

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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Marquise Vilson.
Photo courtesy of NBC



ATTACKED

Gay Chicagoan
brutally assaulted.
Photo of Glenn Collins
courtesy of Charles Nelson

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TRANS ACTION

Marquise Vilson on being transgender in Hollywood

**BETTE
DAVIS'
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annual fundraiser.
Photo of Dr. Nabeela
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Photo by Vern Hester

HOUSE PARTY

Chicago House
holds annual
spring brunch/
fashion show

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Above: WCT reviews Buddy (on page 14).
Photo by Michael Brosilow

online exclusives at
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STRONG TEA

The event series known as The Tea debuted at Center on Halsted.
Photo of Bambi Banks (left) and Trannika Rex by Vern Hester

DOG DAYS



The Savor column takes a closer look at Dog Haus and uncovers ZED451's summer cocktails.
Photo by Andrew Davis

'TULLY' VISION

WCT talks with director Jason Reitman about the current movie release Tully.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Janelle Monae, Westworld and Nate Berkus.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS



THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT SAUGATUCK & DOUGLAS, MICHIGAN...

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SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN



Est. 1981



Gay man severely injured in attack/robbery

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Chicago resident sustained multiple injuries after a severe beating and robbery the evening of March 23.

Glenn Collins, who is gay, had just left work at 9 p.m. at Tuley Park, 501 E. 90th Pl., and was walking to his car when he was approached by four men who attacked him.

"I was facing my driver's-side door," he recalled. "As I put my keys out to unlock it, I heard the footsteps. But my reaction, when I turned around, was too late. Someone ran up and hit me. I felt something cold go up across the right side of my forehead. It dazed me. When I turned to the left, I saw the four guys. They just punched on me and beat me in the face. I fell to the ground, next to the car."

Two of the men ran off with bags Collins was carrying; one of the remaining men took Collins' car keys and began trying to get into his car. The last man took Collins' cellphone and demanded to know the password, repeatedly striking him when he could not get the phone to work.

"When [the password] didn't work, he started beating me in the head again," Collins added.

One of Collins' co-workers heard the scuffle and called for the men to leave. The man with the cellphone fled, while the other had managed to start Collins' car by this time and drove off. Collins, by now drifting in an out of consciousness, was taken inside the park facilities until help arrived. He was later taken to Advocate Christ Hospital and Medical Center.

Among the injuries Collins sustained were a concussion, multiple bruises, two black eyes and a fractured nose, he said, adding that he also had to wear a neck brace for a time. He did not recall any anti-gay remarks during the attack but said Chicago Police Department (CPD) had told him the attack was likely premeditated.

"They had to be watching me, honestly," Collins said, adding that the park had minimal se-



Glenn Collins in the hospital. Photos courtesy of Charles Nelson

curity. "They were talking, but I can't remember what they were saying."

Collins teaches dance at Tuley Park and thinks the men likely targeted him as for being gay on that basis. He said that the Chicago Police Department detective in charge of his case has been in contact regularly, both to check on his health and keep him up to date on the investigation. Collins has not yet returned to work.

"It's been a struggle for me to function and go out, and even be in big crowds," he said. "I'm gradually doing things here and there but always with someone. I don't go out at night."

According to the CPD, the investigation is ongoing.

which is one of the cities Amazon is considering for its second headquarters, and The Stranger in Seattle, the location of Amazon's headquarters.

More information on the brunch is at EqualityIllinois.org/pridebrunch.

Correction

In the May 2 issue, it should have stated, in the spotlight of The Gentleman Caller, that the meetings between Williams and Inge actually happened and are documented. The play is Dawkins' imagining of what happened during those meetings.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

GUEST COLUMN

BY REGINA VICTOR



Steppenwolf's Multi-Cultural Fellows leading the way in forging alliances among minority artists

We've all seen them: Those shows where a sole person of color stands out in an ensemble sea of white. For artists, being the "only one" of a kind in any given production can be a lonely experience. It also means that creating artistic cohorts—a group of people focused on one task or brought together to foster brought together to create general change—is an essential skill.

Steppenwolf Theatre's Multicultural Fellows brought the issue front and center during a two-hour April workshop attended by more than 50 theater artists from a variety of disciplines. The core question: How can we foster community amongst POC/Queer Folx within the theater when we are often 'the only one' at an institution?

Organizations including the Chicago Inclusion Project, Not in Our House, the Chicago

thinks big was very empowering and inspiring because I've always thought that in order to make a successful theater you have to have that board support. And you can't push back against it, but she broke institutional barriers to prove that isn't true." — Estrellita Edwell, Production Management Apprentice and Steppenwolf Multicultural Fellow.

Change is difficult. And necessary.

"Working on this event taught me that change doesn't happen overnight. It's an ongoing process, there are no shortcuts; and just like anything worth having, it won't be easy to achieve. The fact that we all could have this experience proves to me how far we've come, as well as how much further we have to go. It was a wonderful night with wonderful people, and we should be proud. Tomorrow there will be more of us." — Mario J. Rag-

gazon, Electrics Apprentice and Multicultural Fellow.

Embrace agency and authenticity.

"Having the agency and right to voice concerns, grievances, or issues at all levels is important. Also being one's authentic self—in any work place—brings val-

ue to all institutions." — Wardell Julius Clark, Director and Casting and Producing Associate at Timeline.

Next steps.

"Ultimately, what I took away had to do with personal agency and the need for a multiplicity of voices on the decision-making team behind the table as well as onstage. Only then can we build cohorts to give ourselves the tools to have productive conversations with institutions. One excellent idea that surfaced was a Dramaturg/Playwrights mixer for queer and POC artists. I throw the ball in your court Chicago Theatre—where are we having the next cohort building event?" — Regina Victor.

"For artists, being the 'only one' of a kind in any given production can be a lonely experience."

Theatre Accountability Coalition and Steppenwolf's Multicultural Fellowship program are living proof that cohorts—which can take the form of an official organization or simply be several like-minded cast members who have agreed to join forces—are thriving throughout the city.

"When I look around this room, all I see is hope," said keynote speaker and Black Ensemble Theater Founding Artistic Director Jackie Taylor.

Here are three additional takeaways from the April 30 event:

Yes, you can buck the board.

"Taylor's talk about how she got rid of people who didn't see the same vision as her just because they thought small and she

Regina Victor is one of six Multicultural Fellow at the Steppenwolf Theatre and the founder of Rescripted.com. They helped curate the event above. For more information about Steppenwolf's Multicultural Fellow program, go to <https://www.steppenwolf.org/education/professional-leadership-programs/fellow>.

EI issues invite to Amazon employees

Echoing the national NO GAY? NO WAY! campaign, Equality Illinois is issuing a special invitation for its June 3 Equality Illinois Pride Kickoff Brunch to the employees of Amazon to encourage the world's largest online retailer to locate its new HQ2 in an LGBTQ-inclusive state such as Illinois.

The invitation to Amazon employees in Illinois, including the Glamazons, the LGBTQ employee resource group of Amazon, is being shared through social media and in ads in the new issues of Windy City Times in Chicago,

Community activist Bruce Barnes dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Community activist Bruce Barnes Jr. died April 4 at home due to complications from HIV and cancer. He was 62.

