAM

If you are looking for political correctness, you might skip Citadel Theatre's new production of Nell Benjamin's *The Explorers Club*. If, on the other hand, your goal is to have a good time and laugh a lot, you'll do yourself a favor by heading off to Lake Forest to see this cleverly written, well executed farce.

Directed by frequent Citadel director Robert D. Estrin and featuring a talented cast of players in broad, exaggerated farcical mode, *The Explorers Club* takes us to a late 19th-century London clubhouse dedicated to science and exploration. The intrepid members of the club are a varied lot. Nate Strain is Lucius, a botanist who has

found a new species of plant with surprising properties; Jacob Fjare is Cope, a herpetologist (that's a studier of snakes to those who are not scientists); Erik Pearson is Walling, a zoologist currently studying guinea pigs; Bob Sanders is Sloan, a Bible-thumping “archeo-theologist” who believes that the Irish are the Lost Tribes of Israel; and Guy Wicke is Percy, an explorer who believes he has discovered the East Pole.

Enter Elizabeth Rude as Phyllida Spotte-Hume, a female explorer (gasp!) who has recently found a legendary Lost City and wishes to join the club. She has brought back with her one of the tribesmen, whom she calls Luigi. Played by Frank Gasparro in blue body paint striped tribally, Luigi is a politically incorrect scene-stealer. As the “feral man” explores the Explorers Club while others talk, it's difficult to keep your eyes off of him. Gasparro is having so much fun that he keeps us laughing throughout a sometimes too-efficient expository first act. As it ends, in fact, an officious Queen's secretary (pompously played by Edward Kuffert) is threatening to wipe out the Lost City with the British army after Luigi slapped the queen. (Don't ask; see

the show to understand.)

Luigi, though he is intelligent, is seriously politically incorrect, from his gait to his language to his repeated actions to his hilarious explorations. No real effort is made to mask this; if you are easily offended, stay away. Another possible issue is the treatment of women, although that can be explained as a subtle jab at the truth of its time. Some of the dialogue about Phyllida would bring lawsuits today, not to mention her potential exclusion from the club.

This is all played out on one of the finest small theater sets you'll want to see. Scenic Designer Jose Manuel Díaz-Soto has created a first-rate clubhouse featuring wood trim everywhere, and Properties Manager Mark Holley has filled it with enough artifacts to keep audience members busy during intermission. Costume Designer Paul Kim also went to town: all of these people look perfect for their roles and era.

It may not be the most PC play of the year, but *The Explorers Club* will definitely make you laugh—and that's what you go to see farces for, isn't it?

CRITICS' PICKS

South Pacific, Drury Lane Oakbrook, through June 17. Superior musical values and a stellar cast lift this new production beyond “old warhorse” status. Regrettably, the messages of *South Pacific* about race and bullies remain as pertinent today as ever. JA

How I Learned to Drive, The Artistic Home, extended through May 20. He plays a grown man in love with his teenage niece, but John Mossman has been nominated for a Jeff and this is your chance to see why. MSB

Bette Davis Ain't For Sissies, Velvet Fox Productions at the Athenaeum, May 24-June 17. Fasten your seat belts! Jessica Sherr's solo show is back, but just because it's staying longer this time doesn't mean you shouldn't reserve your tickets now. MSB

The Doppelganger (an international farce), Steppenwolf Downstairs Theatre, through June 2. Matthew-Lee Erlbach's rapid-fire farce has raucous lightning-fast laughs—or so it is until the final moments, when comedy takes a hairpin veer into something else entirely. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan



Ryan Cashman,
Laurel Zoff
Pelton and
Jordan Wilson
in *Striking Out*.
Photo by
Smart Yeti
Creative
Agency

THEATER REVIEW

Striking Out (A Gay Baseball Musical)

Authors: Ryan Ford & Adam Levin
At: The Annoyance Theatre,
851 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-697-9693 or
TheAnnoyance.com; \$15-20
Runs through: June 16

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Sometimes holding a show under a critical microscope has no value; it feels like punching a kitten. A production like *Striking Out* (A Gay Baseball Musical) isn't going to win any Jeff awards, but it does inch the quality of Chicago's improvised musical scene up a notch, and it has already won the premise powerball.

In *Striking Out*, baseball is dominated by openly gay players, and the thought of a straight man picking up a bat is laughable. However, when star player Lance Valentine (Jordan Wilson) gets injured in a chorus-line mishap, the Chicago Otters must hold open tryouts to replace him, and their replacement, rookie Jimmy Roberts (Ryan Cashman), is very suspicious. He never wants to go clubbing, he spends all his time with his "sister" Penny (Laurel Zoff Pelton), and he's capable of turning down Beyonce tickets. Heterosexual Jimmy works tirelessly to throw everyone off his trail; high-powered lesbian sports anchors Susan Winters (Jordan Lee Cohen) and Roberta Nightingale (Elizabeth Andrews), his coach (Shelby

Quinn) and even agent Chester Wiesel (Sarah Porter—technically a pants role, but it's fun imagining a world filled with business lesbians). In musical tradition, relationships get put to the test, and in sports tradition, it all comes down to the final play.

Striking Out walks a delicate line between improv looseness and musical exactness. When performers are trying to hit the mark, coordinating songs with choreography and stage effects, they come away a little dead-eyed and passionless, forgetting the emotions involved. The moments that hit with the most power are numbers like "Love is All We Need Tonight," that are simple, allowing performers to get comfortable enough to improvise. It hardly matters if you go up on the lyrics in a love song, the words aren't important—just kiss, already!

One character duo given more story function and complexity than you'd see in an average musical is long-suffering girlfriend Penny, played with odd charm by Laurel Zoff Pelton, and villain-turned-bestie Lance Valentine, made ultra-sardonic and shallow by Jordan Wilson. The two share a comedy song "Tired of Waiting" that would feel at home in an episode of *Crazy Ex Girlfriend*. I'd also be loathe to forget this production's turned-on-its-ear take on testosterone-fueled sports reporters—Roberta Nightingale and Susan Winters, played by Elizabeth Andrews and Jordan Lee Cohen—who are forever ramping up to a screaming match.

By act two, *Striking Out* delivers the utmost in heterophobic jokes, you just have to wade through a lot of hit-or miss material to get there. If you've ever wondered how a drag-queen Babe Ruth would lip-sync for her life on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, this show is definitely for you.



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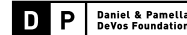
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SPOTLIGHT

Here's the short version: If Philip Dawkins writes a new play, you want to see it. The longer version: The gay Chicago playwright (Charm, *Le Switch*) has penned **The Gentleman Caller**, an emotionally evocative exploration of that (fictional) time iconic gay playwrights Tennessee Williams (*The Glass Menagerie*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) and William Inge (*Picnic*, *Bus Stop*) met to discuss art, love, sex and writing. The dynamic between great artists—one deeply closeted Inge and the other comparatively open—is a



meeting of both minds and bodies. With Rudy Galvan as Williams and Curtis Edward Jackson as Inge, it is also unforgettable. Through May 27 at the Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St.; \$15-\$43; RavenTheatre.com
Caption: Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

The Madres

Playwright: Stephanie Alison Walker
 At: Teatro Vista at the Biograph,
 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.
 Tickets: \$20-\$45;
<https://www.teatrovista.org/>
 Runs through: May 27

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't be fooled by the convivial chat of the priest making a friendly visit to an elderly widow in the first scene of this Teatro Vista production.

Padre Juan's nostalgia for sentimental love songs and Senora Josefina's home-baked *medialunes* camouflages inquiries into treasonous activities, just as his hostess' pride in her granddaughter Belen's accomplishments as a film student in Paris conceals her fear that the pregnant young newlywed is being detained in a government prison. Later, a baby shower—devised as a subterfuge to precipitate a compassionate release—is thwarted by the guest of honor's arrival in the company of family friend Diego Hernandez, now a soldier in Argentina's civic-military junta. Even the title of our play has a double meaning.

The "mothers" of the Acosta household, you see, are no ordinary Marianist matrons, but Stephanie Alison Walker's microcosmic representation of the parents who march in silent recrimination before the gates of the presidential palace in Buenos Ai-

Lorena Diaz in
The Madres.
 Photo by Joel
 Maisonet



res from 1978 to the present day—their purpose, to call attention to the *Proceso de Reorganizacion Nacional's* policy of rounding up anyone suspected of dissident affiliations to be jailed, questioned, tortured and often murdered. The victims of this persecution are called "los desaparecidos" ("the disappeared"), many of whom continue to be the focus of DNA searches by families seeking to learn their fates, or the fates of children born in captivity to be raised in foster homes.

North American audiences unaware of this subtext to the most casual conversations may misunderstand the evasive tone permeating our introduction to a universe we free U.S. citizens can only imagine, but the entrance of daughter Carolina, wearing the white headscarf of the Plaza de Mayo protesters, reveals the risks involved in the plan to rescue their youngest relative. By the time the maternity party has commenced (where the balloon-bearing GI will succumb to PTSD during a game involving blindfolds), we are fully cognizant of the danger lurking beneath the joviality.