Barnes was born April 29, 1955, in Chicago. His family soon moved to Antioch, Illinois and that is where he spent his childhood. He was actively involved in his high school (Antioch Community) newspaper—The Tom-Tom—and was the Sequoia yearbook photographer as well as a member of the drama club and the *a capella* choir.

In recent years, Barnes returned to Antioch to help create the Lakes Region Historical Society's computer operation.

When Barnes moved to Chicago as an adult he explored everything the city had to offer including the original Gold Coast gay bars and jazz clubs. He held managerial positions at Mel Mar-kon Restaurants and Keeshin Charter Bus Lines among other jobs during his early adulthood. Barnes put his information technology skills to use with his own business, ChicagoNetTech, where he provided low-cost or free telephone and internet services to community organizations.

Barnes got involved in the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a member of ACT UP Chicago and was instrumental in the success of the

original NAMES Project/AIDS Memorial Quilt that was displayed at the old Navy Pier in 1988. He ensured that every volunteer shift was covered so the Quilt would never be unattended and or at risk of being defaced by individuals who might want to do it harm. Barnes was known to have said "not on my watch, mister" when talking about the Quilt's safety. He also photographed the Quilt in Chicago as well as when it was displayed in its entirety in Washington, D.C., in 1996.

Barnes was also on the Howard Brown Health advisory board, delivered meals for Open Hand Chicago and assisted numerous HIV/AIDS service organizations. He was also a member, since 2003, of the Hesperia and King Oscar Masonic Lodges where he attained Master Mason status.

He met his partner, Ben Ziola, on an online dating site and soon after (in 2008) they registered as domestic partners. They spent 10 years together in the house Barnes bought and refurbished years earlier in Humboldt Park.

In 2010 and 2011, Barnes and Ziola took road trips to Los Angeles to take in the Turner Classic Movie's Film Festival, where stars of yesteryear and the now-late Robert Osborne would appear for meet and greets with the fans. They met and talked with Osborne, Tony Curtis, Tab Hunter, Eli



Bruce Barnes (right) with partner Ben Ziola.

Wallach, Jane Withers and Lorna Luft, among others during those events.

Barnes is survived by Ziola, brother Brian Barnes, nephews Daniel and Billy Barnes, cousins Karen and Tim Wikholm and their son Jonathon Wikholm as well as their four cats. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bruce Sr. and Joan Barnes.

"Bruce was an old-school AIDS activist," said longtime community HIV/AIDS activist and Open Hand Chicago co-founder Lori Cannon. "He stood his ground and was not afraid to name names. Bruce knew where all the bodies were buried. He was a natural community organizer and was so accomplished in creating coalitions of organizations and politicians to forcefully address the deadly AIDS epidemic. He expected everyone to

contribute to assist those who were shunned, discriminated against, suffering and dying. Bruce leaves a huge legacy of hands-on contributions that will never be forgotten. Never let it be said that one person cannot make a difference."

"Bruce was a compassionate hero that fought for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS," said Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle. "During the early days of the epidemic he volunteered endless hours to help bring the quilt to Navy Pier. He along with so many did not want to forget the countless lives lost during a horrific time in our lives. He will be missed."

"Bruce was an unstoppable crusader for the things and people in whom he believed," said Jonathon Wikholm.

Ziola shared this quote Barnes tagged at the end of all of his email messages since 2009: "When I retire to my log cabin in the forests of Michigan; I will no longer have a credit card, phone, internet, computer, water service, natural gas or electricity provided by corporations. I am going off the grid. Give me cash, paper mail, a well, solar panels, a wind generator and a wood burning stove. I will live out the remaining days of my life without the chaos that modern living has wrought upon all our lives."

"This quote about Bruce's future describes his nature perfectly, in contrast to his real life," said Ziola.

Barnes' memorial service and final Masonic Rites were held April 29 at the Hesperia Masonic Lodge in Chicago's Jefferson Park neighborhood. His family has requested that any donations be made to the Center on Halsted.

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Robert Wrasse leading charge for installing young LGBT politicians

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Growing up in the suburbs of Detroit, Robert Wrasse recalled seeing a lot of anti-marriage-equality bumper stickers reading “One Man One Woman” when talking with Windy City Times recently.

Wrasse began to clue in to his sexuality as a gay man by the end of middle school and said the ensuing years weren’t particularly easy for him. “I definitely went through some bullying in middle school and high school and hit a rough patch coming out to friends and family after college,” he said.

Wrasse attended college at University of Michigan, majoring in political science. After graduation, he relocated to Washington, D.C., which he said brought an “immediate sense of relief.”

“I was free to be myself and to slowly repair and grow relationships with family from a safe distance,” he said.

He also began to discover a sense of purpose. “I also knew I wanted things to be different and easier for young LGBT people, who probably wouldn’t find that same relief or safe distance, recognizing that many LGBT people have fewer safety nets than I had. At that point, I didn’t know how exactly [to do that], but I was ready to be a part of that change.”

Wrasse said that LGBTQ suicide and homelessness statistics troubled him, in particular.

“I saw the big opportunity for sweeping change with the 2008 elections and I wanted to be a part of it,” he said. “I joined Congressman Jared Polis’ first class of interns. He was the first openly gay man elected to Congress as a freshman. I wanted to learn more about law making and witness it first hand.

“Those were really exciting times to be in D.C. I remember marching down to the White House to celebrate the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and watching President Obama sign the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.”

For the next several years, Wrasse continued working in politics from both Chicago and D.C., joining President Obama’s LGBT Vote team in Chicago, followed by a stint on the fundraising team. Most recently, he was working for Organizing for Action in Chicago.

“It was there that I met Amanda Litman, co-founder & executive director of Run for Something. We hosted a book signing for her. I was so excited to get supporters in the room. I’d read parts of the book and wanted everyone to hear her story.”

He said it turned out “one of the people most moved by it was me.”

Run for Something launched in January 2017 with the mission to “recruit and support young, diverse progressives to run for down-ballot races

in order to build a bench for the future.” Its goal is to “lower the barriers to entry for these candidates by helping them with seed money, organization building, and access to trainings needed to be successful.”

The organization has had nearly 18,000 individuals express interest in running for public office since it launched.

In March, Wrasse was asked to join Run for Something as development director. “It’s my mission to make sure we are able to continually recruit and support this wave of passionate young people who want to run for local office.”

Diversifying the pipeline of political talent is of the utmost importance to Wrasse, who said LGBTQ people in particular struggle to see themselves as leaders. “You cannot be what you cannot see. I don’t think many LGBTQ people see themselves as leaders, because so much of our history and the contributions LGBTQ people have made to society have just been swept under the rug.”

He added, “Run for Something does that. We are here to help young people from under represented backgrounds. For me personally, seeing that 20 percent of our endorsees were LGBT in January is huge. It’s what gets me to work every day.”

Wrasse said since the organization launched, 50 percent of its endorsed candidates are women and nearly 50 percent are people of color. He also noted Run for Something has endorsed a total of 69 LGBTQ candidates, 45 of which have upcoming elections.

One of those LGBTQ candidates is Kevin Morrison, who is running for Cook County board commissioner in the 15th District. “One thing I think is so brave is he’s running against the chair of the Illinois Republican Party. It’s this passion to make change and not letting the status quo dictate whether or not you’ll take a chance to lead your community.”

Run for Something provides individuals like Morrison with several different types of support including contacts with other progressive organizations, local mentors and private sector experts, candidate guides that explain things like filing to run, fundraising, policy 101, tips for knocking on doors, and more.

Wrasse said for many young people troubled by the 2016 election results, there was an urgent desire to get involved in politics but also a question of how exactly to go about doing that.

“I am someone who most people would consider pretty connected, I’ve worked in politics for some time now, but if you asked me, before Run for Something, how to run for office, the first steps, I would not have been able to tell you,” he explained. “Where do you start, how do I file paper work, what does it cost, who do I need to help me, am I qualified. That is the problem that Run for Something solves.”



Robert Wrasse.

Photo courtesy of Wrasse

Reports: Lightfoot steps down from Police Board

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lori Lightfoot, who is a lesbian and has for three years headed up the Chicago Police Board, resigned from the Board on May 7 in what many insiders believe is a preliminary step towards a mayoral run.

Lightfoot’s resignation from the nine-person body was reported May 7 in Chicago Sun-Times. She has reportedly also hired staffers to assist her in a run.

Lightfoot has butted heads with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel on several occasions since he first appointed her to her post in 2015. In April, Chicago Tribune reported that, when asked about a run, Lightfoot said that “this is a decision that has to be made by me and my family, because we’re going to be putting ourselves out there and asking citizens of Chicago to take us seriously.”

Lightfoot is a former federal prosecutor who specialized in white-collar and violent crimes. At an Oct. 2017 gathering for the Victory Fund, Lightfoot spoke about the main principle inspiring her work: “If people don’t feel safe—if they don’t feel like they’re safe in their homes, if they don’t feel like they’re safe in the way they can walk down the street and claim the geography under their feet—nothing else matters.”

If she runs for the mayoral post, Lightfoot would be up against presumably Emanuel and a

number of other challengers. Were she to win, she would be the first openly lesbian mayor of Chicago. E. Denise Simmons, elected as mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2008, was the first openly lesbian Black mayor in America.

Chicago Sun-Times’ article is at <https://bit.ly/2rs19UW>. Chicago Tribune’s article is at <https://trib.in/2rsBATs>.

As to whether or not he’d ever run for public office, “I won’t rule anything out, but I think it’s very important to be ingrained in the community that you want to become a leader in. You have to have real relationships. I’ve moved back and forth between Michigan, D.C. and Chicago so many times that I’m looking forward to being in one place long enough to really see how I can be helpful and to start volunteering my time to solve problems and recognizing whether or not I’m the right person to run.

“There is no shortage of men holding elected office in our country. Right now I’m a lot more passionate about getting women and people of color and trans people to see themselves as leaders and running for local office.”

While Wrasse said he doesn’t expect to have much downtime in the coming months due to midterm elections, when he does have time to relax he spends it checking out ‘90s cover bands, running Chicago’s lakeshore path and spending time with his partner, Mark Elledge.

What is Wrasse’s parting message? It is “We can’t look to others to lead. If you are passionate about solving a problem in your community and ready to put in the work and run a good, strong campaign, we’ll help you out.”

Hate-crimes summit at Center on May 10

The Matthew Shepard Foundation is joining forces with the Center on Halsted for a hate-crimes summit and community reception, taking place Thursday, May 10, at 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (the summit) and 6:30-8 p.m. (the reception) at the Center, 3656 N. Halsted St.

The event is a training for law enforcement, first responders and prosecutors who are interested in the history and the future of hate crimes from national and local perspectives.

The summit will review federal and state hate-crime laws, share significant prosecutions, provide updates on the Department of Justice’s cold cases and discuss hate-crime reporting in Illinois.

Judy and Dennis Shepard, the parents of Matthew Shepard—whose murder was the impetus for the Matthew Shepard Foundation as well as the Hate Crimes Prevention Act—will be giving the keynote.

The reception is open to the public; the summit is only for law-enforcement and prosecutors.

See MatthewShepard.org.



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Fired Rockford-area lesbian files EEOC complaint

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Winnebago County resident has filed a complaint with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against her former employer on the grounds that she was fired for being a lesbian.

Brooke Berentes, who lives in Machesney Park, Illinois, a suburb of Rockford, said in her April 10 complaint that her boss at Choice Furniture, located in Rockford, fired her about a week after learning that her fiancé, Ashlie Judd, was a woman.

Berentes was hired in August 2017. On Aug. 31, she introduced her fiancé to the store manager and, according to the complaint, she alleges she was given the "cold shoulder" by the store manager thereafter. On Sept. 6, she was informed that she was being let go because she was not "a good fit" for the company.

When Berentes' attorney attempted to resolve the matter, they were given a report of her supposed infractions, but she maintains that she was never informed of those while she was actually employed at Choice.

Berentes' complaint, filed on her behalf by Chicago attorney Betty Tsamis, maintains that Choice is in violation of federal Title VII gender-discrimination laws. An additional complaint maintains that the firm violated Americans with Disabilities Act rules when it asked Berentes to fill out a form listing her medications and physician information.

Judd was recently awarded parental rights of a child whom she and her ex-wife had conceived through artificial insemination. Her ex-wife had given birth to the child and had argued that Judd was therefore not entitled to such rights; an Illinois appeals court ruled in Judd's favor April 27, however.

Out & Equal holds Citywide Pride kickoff

BY LIZ BAUDLER

The Chicagoland Out & Equal's May 1 Citywide Pride Kickoff at the offices of the global law firm Jenner & Block was both a beginning and a goodbye, as outgoing local Out & Equal Chairman Jim Huberty was thanked for his service. Huberty and incoming co-chairs Bernadette Smith and Joshua Wright welcomed about 80 different companies and community organization looking to share ideas and partner with each other on events to perhaps educate their employees about LGBTQ issues.

Huberty described Out & Equal as helping to identify topics to focus on and make partnerships with other organizations, and he encouraged attendees to run any concerns and questions by his organization. Last year Out & Equal put on 14 events in the city and suburbs, and this year's slate of events includes companies like Comcast, Barilla and Northern Trust hosting discussions and presentations on adoption, LGBTQ history and trans issues.

Prior to the kickoff, Out & Equal had sent out a survey of topics that attendees might want to focus on, and the room was set up with six flipboards for participants. Those topics included engagement and intersectionality; sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; business and corporate culture; policies and rights; learning and leadership development; and community involvement and partnership. For about fifteen minutes attendees had the chance to discuss these issues and network with each other before reconvening for some closing words.

Huberty also mentioned needing to fill the local chapter of Out & Equal's Board; they need five more members to be fully staffed at 12. (Anyone interested in joining can email oechicagoland@gmail.com.) The national organization's new CEO, Erin Uritus, is also potentially visiting Chicago in



Jenner & Block host Howard S. Suskin, Bernadette Smith, Jim Huberty and Joshua Wright. Photo by Liz Baudler

the fall, and is currently conducting a national listening tour for input about the organization.

The outgoing chair recalled the early days of his career, when he was warned he might lose his job for coming out at First National Bank. "Over the years, the issues have changed, but not our expectations," Huberty said, adding that he still sees inequality.