Walker sometime appears to favor issues over character—her ambivalence regarding Diego's zeal for his inhumane duties, for example—but under the direction of Ricardo Gutierrez, the trio of Ivonne Coll, Lorena Diaz and Ilse Zacharias endow our three generations of child-bearers making their journey from helpless terror to concerted action with the courage and dignity of classic tragedy's Trojan Women.

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Chicago Filmmakers Board President Sharon Zurek at the event.

Photo by Liz Baudler

Chicago Filmmakers cuts ribbon on new home

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Chicago P.D. actor Jeff Rogers wears many hats, and he put another one to emcee Chicago Filmmakers' open house and ribbon-cutting on April 28 at 5720 N. Ridge Ave.

Formerly a Chicago firehouse from 1928, the Chicago Landmark building will be home to classrooms and a theater for the 45-year-old organization. In his opening remarks, Rogers, who has worked with Chicago Filmmakers, said the organization helps Chicagoans "explore their dreams."

"We hope the next generation of filmmakers and media makers will find their community," said Chicago Filmmakers Board President Sharon Zurek, who concluded her speech with some tears.

Executive Director Brenda Webb recalled passing the firehouse while Chicago Filmmakers was renting spaces and dreaming of having its own. "I always wondered what was inside," Webb said of the firehouse. "Now I get to create what's inside." While Rogers called Webb "the tip of the spear" for finding the space, Webb thanked Ald. Harry Osterman for his "vision and dedication" and for wanting to see their building used for the good of the community.

Diane Quon—whose latest film, *Mind the Gap*, has received Sundance accolades—recalled "feeling lucky" to find workshops at Chicago Filmmakers, and remembered putting her education to work the day after when returning to set.

Rich Moskel, director of the Chicago Film Office, called Filmmakers an organization "of and for filmmakers," and praised its egalitarian nature. Christine Dudley, of the Illinois Film Office, called the firehouse itself a symbol of safety and a place to be nurtured.

Osterman called the opening "an incredible day in Edgewater" and likened the process of connecting the organization to the space as a "masterpiece." And Chicago Fire actor Chris Stolte, like

Webb, remembered driving past the firehouse and wondering what would become of it—perhaps "a really cool theater."

"This might be even better than a really cool theater," said a smiling Stolte. After the ribbon was officially cut and a very large community photo was taken, guests streamed inside to drink champagne and nibble on snacks. And as was made clear from the long list of announced VIPs, which Jones called "The Avengers: Chicago Filmmaking Edition," everyone was here for the party. After a toast to "the health and long life of the organization" inside the former fire truck bay, now a theater, Zurek and Webb continued to thank individuals and ask for support, particularly to purchase platform seating for the theater and plants for the outdoor park. Upstairs, instructors and volunteers facilitated class-sign ups, and screenwriting and film-cutting activities.

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Janelle Monae comes out as queer

Singer/actress Janelle Monae has come out as queer.

"Being a queer Black woman in America, someone who has been in relationships with both men and women—I consider myself to be a free-ass motherfucker," she told Rolling Stone's Brittany Spanos for the magazine's May cover story.

There had been speculation about Monae's sexuality for some time, and it rose to a fever pitch thanks to the release of music videos for her songs "Make Me Feel" and "Pynk," both of which have explicitly queer overtones.

Monae, 32, said that, at first, she identified as bisexual but that she's also learning about being pansexual: "I read about pansexuality and was like, 'Oh, these are things that I identify with too.' I'm open to learning more about who I am."

"Make Me Feel" is a version of Sylvester's 1978 gay anthem, and the music video features actress Tessa Thompson, who is rumored to be dating Monae.

Monae has been received critical plaudits for her work in music and film, the latter involving roles in movies such as Moonlight and Hidden Figures.

New Armatrading CD out May 18; tour dates announced

Singer Joan Armatrading's new studio album Not Too Far Away, will be out on BMG on Friday, May 18.

This is her 21st album. Tracks include "Loving What You Hate," "Still Waters," "Always in My Dreams," "Invisible (Blue Light)" and others.

Not Too Far Away is the studio follow-up to the trilogy of This Charming Life (2010), the jazz-orientated Starlight (2012) and the blues-based Into The Blues (2007), which went straight to the top of the Billboard Blues Chart—making Armatrading the first British female artist ever to do so.

The album will be supported by live dates in the United States May through July followed by a major tour of the United Kingdom in September. Among her U.S. stops will be Chicago's City Winery on June 9-14.

Not Too Far Away will be released on CD, LP and digitally. Album pre-orders are now available by visiting <https://joan.lnk.to/NTFAPR>.

Wonka Ball on May 11 at MBC

About Face Theatre's annual gala, Wonka Ball (theme "Saturday Night Live: The Experience!") will take place Friday, May 11, at 8 p.m. (VIP cocktail reception 7 p.m.) at the Museum of Broadcast Communications, 360 N. State St.

From Wayne's World to Celebrity Jeopardy to Weekend Update, patrons will interact with SNL sets, original props and costumes—all with a distinct About Face Theatre twist.

Wonka Ball will also include the presentation of the annual Leppen Leadership Awards, recognizing one individual and one organization whose efforts have made an enormous impact within Chicago's LGBTQIA communities; as well as the About Face Youth Theatre MVP Award, presented annually to an outstanding youth theatre ensemble member for exceptional service to the company and to the greater LGBTQIA community.

Tickets are available at AboutFaceTheatre.com or 773-784-8565.

Bonnie Hunt to chair Mother's Day race

Award-winning actress and Chicagoan Bonnie Hunt has been named honorary race chair of Susan G. Komen Chicago's 21st Mother's Day Race for the Cure, which will return to Montrose Harbor on Sunday, May 13.

Race for the Cure registration begins at 7:30 a.m., the Survivor Parade is at 8:30 a.m., and the 5K Fun Walk/Run steps off at 9 a.m. There's a Finish Fest Celebration at 9:30 a.m., with awards and a live band.

Registration fees are \$40 for adults, \$35 for survivors, \$25 for youth 5 to 12, and free for 4 and younger. Virtual registration for those who can't make it on Race Day is \$40. Registration fees increase May 12.

Supporters are encouraged to register at KomenChicago.org.

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BILLY Masters

"You know what? You have no sense of humor. That's your problem."—**Joy Behar** to **Megan McCain** on *The View* after the conservative spawn criticized a joke about Melania Trump spouted by Shecky Behar. The next day, McCain was curiously absent from the table. I'm counting the minutes until the next split-screen!

"Can I bum a fag?" I've had my share of propositions, but this seemed more forward than most. Turns out, the gent simply wanted a cigarette. Well, excuse me for hearing the words "bum" and "fag" and conjuring up a sexual image. That got me thinking—in these days of rampant political correctness, should I be offended that the Brits call cigarettes "fags?" Typically, hearing the word "fag" might elicit at least a raised eyebrow. However, since the word in this context had nothing to do with gay people, I wouldn't blink if he screamed it in Leicester Square.

Most people aren't as laissez-faire as moi. Broadway was buzzing with news that Actors' Equity would be renaming the legendary "gypsy robe" in "response to the cultural implications of the term"—i.e., so as not to offend the Romany people. Have I missed a huge outcry about this relatively private Broadway tradition? A Broadway "gypsy" is someone in the chorus who goes from show to show, city to city. The tradition of the "gypsy robe" dates back to the Broadway production of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* in 1950. A male chorister put on a robe and let everyone touch it. He then sent the robe to Call Me Madam, where the choristers did a similar thing, except they attached a feather from Ethel Merman's costume. They passed it on to *Guys and Dolls*, etc. The current tradition dictates that the robe goes to a Broadway show on opening night. The chorister with the most Broadway credits wears it. That chorister circles the stage three times while cast members touch it for good luck. The robe wearer blesses each dressing room. Finally, a memento from the show is affixed to the robe. When a robe is filled with mementos, it is retired and exhibited in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Smithsonian, or at Actors' Equity. That's the history.

Somehow, this use of the term "gypsy" has been mixed up with the derogatory term for the Romany people—as if the chorister in the robe is shaking a tambourine and reading palms! The "gypsy robe" has as much to do with the Romany people as the "wandering Jew" has to do with Israel! But, you know—some people want to sanitize anything that could offend two people. Petra Gelbart, a curator at RomArchive, said, "The fact that the term 'gypsy' is so often used to denote free-spirited or traveling lifestyles has real-life repercussions for actual Romany people." Yes, I'm sure people often look down on free-spirited travelers! I wondered where this would end. Days later, Tom Viola from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS announced that they would not change the name of "Gypsy of the Year," an



Taron Egerton (above) is going to fill **Elton John's shoes, Billy says.**

Photo from Egerton's official Twitter account

annual fundraiser where choristers and dancers raise millions of dollars to help those in need: "Words have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. In our theatrical community, 'the gypsy' is beloved." Bravo! Personally, I refuse to get behind any "gypsy" ban that hasn't been officially sanctioned by Miss Mitzi Gaynor!

As I mentioned, I'm in London to see some plays, visit the baby, get ready for the wedding ... you know, the usual. You know who else is planning a trip to London? Donald Trump. Although he'll be meeting with the prime minister and, perhaps, some members of the royal family, it is not an official state visit. So ... no banquet, no carriage procession and probably no hookers.