USG employees Cassandra Nelson and Jodie Arenz attended looking for ideas to bring back to their company's Pride Leadership Council. While both were hoping for more ideas on best practices when it came to LGBTQ issues, both thought the handouts Out & Equal provided were "fantastic" and a great opportunity to "self-audit" as a company when it came to LGBTQ issues.

CSGS LGBTQ talk series concludes May 17

The University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) will hold its LGBTQ speaker series through May. All events will take place at 5733 S. University Ave.

The series concludes Thursday, May 17, at 5 p.m. The speaker will be University of Maryland Associate Professor of American Studies Christina Hanhardt, who has written *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*.

See <http://gendersexuality.uchicago.edu/>.

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Chicago House celebrates springtime with 'Revive'

BY VERNON HESTER

Chicago House and Social Service Agency held its 32nd annual spring brunch and fashion show on May 6 in the Winter Garden Room atop The Harold Washington Library. The event, which piggybacked off of last year's concept of footsteps, was titled "Revive! Rally on the Runway," and was designed to springboard the start of spring and to revive the spirit while acknowledging the

passing of winter.

With a near-capacity crowd of more than 300 guests, the festivities included a three-course gourmet brunch, specialty cocktails, a one-of-a-kind flower market, a lavish live auction, musical and dance performances, and the titular runway show featuring work from local, national and international designers. The annual brunch/fashion show has served as a fundraiser for Chicago House and has emerged as one of the key social events

for the LGBTQ community. This year's event also celebrated the accomplishments of Michael Quinlan and his F*** You Hate Campaign, and featured words from author/activist/publisher and Chicago House Trans Safe coordinator Reyna Ortiz. Channel 5's Chris Hush emceed the event.

In his introduction to Spirit Award winner Michael Quinlan, Chicago House Chief Executive Officer Scott Ammarell said, "Revive—wake up and refresh from a long winter. But we also need to revive against the continued onslaught against LGBTQ Rights with the appointment of openly homophobic public officials, the attempted ban of trans individuals in the military, the removal of LGBTQ inclusion from the HUD mission statement, the brazen physical assaults on gay people and the continued violence against trans individuals not to mention the lack of resources for HIV." (Through special events at his establishment, Links Taproom, badly needed money was raised with Quinlan matching the amount to support Chicago House and The GLBT Community Center of Central Florida.)

After Ortiz spoke about working at Chicago House and reading from her self-published book, *T Stands for Truth; In Search of the Queen*, the fashion show took place. A wide selection of formal and leisure wear was on display as models walked the runway in clothes designed by Cram, Sylwia, Soundoff, Anna Loosli, Ricorso, Rakan, Radoggio and Black Tie Formalwear. The festivities came to a finish with juggler Cyril Rabbath seemingly appearing from thin air while actress/vocalist Molly Callinan closing out the show with her rendition of "I Came for Love."

Sponsors of the event included BMO Harris Bank, Gilead, MB Financial Bank, Care Roofing, Replay Beer and Bourbon, Orbitz, Cram, and Saville Flowers among others.

Founded in 1985, Chicago House has served individuals and families impacted by HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ and gender non-conformity marginalization, poverty and homelessness. The organization has provided housing, employment services, medical linkage and retention services, HIV prevention and education, and legal services.



Left: Emcee Chris Hush. Right: Michael Quinlan (right) receiving his award from Scott Ammarell. Photos by Vernon Hester



Left, above: Performer Cyril Rabbath. Left, below: Singer Molly Callinan. Above: Chicago House's Reyna Ortiz. Photos by Vernon Hester

Report: Man who threatened Boystown shooting captured

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Shane Sleeper, who was mistakenly released by authorities even after a litany of charges, includ-



Shane Sleeper.

Photo courtesy of the Cook County sheriff's department

ing terrorism and hate crime charges, were issued by Cook County prosecutors earlier this week, was apprehended the afternoon of May 3 at an Uptown apartment.

Sleeper's capture was first reported on the CWB Chicago blog.

Sleeper was accused of issuing threats this past winter against staff and patrons of Sidetrack nightclub in Boystown, allegedly threatening to perpetrate a shooting on a scale like that of the Pulse nightclub incident in Orlando. He was being held in Cook County Jail and faced a number of misdemeanor charges. Prosecutors presented a number of new felony charges, comprising some 10 different cases, on May 1.

But a bureaucratic snafu subsequently resulted in Sleeper's accidental release. He was apprehended without incident however in an apartment building on the 4800 block of North Clark Street. The apartment belonged to a friend of Sleeper.

CWB Chicago's report is at <http://www.cwb-chicago.com/2018/05/exclusive-fugitive-who-threatened.html?m=1>.

LGBT education bill passes state Senate

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Illinois Senate passed the Inclusive Curriculum Bill—legislation calling for the inclusion of LGBT-related historical events and contributions in state classrooms—on May 2.

The Senate passed the bill 34-18, with two Republican legislators crossing the aisle to vote in its favor. The legislation, whose chief sponsor is state Sen. Heather Steans, D-Chicago, now heads for the state House, where advocates hope to see a vote before the end of the current session on May 31.

Supporters of the LGBT-rights advocacy Equality Illinois, which has been pushing for the bill alongside organizations including Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and the Legacy Project, lobbied for the bill at the Illinois Statehouse on its April 11 "lobby day."

Equality Illinois CEO Brian Johnson told Windy City Times later that week that, "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."

Illinois would be the second state in the union, after California, to have an LGBT-inclusive curriculum if the legislation is passed.

European activist in town May 12-14

European LGBTQ-rights activist Kevin Ovenden will be in Chicago May 12-14 for two appearances.

On Saturday, May 12, Ovenden will speak at "The Rise of the Far Right in Europe, and the Left's Responses" at 2:30 p.m. at the Logan

Square Chicago Public Library, 3030 W. Fullerton Ave. Open University of the Left is the lead sponsor of this event.

On Monday, May 14, the Gay Liberation Network is sponsoring "Why LGBTQs (& everyone) Should Support Palestinian Rights" at 7 p.m. at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway.

According to his blog, Ovenden is the author of *Syriza Inside the Labyrinth*, which is being published this autumn by Pluto Press. He is a long-standing socialist activist and writer in Britain who has closely followed Greek politics, society and culture for more than 25 years. He writes particularly on racism, the politics of the Middle East and the crisis of the Eurozone for a range of outlets.

See <http://gayliberation.net/blog/> and <https://www.facebook.com/GayLiberationNet/>.

Springfield Pridefest taking place May 19

On Saturday, May 19, the eighth annual Springfield Pridefest celebration will take place downtown on Capital Avenue, between 4th and 6th streets, from noon to 10 p.m.

This year's theme is "No H8. No Labels."

The Pride Parade will kick off Springfield Pridefest at 11:30 a.m. leading to the ribbon-cutting event at 4th and Capitol. In addition, Springfield Pridefest 2018 will feature musicians Fun DMC, Thornhill and The Shenanigans, and will have a show featuring local drag performers.

See SpringfieldPride.org.



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Legal Council marks season with May Ball

BY VERNON HESTER

The Legal Council for Health Justice (LCHJ) held its annual May Ball on May 5 at the home of Dr. Nabeela Rasheed and Fawria Mirza—complete with a Derby Day theme. The event, titled “Race to the Finish Line,” featured a silent auction, raffle, DJ and Southern cuisine, and was aimed at launching the 30th anniversary of the organization.