One of Mr. Trump's previous overseas jaunts was confirmed by a member of our community. In his capacity as host of the Miss Universe Pageant, **Thomas Roberts** met Trump in Moscow on Nov. 8, 2013, and interviewed him the next day. "During the after-party for the Miss Universe event, Mr. Trump offered to fly me and my husband back to New York. He said he would be leaving directly from the party. We were unable to accept the invitation. That was the early morning hours of Nov. 10." Now, I don't have my sundial handy, but it sounds like Mr. Trump spent at least two nights in Moscow—despite saying that he "didn't stay overnight in Russia for that."

The long-gestating **Elton John biopic** has inched closer to fruition. It was just announced that *Rocketman* will star **Taron Egerton**. In case you can't place him, he starred opposite **Hugh Jackman** in *Eddie the Eagle*. Would I call him Elton's doppelganger? Well, he's a hot Welsh lad with a full head of hair—you decide! What's interesting is that Elton's iconic recordings will not be featured in the flick. Taron is actually re-recording the songs. David Furnish says his hubby heard three of the songs and was "blown away." Of course, Egerton already had experience singing Elton John songs—in the animated feature *Sing*,



we are treated to his rendition of "I'm Still Standing." The Paramount biopic is being directed by Dexter Fletcher, who replaced Bryan Singer on the Freddie Mercury film *Bohemian Rhapsody*, which comes out on Nov. 2.

Let me put on my psychic hat and predict what a future "Ask Billy" question might be "Billy, do you have any nude photos of Taron Egerton?" Better than photos: videos. He was on the UK series *The Smoke* and, well, let's just say his shower scene left little to the imagination, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When people are smoking in the shower, it's time for me to end yet another column. We've gone from gypsies to Brits pretty effortlessly. So while I deal with jet lag, you can check out BillyMasters.com—the site that never sleeps. Even overseas, I'm here for all your queries. Feel free to send them to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before I put on yet another hat (which will be during this trip in about two weeks). So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Brunches at Chez Moi, Bounce

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Chicago takes its brunches pretty seriously, no matter when they happen (and, yes, there are places that have weekday brunches).

To that end, restaurants throughout the city and suburbs have stepped up what they offer for this most social of meals, whether it's having innovative dishes and/or top-notch chefs.

For example, there's **Chez Moi** (2100 N. Halsted St.; <http://www.chezmoichicago.com/>), which even says it's a "unique French bistro" on its website. Chef Dominique Tougne has crafted dishes that are thoroughly delicious.

It's obvious that the restaurant staff knows



Gateau Breton at Chez Moi.
PR photo

what it's doing—doing to establishing that French vibe through beautiful decor and European music (although Sam Cooke and few other U.S. artists were also piped in every now and again). Dishes include a very well-done quiche Lorraine. The Crepes Grand Mere au Gratin are unlike other crepes most have probably had; the tasty dish features baked chicken, mushroom, onion and bacon creme with bechemel.

And don't forget desserts. The mousse is sublime, while the gateau Breton is buttery shortbread (although it seemed a little too hard for my fork at times).

BTW: Chez Moi is offering lunch on Wednesdays through Fridays starting May 2. Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bounce on over

As opposed to the relatively sophisticated items at Chez Moi, **Bounce Sporting Club** (324 W. Chicago Ave.; <https://www.bouncesportingclub.com/>) offers flat-out fun with its brunch items.

Adding to the, well, bouncy feel of the place is music from the '80s and '90s (like New Edition's "Cool It Now")—and it didn't hurt that



Chicken nachos at Bounce Sporting Club.
PR photo

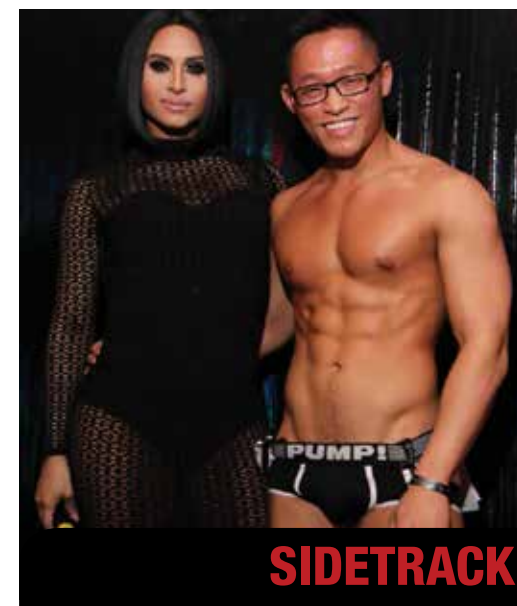
photogenic bartender Luke was bouncing around to the tunes. Also, there are large TV screens everywhere, which means that sports-minded guests won't miss a single minute of anything.

As for the food, it's indulgent in the best possible way. My friend tried fried mozzarella curds that were positively addictive, as well as a smoked brisket Benedict that featured a potato "waffle," poached eggs and pickled mustard hollandaise.

A huge plate of smoked pulled chicken nachos (with cheddar and jack) would be enough for most small groups. Also, for those craving something sweet instead of savory, there are Banana Jameson-soaked French toast sticks—although they may have been too soaked, as my friend and I were both slightly put off by the slightly bitter aftertaste. But then there was the donut sundae, a sinful olio of the aforementioned donut, ice cream, whipped cream, chocolate sauce—and Fruity Pebbles treats for good measure.

I occasionally say that it seems that half the world has brunch at 11 a.m. Well, I can certainly say that's not true of Bounce—at least, not yet—as guests started to roll in at 1 p.m. Maybe they had too much fun the previous night, and had to wait to indulge in more.

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



SIDETRACK

Chicago Dragons' bachelor auction, Sat., April 28.
Photos by Jed Dulanias

WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., May 2

Book Launch Party: Death Rides the Ferry After a forty-year absence, the Viola da Gamba Music Festival has returned to the picturesque isle on the tip of Wisconsin's Door County peninsula. 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>



TIE ONE ON Sunday, May 6

Chicago House's annual spring brunch/fashion show will take place in the Loop.

Photo from 2017 by Ed Negron

Thursday, May 3

American Veterans for Equal Rights Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.averchicago.org/>

Meaty (the re-issue) The Chicago launch celebration for the reissue of Irby's first essay collection, Meaty. Ticketed event. 7:00pm Wilson Abbey, 935 W. Wilson, Chicago. <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Friday, May 4

Gay is Good exhibit Details the homophile movement 1920s through Stonewall.

See days and hours on site. 12:00pm - 4:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago 773-381-8030 <http://www.gerberhart.org/>
LGBTQ Town Hall Meeting Affinity Community Services, Senator Mattie Hunter, Kim Hunt of Pride Action Tank, and Kelly Saulsberry of Chicago Commission on Human Relations discuss hate crimes,

reporting them, an ordinance supporting LGBTQ people in the workforce, the Attorney General's consent decree and more. Doors 5:30pm 6:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago

Saturday, May 5

FrontRunners/FrontWalkers Chicago's LGBT running and walking club. Meet at the totem pole. 9:00am Addison and Lakeshore Dr. <http://www.frwchicago.org>

Neil Tobin, Necromancer: Near Death Experience Interactive, magical theater about life and death in a once-in-a-lifetime setting. Tobin's award-winning exploration of mortality and mystery will make you laugh, ponder and wonder. No kids. This is grown-up, dead-serious fun. Presented at May Chapel, a rarely open-to-the-public architectural gem. 3:00pm May Chapel at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 N. Ravenswood Ave., <http://neardeathx.com>

Legal Council for Health Justice's 4th Annual May Ball Commemorating the council's 30th anniversary providing free, expert legal care for those with illnesses or disabilities, Nabeela and Fawzia open their grand turn-of-the-century residence for celebration, champagne, cocktails, delectable fare, and dancing. Derby theme, Derby hats encouraged. \$15 - \$1,030 8:00pm - 12:00pm Location provided with ticket information <https://www.eventbrite.com>

Sunday, May 6

REVIVE! Rally on the Runway, Chicago House's Spring Brunch & Fashion Show Brunch, entertainment, fashion show headlined by local Chicago boutiques and design studios and nationally recognized designers. Three-course gourmet brunch by Inspired Catering, champagne, signature cocktails, live auction. \$200 12:00pm - 2:30pm Harold Washington Public Library 400 S State Chicago 773.248.5200 (ext. 209) <http://www.chicagohouse.org>

LGBTQ Pride Event, International Family Equality Day Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier actively welcomes the lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer/questioning community. Two months of special programs that showcase our ongoing commitment to making the museum a joyful place for all families. 3:00pm - 4:30pm Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier <http://www.chicagochildrensmuseum.org>

Tuesday, May 8

On the Table The Chicago Community Trust's annual region-wide civic engagement initiative where tens of thousands of Chicagoans engage in conversation, develop new relationships and inspire action to make differences in communities. Anyone can host. 6:00pm Various locations 866-737-6951 <http://OnTheTable.com>