In a press release for the event, LCHJ Director of Development Kevin Mork, for the Council stated, (The Legal Council for Health aims to) “use the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being to people facing illness and disability. Our evidence based medical legal partnership programs work uniquely with health, hospital, and social service systems to train and support the care provider network, provide direct representation to referred patients, and conduct systematic advocacy to promote health equity among populations facing chronic, disabling, and stigmatizing health and social conditions.”

In the same press release, Board President Mike Sullivan said, “As [the] Legal Council enters its third decade of service to the community, we are proud to never stop serving vulnerable clients with dignity and care regardless of today’s challenging climate.

As guests enjoyed the cocktail selection and dined on smoked turkey sliders DJ Nevin provided a low key soundtrack for the evening. An added attraction came with guests who wore ornate Derby Day hats and outfits. Though there was much frivolity, there was still a feeling of seriousness to the event.

During a short presentation near the close of

the evening after comments from the first Board President, Kimble Anderson, host Dr. Rasheed said, “We are trying to provide services that people need to live their fullest lives.” Her partner, Mirza said, “More now than ever we need an organization like this... With this current [presidential] administration we’ve seen attacks on access to healthcare, attacks on trans rights, attacks on women’s rights and attacks on immigration. With more people involved. it’s more essential. ... If we don’t take care of our community, no one will take care of it for us.”

After thanking honorary chair Phillip Tortorich, Legal Council Executive Director Tom Yates urged guests to “have a conversation with some of the attorneys involved in the Council. You will be amazed at the impact that they have with their clients.”

Attorney Myron Grant spoke about how coming to work for the Council from the South gave him a sobering experience. He said, “Working with our clients each day reminds me that we are not so different. I was raised by a single mother. We lived in public housing and growing up as a gay black man in South Georgia, things weren’t always easy. Oftentimes, when I am meeting with a client, I think about how it could be me on the other side of that desk.”

Sponsors for the event included Kirkland and Ellis LLP, Sidley and Austin LLP, The Illinois Hospital and Health Association, Jenner and Block LLP, Winston and Strawn LLP and MB Financial Bank, among others. J and L Catering provided food, with Sidetrack supplying cocktails.

Tickets for the 30th-anniversary gala are on sale, with the date set for Saturday, Oct. 13, at Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St.



Kevin Mork (right) speaks at the presentation.

Photos by Vernon Hester



Above left: Tom Yates (left), Kevin Mork and May Ball guests. Below left: Karen Kimble and guest. Below: DJ Nevin.

Photos by Vernon Hester



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Morrison officially wins, gears up for Pride Month campaign event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Openly gay community organizer Kevin B. Morrison will face off against incumbent Republican 15th District Cook County Board Commissioner Timothy Schneider in the general election on Nov. 6. Schneider, an ally of Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner, is currently serving his third term in office and is chairing Illinois' Republican Party.

This comes after a protracted dispute over the March 20 primary election vote counts between Morrison and his former Democratic challenger Ravi Raju. (Morrison won by 10 votes.) Raju conceded to Morrison in a phone call April 20 and has pledged his full support to flip the district from red to blue. Plans are underway to have a unity event with Raju in the future.

"I am proud to be running as the first openly LGBTQ Cook County board commissioner," said Morrison. "I count myself fortunate to have received the support of the LGBTQ community and our LGBTQ elected officials. Now more than ever, it is important to recognize the achievements of LGBTQ individuals throughout history, and as



Kevin Morrison.
Photo by AJ Kane Photography

commissioner I would strive for equitable treatment and the protection of our vital services for our community."

Morrison will be holding numerous fundraising events in the coming months including a Pride Month event at Sidetrack on Wed., June 13, 6-8 p.m. The host committee includes LGBT elected officials from across the state—Ald. Tom Tunney, James Cappleman, Deb Mell, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa and Raymond Lopez; state Reps. Greg Harris, Kelly Cassidy and Sam Yingling and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore among others.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/169096067063926/>. See <http://www.kevinmorrison.com/> for more information.

HRC work report looks at LGBTQ people of color

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) released a new report underscoring the need for inclusive employer-paid family and medical leave for LGBTQ working people of color.

Among the key findings are that:

—27 percent of respondents of color say they are afraid to request time off to care for a loved one because it might disclose their LGBTQ identity, compared to 16 percent of white respondents;

—53 percent of respondents of color agree with the statement, "I feel increased responsibility to care for certain loved ones due to their

lack of support from their families/friends due to their LGBTQ identities," compared to 44 percent of white respondents; and

—Only 36 percent of respondents of color report that their employer offers paid parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child.

"LGBTQ Working People of Color Need Paid Leave" is at <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC-PaidLeave-POCReport-FINAL.pdf>.

'What the L' panel discussion May 11

Center on Halsted's Courageous Conversations series continues Friday, May 11, 6-9 p.m., with "What the L: Meet the Faces Behind the Spaces."

Even with the disappearance of lesbian bars in Chicago, lesbian spaces in Chicago are alive and thriving. This event will be with a panel of those who have and are creating these spaces.

Panelists will include Brooke Webster (Meow Mix, Clandestina), Amie Klujian (Back Lot Bash, Curve Chicago), Bre Berry (Peach), Elena May (Lez Be), Jenae Williams (LBC, Chicago Dirty Girls), Eva Castro (Stargaze, Castro Entertainment), Pat McCombs (Jeffrey Pub), Alma Izquierdo (Amigas Latinas, Clandestina), Renauda Riddle (By Women for Women, Brunch ReMixed), Kristen Kaza (Slo' Mo) and Tamara Allen (B.Blyss!) Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim will moderate the discussion.

See <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/courageousconversations> for more information.



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viewpoints



**Dana
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MOMBIAN Of marriage and parenting

My spouse, Helen, and I recently celebrated our 25th anniversary (though our time as legal spouses is obviously shorter). Reaching a quarter-century together—just about half of my life—feels significant in a way that previous anniversaries, even milestone ones at the decade marks, have not. Here are a few reflections on the occasion:

We've been through a lot together, including six interstate moves as a couple and significant career changes. We met as struggling grad students and now have a son in high school who will soon be looking at colleges himself. For us, retirement is now closer than college. We've dealt with births and deaths in each of our families. We've disagreed and argued but also supported and encouraged each other.

How have we made this work? I don't think we have any secret except that we've both managed—with difficulty sometimes—to change and grow over the years. We've learned each other's peevish and sore points and how to communicate more effectively when one of us does get upset about something. We've been willing to adapt our roles and routines as needed around both outside employment and household tasks. We've offered each other support and sympathy, and remembered that ineffable something that drew us to each other in the first place.

Since becoming parents, too, and especially as our son gets older, I've become more aware of needing to set an example for him of what a healthy relationship looks like. Not that Helen and I never disagree—it's also important for our son to see that two people can argue and still love each other, and for him to learn how people can apologize and reach resolution after an argument. But I've come to realize it's often not worth sweating the small stuff.

We've also always believed that it's important for us each to have time apart as well as together. Marriage, legal or otherwise, doesn't mean being joined at the hip (except sometimes—ahem). Giving each other alone time, or time for other interests and friends, is critical for a balanced life and makes us appreciate each other anew when we're reunited.