Thursday, May 10

Crimes training by Matthew Shepard Foundation and Center on Halsted Instruction on state and federal hate crime laws with a real-world scenario to work through with instructors to properly identify a hate crime, how to ensure a comprehensive and thorough investigation and how to prepare the case for trial. 9:00am - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15392>

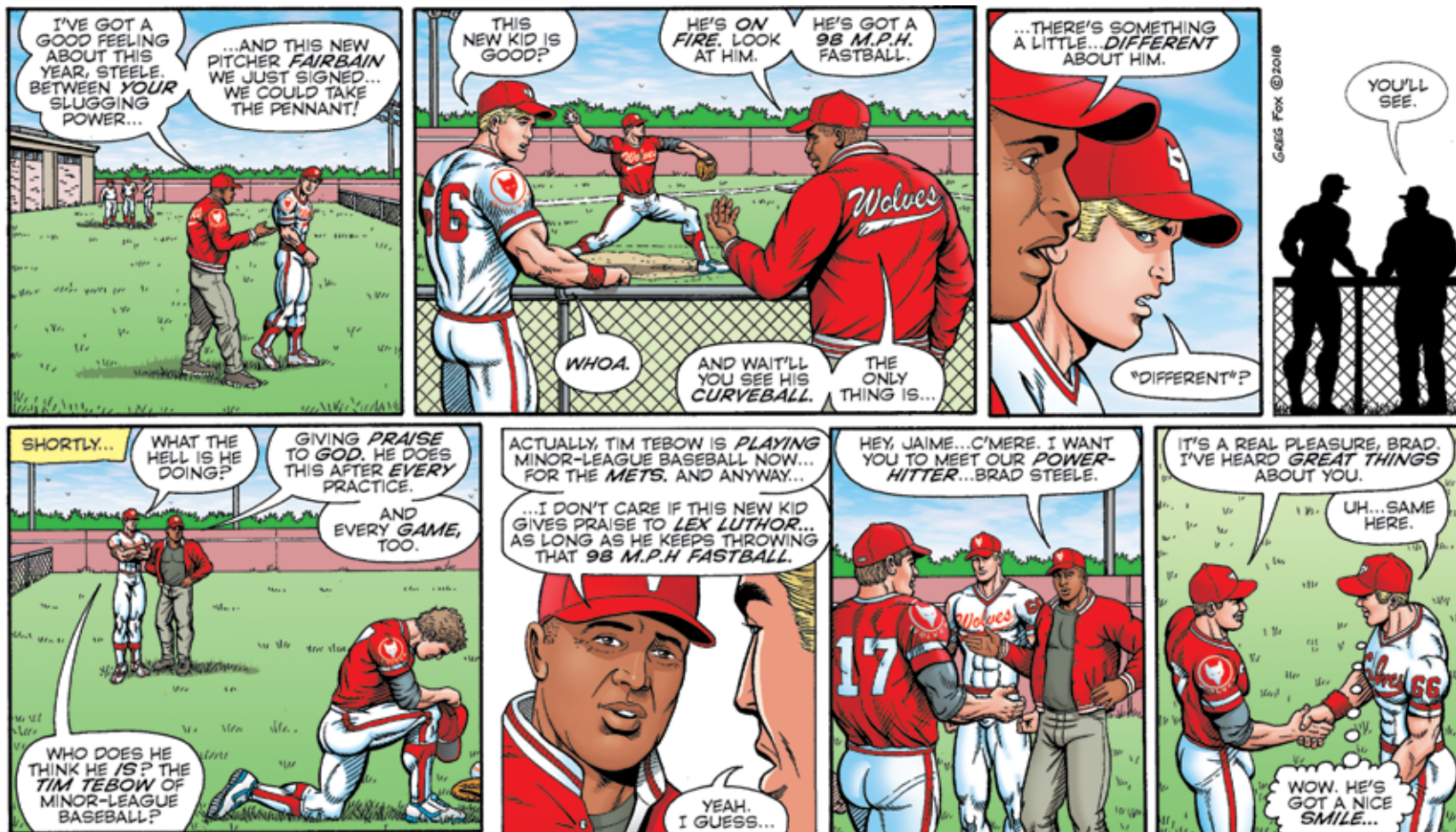
The Blue Jean Ball An old-fashioned barn dance and BBQ. Benefits Rivendell Theatre Ensemble. Tickets are \$100 in advance (\$125 at the door) or \$145 to include the VIP hour reception at 6pm. 7:00pm - 10:00pm The Flower Firm, 451 N Wood, Chicago <http://rivendell-theatre.org/blue-jean-ball-2018/>

Friday, May 11

About Face Theatre's Wonka Ball at Saturday Night Live: The Experience Dress as your favorite comedy character and relive 40 years of television history. Support from WONKA BALL enables About Face to thrive as Chicago's celebrated center for LGBTQIA theatre. VIP reception 7pm. 8:00pm Museum of Broadcast Communications 360 N. State St Chicago 773-784-8565 <http://www.aboutface theatre.com>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox



BOOK REVIEW

Tomorrow Will Be Different

by Sarah McBride

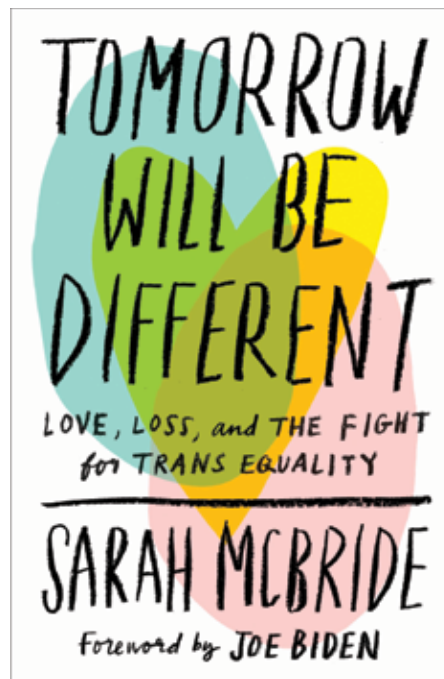
\$26; Crown Archetype; 288 pages
BY GARY L. DAY

Sometimes a person's private journey fortuitously intersects with a public ferment, and quite spontaneously both a movement and a leader are born. This seems to be what happened with Sarah McBride and the movement for trans equality.

In many ways, McBride's story is a familiar one: a childhood feeling "different," learning about oneself, the difficult coming out process—a path travelled by countless LGBTQ people. It's when her personal journey of growth intersects with the world of politics that her story becomes more than just interesting and becomes informative. This dual narrative of personal growth and public policy is recounted in her memoir, *Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality* (Crown Archetype; HB, 274 pp).

McBride is a native of Wilmington, Delaware, and grew up in a family well-connected with progressive Delaware politics. Her family had connections to the Biden family, and as a teenager she worked for Beau Biden's campaign for DE attorney general. She first garnered national attention when, while she was student body president at American University, she posted a notice on Facebook coming out as a transgender woman. The university newspaper reprinted her statement and—instant celebrity.

She then went on to become an intern at the Obama White House, the first trans person to ever hold such a position. Further political work eventually led to her being the first trans person



to address a national audience at the Democratic National Convention in 2016.

McBride also experienced both triumph and tragedy in her private life. In 2012 she met the first great love of her life, Andy, a trans man and fellow activist. The two became not only soul mates but partners in activism. But their grand romance was to be short-lived: Andy was soon diagnosed with terminal cancer. Nevertheless, they married in August 2014. Andy died four days later.

For such a young person, McBride has a remarkably clear understanding of herself, as well as an impressive sensitivity to the emotions of those around her. This clarity and sensitivity makes for

compelling storytelling; for instance, when she recounts her coming out process, she is able to go beyond describing her own feelings and help us understand what her parents went through. She tells of her parents' initial shock, and then how they grieved for what they felt was the loss of their son, and ultimately how they struggled and achieved understanding and acceptance.

She also has a politician's ear for carefully balanced language as she recounts her work in the White House and later for the Human Rights Campaign. Additionally, she displays a policy wonk's grasp of detail and process, something she doubtless learned working in an Administration that both valued and demanded intelligent analysis (as opposed to the current Administration). Fortunately, she doesn't lose herself in the intricacies of policy and process, something that often happens with policy wonks. She knows the story she wants to tell, and she pretty much sticks with it.

One aspect of McBride's memoir in which her relative youth works against her is a lack of depth of perspective that can only come from much more life experience. She needs more time to find a context and a meaning, not only to her journey of personal growth, but to her political and advocacy work as well.

Nevertheless, McBride's story, which she tells here in a clear and honest fashion, is important and a valuable one to experience. Not only will LGBTQ persons, young and old, find much with which to identify, but it will help us all understand what a trans person must deal with on a daily basis, both before and after coming out.

Also, McBride provides a bit of a blueprint of how to utilize one's personal journey, one's private issues, to spark political movement and potential change. And let's be honest, in these dark days of political and social turmoil, we can use all the inspirational stories we can get.

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Curtain call at Illinois Safe Schools Alliance's "Night of Noise: Celebrating the Past; Looking Toward the Future."
Photo by Melissa Wasserman

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