Now that we're parents, it's equally important for us to spend time as a couple without our son (and not just in the hip-bumping way). When our son was



Dana Rudolph (second from left) with her mom, son, spouse and a dragon they dubbed Mitzy in 2014.
Image from Rudolph

an infant, my parents would sometimes watch him while we went out for a quiet dinner. He even stayed with them overnight for several days once while we took a real vacation. We came back truly rested and ready for the next phase of his ever-changing development; my parents loved spending time with their only grandchild; and our son gained exposure to new experiences and people. He's grown into a pretty adaptable teenager who loves to travel with us, and I put a lot of that down to his early "travel" to Grandma and Grandpa's. He's old enough now that we can pretty much take him any place we go to (except for bars, which aren't really our thing anyway), but it's still sometimes nice for us moms to get away on our own.

Having said that, one of the great joys of parenthood for me is doing things as an entire family. That includes rediscovering things I liked to do as a child—visiting children's museums, sledding in the winter, making cookies on a rainy afternoon. It also means being introduced to things by our 21st-century son, like VR games, ziplining, and Harry Potter amusement parks.

Kids don't make a marriage; there are plenty of happy and child-free married (and otherwise committed) folks out there. But for those marriages that do include them, children can expand horizons and give us extra motivation to work on our parental relationships (or, conversely, to realize that things are so bad that one needs to get out for the sake of the children).

Raising children brings new concerns and responsibilities to the adults involved. Passing the marker of midlife, children or no, carries yet another wave of issues and decisions (and occasional backaches). But with responsibilities come also joys, and a good marriage carries love at its core, despite laundry, bills, and other duties of adulthood.

Somehow, Helen and I have made it all work for 25 years now. We have a similar set of values yet complement each other well where we differ. (She loves hoppy beers, whereas I'm all about the dark and malty, so we never fight over the last bottle.) When I think about all the things in each of our lives that led us to meet 25 years ago, it seems a moment of impossible odds. I'm not the kind to put this down to some mystical move of God or fate. Call it luck, perhaps; luck with a lot of work that followed.

Marriage, of course, can be a fraught subject for LGBTQ folks and other marginalized people for whom it has been unfortunately mired in politics. At the personal level, however, it remains about love, no matter what politicians and pundits say. Happy anniversary, then, to the woman I love. I'm looking forward to our next 25 years and beyond.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (Mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

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PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Tracy Baim

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky
MANAGING EDITOR Andrew Davis
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Matt Simonette
BUSINESS MANAGER Ripley Caine
DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA Jean Albright
ART DIRECTOR Kirk Williamson
SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Terri Klinsky, Kirk Williamson, Amy Matheny, Scott Duff, Kathy Breit, Andrew Kain Miller, Theresa Santos Volpe, Kevin Siakowski
NATIONAL SALES Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863
SENIOR WRITERS Bob Roehr, Tony Peregrin, Lisa Keen, Yasmin Nair
THEATER COORDINATOR Catey Sullivan
SPORTS WRITER Ross Forman
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT WRITERS Mary Shen Barnidge, Lawrence Ferber, Jerry Nunn, Jonathan Abarbanel, Scott C. Morgan, Lauren Emily Whalen, Karen Topham, Brian Kirst
COLUMNISTS/WRITERS: Yvonne Zipter, Jorjet Harper, Charlsie Dewey, Carrie Maxwell, Billy Masters, Sarah Toce, Dana Rudolph, Melissa Wasserman, Joe Franco, Nick Patricca, Liz Baudler, Rex Wockner, Angelique Smith
SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHERS Kat Fitzgerald, Hal Baim, Tim Carroll, Ed Negrón
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jean Albright
DISTRIBUTION Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Sue and Victor
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(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609
e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or
Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com
podcast: WindyCityQueercast.com

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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WCT reviews the production *To Catch a Fish*.

Photo by Lara Goetsch

THEATER

Fasten your seat belts: Jessica Sherr returns in Bette Davis solo show

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The editor who asked for a feature story showcasing the cast's "pre-eminent dragsters" may have been forgiven guessing Bette Davis Ain't For Sissies to be a cross-dressing camp comedy instead of a solo show written, directed and performed by the multitalented Jessica Sherr.

Ironically, this error illustrates perfectly the misconceptions regarding the career of the Hollywood icon who vowed to make her legacy that of an actress, rather than a star.

Windy City Times: In the early days of motion pictures—before anybody knew how to act for the camera, or photograph a scene so it looked real, or draw up a contract guaranteeing an equitable salary—Bette Davis defied the studio bosses to take charge of her own career. You might say that she was *always* a solo act.

Jessica Sherr: Most people today only know Bette Davis for her role as the drunk madwoman in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*, but she was so much more than that. I want audiences to see how she stood up for herself and changed the way Hollywood treated its artists.

WCT: The story in your show is set on the night of the Academy Awards ceremonies in 1940, when Davis would lose the Best Actress Oscar to Vivian Leigh. The *Los Angeles Times* had leaked the list of the winners before the start of the event, so Davis decided to leave the event and go home early rather than fake being surprised. Why did you choose this par-

ticular incident for your launching point?

JS: At first, I just imagined how Davis must have felt at not winning, but after I learned that the Times had announced her defeat prematurely, it added a sense of betrayal to her disappointment. As a playwright, I knew this would be an intriguing place to start the play.

WCT: How do you go about changing into Bette every night for the show?

JS: When I look in the mirror, what I focus on are my giant eyes, and that begins my transformation. As I apply makeup, I, Jessica, gradually disappear and the reflection gradually becomes Bette Davis. By the time my hair is pinned up, I see only Bette.

WCT: Where did you find that scrumptious vintage wardrobe?

JS: The red velvet robe I wear in the play comes from an Amvets thrift shop in San Diego. I didn't know then that I would be using it for this particular show—only that it was special. My Oscar gown came from an actual dress shop, but it was a size 12, so I called [costume designer Isabelle Color] to help me alter it and spruce it up to give it more depth.

WCT: You've toured the show all over the [United Kingdom] and the United States. Have you had any audience members come to the show dressed up as Bette?

JS: It hasn't happened—yet. I always thought it would be fun if a drag Joan Crawford showed up and sat in the front row.

WCT: What's the most unusual fan response you've encountered in your travels?

JS: There's a scene in the play where Bette does a pin-up photo shoot for Howard Hughes and she runs around posing at high speed. When I was performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, I had a fan who brought me about 500 postcards of scantily-dressed pin-up girls. He told me—in his heavy brogue—that he'd found them at a yard sale and knew they were perfect for me. (I was more curious about what a Scottish yard sale would look like.)

WCT: What's the hardest part of telling this story? What's the easiest?

JS: Bette had a full life, and that included a lot of loss. I've added some of that material to the show I do now, but the new content demands

that I allow myself to be vulnerable and reliving *that* emotion every night is a challenge. The easiest part is the fun I have onstage when the audience is really there in the moment with me.

WCT: What do you want the audience to take home after the show?

JS: I want them to understand that Bette Davis was not perfect—that she was flawed, like all of us. I want them to go home and google her biography and to read all about her life. I want them to watch her early movies and in that way, keep her image alive for years to come.

Bette Davis Ain't for Sissies plays May 24-June 17 at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave. Visit AthenaeumTheatre.org.



Jessica Sherr in *Bette Davis Ain't for Sissies*.

Publicity photo

THEATER REVIEW

Birds of a Feather

Playwright: Marc Acito

At: Greenhouse Theater Center at Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: \$35-\$45;

GreenhouseTheater.org; 773-404-7336

Runs through: June 17

BY BRIAN KIRST

In *Birds of a Feather*, the audience witnesses a penguin singing show tunes and a proud hawk reveling in the abundant media attention that he receives. Surprisingly, the comedic nature of this piece is nicely counterbalanced by its bittersweet heart. In fact, anyone who has suffered through the highs and lows of a relationship should find themselves reflecting on the both the dizzying joys and the wearisome lows of life by the show's near perfect ending.

The production is actually based on two true stories of avian domesticity. Roy and Silo, two

male penguins who raised a child together, are featured here along with Pale Male and Lola, two hawks that captivated New York City. Marc Acito's inventive script takes you through the initial encounters between these unusual couples and through the turbulent middle stages of their journeys as well. The flamboyant Roy feels he is destined to be a parent and, before being gifted an egg by a kindly zookeeper, tries to convince the quieter, reluctant Silo to hatch a rock with him. Once their child—christened Tango by the staff—is born, the differences between the two continue to increase. Their story is counterbalanced by the tale of Pale Male, a proud predator, who loves providing for Lola, but is callously ambivalent to the fact that she is just one of his many mates.

While this may seem an unusual subject matter for Acito to attach himself to, both couples received significant attention in the real world. Roy and Silo were written about in a popular and, ultimately, controversial children's book titled *And Tango Makes Three*. While praised for being a subtle way to introduce the subject of gay relationships to younger family members, it was also



Paul Michael Thomson (left) and Aaron Kirby in *Birds of a Feather*.

Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

To Catch a Fish

Playwright: Brett Neveu

At: Timeline Theatre at Baird Hall, 615 W. Wellington Ave.

Tickets: \$40-\$54; TimelineTheatre.com; 773-281-8463

Runs through: July 1

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

If this scenario weren't almost all true, you'd think David Mamet plotted it.

There's these three scruffy hustlers, you see—outlaw biker Dex, tattooed skateboard-bum Ike and Pam Grier-lookalike "G"—managing a pop-

up dollar-shop outlet in Milwaukee's borderline-gentrified River North district. They cajole local layabout Terry Kilbourn into, first, distributing advertising flyers for their store and, later, passing word on the street that they are looking to pay top dollar for weapons declared illegal under the increasingly severe regulations enacted at all levels of government since 1968. What could go wrong?

Plenty, we soon come to learn. The new employee is mentally impaired, the result of accidental brain damage sustained in childhood—a condition whose indications his bosses either ignore, or dismiss as normal behavior within his social demographic. Anyhow, the whole scheme is merely camouflage for a sting operation initiated by the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Dex and Ike are federal agents and G, an officer with the city police. Their goal—the impounding of stray guns—is noble enough, but neither they, nor their amoral assistant's kinfolk, are prepared for the unexpected zeal they will apply to their duties.

Brett Neveu's narrative follows the real-life documentation that Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporters John Diedrich and Raquel Rutledge supplied to forge an adequately linear line of action. The author's focus is not on procedural implemented by heroic big shots, however, but instead the collateral damage inflicted on bystanders driven by poverty and misfortune to set aside their suspicions of strangers promising rewards designed to encourage the very criminal activity it purports to disparage.

widely banned by the right wing. Pale Male was also a noteworthy sensation for building a nest on top of one of the most exclusive apartment buildings in the Big Apple. The efforts to remove him from his perch caused vocal outcry and much difficulty for the residents including Mary Tyler Moore and newscaster Paula Zahn, a character here.

But through these animated portraits of our beaked counterparts, Acito is able to get at the truth of relationships, in general. He captures the shifts and changes of intimate personal connection with comedic accurateness and reaffirms the normalcy of queerness by illuminating how often same sex attraction occurs in the animal kingdom.

The performances also bring multiple layers to the statements made here. Under the keen direction of Jacob Harvey, Aaron Kirby and Paul Michael Thomson preen with heartwarming diversity as a host of warm blooded characters. By the end of the evening, they have truly endeared themselves to viewers. Marika Mashburn and Abu Ansari, meanwhile, excel on multiple levels as the humans who love them.

Ron OJ Parsons directs an ensemble exercising commendable restraint to inhabit their midsized-city personae to the smallest stereotype-free nuance—in particular, Geno Walker, who ramps down the classroom Mice-and-Men mummy to keep the visible boundaries of Terry's cognitive powers reliant on the perceptions of outsiders whose motives (as Neveu reminds us repeatedly) suffer ambiguities unacknowledged even by their owners. In the end, nobody has died, but neither has anybody gained anything by their experience. Indeed, the lesson we take away from Neveu's parable is that decisions based in "jobs that make you choose to lie" engender losses only serving to reinforce the dynamics of bitterness and despair.

THEATER REVIEW

Buddy

Playwright: Alan James and multiple composers/lyricists

At: American Blues Theatre at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 773-325-5252;

AmericanBluesTheater.com; \$19-\$49

Runs through: May 26 (extension likely)

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Conspiracy theorists are correct: Fluoridated water and rock 'n' roll music were 1950s Communist plots designed to rot the minds of young Americans. The result is that we now have Donald Trump.

On the other hand, perhaps Buddy Holly and the Crickets struck some primordial note among pre-adolescents such as myself. High-spirited, driving and almost-naively simple, their music touched us in some molecular way that helped define who we would be. Overlap with Elvis, the Everly Brothers and others was undeniable, but

Holly had a purity that set him apart.

My pre-adolescence paraded before me at Buddy, the story of the short, mostly-sweet life of the early-rock icon. It's a mind-poppingly energetic production which delivers as much musical bang for your buck as you will find anywhere in Chicago.

Actually, it isn't the life story of Charles Hardin Holley (his real name). There's nothing about his background. He's 20 years old when Buddy begins and already a musical star around his hometown of Lubbock, Texas: He'd been a country music opening act for Elvis three times. True, he was expanding beyond his rockabilly and country roots under the influence of blues and R&B, but he never completely abandoned either one before his plane crash death at 22. Who knows where he would have gone artistically? Stories say he wanted to record with Ray Charles and Mahalia Jackson, and—having moved to New York—he was taking acting lessons at the Actors Studio. Buddy, Patsy Cline, John Denver, Rick Nelson. Airplane wrecks don't care about talent or possibilities.

So, there's little story and even less drama in Buddy. It's not a true jukebox musical (as, say,

All Shook Up) because the songs—a nearly non-stop flow of them—don't convey story or character. The music mostly is Holly and The Crickets with a few other songs also featured, among them "Shout," "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," "Chantilly Lace" and "Johnny B Goode." All are performed to perfection by 16 superb singer-actors, most also doubling as star-quality instrumentalists who probably are far better than the originals, right up to Zachary Stevenson in the title role. Looking approximately like Holly—although older and without curly hair—he has charm and musical chops to spare. His wonderful Crickets are Shaun Whitley (superb slap bassist), Kieran McCabe (the drummer who married Peggy Sue) and sometimes Michael Mahler (the production's gifted musical director) as the second guitarist Holly made standard in rock-band instrumentation.

The large supporting cast sings wonderfully and performs with energy and humor, all under director Lili-Anne Brown and Mahler. Acts I and II both end as mini-concerts. If you don't stomp your feet and shout, you're probably dead.

CRITICS' PICKS

Gaslight District, The Second City e.t.c., open run. The 42nd revue at The Second City's "junior" stage waxes sardonic about Trump, improvises a song, cleverly incorporates an audience member and trumpets (perhaps unnecessarily) its multi-ethnic, multiamorous cast. JA

Sweeney Todd, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre at the No Exit Café, through May 20. Sondheim's operatic musical changed the history of the genre and this is your last chance to see it up close and cozy as only Theo Ubique's back-street hidaway can present it. MSB

Frost/Nixon, Redtwist Theatre, through May 20. Longtime audiences will barely recognize Redtwist regular Brian Parry, serving up a portrait of American archvillain Richard Nixon so vividly charismatic as to almost—almost, I said—exonerate him for his criminal legacy. MSB

Prometheus Unbound, City Lit Theatre, through June 10. Aeschylus' ancient tale of Prometheus' crime and Zeus' punishment is adapted by from the Greek by human Nicholas Rudall and featuring a cast of human-sized puppets alongside actual humans. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan



Ian Merrill Peakes in Macbeth.
Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

Macbeth

Playwright: William Shakespeare, adapted by Joseph Teller and Aaron Posner
At: The Yard at Shakespeare, 800 E. Grand Ave. (Navy Pier)
Tickets: 312-595-5600 or ChicagoShakes.com; \$48-\$88.
Runs through: June 24

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

In the words of Macbeth's infamous witches, you might well "sleep no more" after taking in Chicago Shakespeare's gorgeously horrifying staging of the Scottish Play. In this adaptation by Joseph Teller (the silent half of Penn and Teller) and Aaron Posner, the tragedy's gruesome creepiness is a thing of terrible beauty. And when the tragedy's trio of weird sisters begins their witchy incanta-

tion to "sleep no more," it's an imperative for the doomed and the damned.

Under Teller's direction, MacBeth is at once a tragedy, a psychological thriller, a ghost story and a stab at the horror genre. It's got cinematic sweep and vivid, intricate detail. It is also packed with magic, illusions designed by Johnny Thompson to eerie effectiveness. The plot is fairly simple: A trio of witches tell Macbeth he will be king of Scotland. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth slaughter their way to the crown.

Teller puts his stamp on the production from the opening scene onward. The first figure to emerge from the shadows isn't the titular Scottish nobleman (Ian Merrill Peakes) Instead, we see his wife, Lady Macbeth (Chaon Cross), wide-eyed and ghostly in a diaphanous nightgown the color of smoke. There's the slightest hint of madness in her movements, something that marks her as not entirely right. The origin becomes apparent as a silent Lady Macbeth wraps her arms around a tiny

coffin.

Shakespeare didn't hide the fact that Lady Macbeth is mourning the death of her only child. But it's a detail that's rarely emphasized in the play's world of murder, mayhem, witches, decapitations, deadly ambition and unquiet ghosts. By emphasizing Lady Macbeth's loss, audiences get a glimmer of insight into what drives her to such unconscionable lengths. Her murderous actions are grief manifested as sociopathy.

Cross' Lady Macbeth is definitive. It's a hair-fine line between ambition and insanity, and Cross wavers between with grace and abandon. As Macbeth, Peakes morphs from warrior to reluctant hero to ruthless obsessive. Teller's supporting cast is equally memorable.

SPOTLIGHT

Soul-crushing labor, intolerable co-workers, hour-long shifts that feel like days. We've all been there, no? Playwright Will Snider digs into the unlikely evolution of restaurant employees in the (wait for it) sharp-edged comedy **How to Use a Knife**, which is stuffed with memorable characters. Among them are a chef whose career is shredded by years of booze and pills; a dishwasher who everyone assumes is mute, a busboy who is a walking target for bullying and a trio of Guatemalan cooks who's biting observations about their co-workers need no transla-



tion even if you don't speak Spanish. It runs through June 9 at Shattered Globe Theatre at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Admission is \$15-\$35 each; visit ShatteredGlobe.org.

Caption: Photo of Anthony Irons by Michael Brosilow

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Ian Merrill Peakes & Chaon Cross, photo by Jeff Scortino

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WT
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Janyce Caraballo, Mary K. Nigohosian and Grayson Heyl (right) in *Suddenly Last Summer*.
Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER

Raven heats up with ‘Suddenly Last Summer’

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

For iconic gay playwright Tennessee Williams, love was never about hearts and flowers. The passions that fuel his mighty body of work (A Streetcar Named Desire, The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof) are ruinous rather than rose-tinted. As Williams points out early in *Suddenly Last Summer*, the Venus Flytrap—a “devouring organism”—is named for the Goddess of Love.

Running through Sunday, June 17, at Rogers Park’s Raven Theatre, *Suddenly Last Summer* is a torrid Southern gothic mystery revolving around the mysterious death of a young gay poet. The plot deals with cannibalism and lobotomies and the truly shocking lengths one family will go to keep its secrets closeted.

“This is a play about the muzzling of a strong female voice,” said director Jason Gerace. “It mirrors today’s society in that we all want our opinions heard, but we’re often losing the ability to argue in a constructive matter.”

The strong female voice at the nexus of *Suddenly Last Summer* belongs to Catherine Holly (Grayson Heyl), the beloved sister of the late poet Sebastian. At lights up, Catherine is confined to a mental hospital. Her aunt Violet (Mary K. Nigohosian) is determined to silence Catherine—thereby keeping the horrific details about Sebastian’s murder a deeply buried secret.

Violet’s final solution is lobotomizing Catherine, a procedure that was cutting edge during the play’s mid-20th-century setting. Williams was tragically familiar with the impact of lobotomies, which involve driving a sharp spike through the skull of the patient and essentially turning off a section of the brain. The operation was often used on violent patients, rendering them docile, vacant and calm. Rose’s life was snuffed out in many respects,” said Gerace. “She was vibrant, beautiful and strong-minded. She was brutally oppressed. Williams never got over his anger.”

As Williams’ razor-wire dialogue moves relentlessly toward revelation, it takes on the urgency of a suicide mission. The details of Sebastian’s death remain as shocking today as they were when the play debuted in 1958. As the one-act progresses, the audience becomes a fly-on-the-wall for a harrowing journey through sex, loneliness, violence and—this above all else—secrecy.

Despite the barbarically outdated medical practices, *Suddenly, Last Summer* remains eerily of-the-moment:

The questions the drama elicits aren’t only applicable to a tragedy set more than half a century ago in New Orleans’ Garden District, Heyl said.

“Whose truth is the correct truth? Who gets to decide which is right? What happens when somebody in power insists ‘alternative facts’ are the real truth, because the real truth is inconvenient?” Heyl said.

“*Suddenly Last Summer* mirrors today’s society. We all want our opinion heard, but sometimes we refuse to listen to others. I feel like we’re losing the ability to argue in a constructive manner. Especially on social media where it’s so easy to just attack someone,” Heyl added.

Class issues also rear up within Williams’ play, Gerace said. “The play is all about devouring, literally and metaphorically. It’s about how the rich or powerful can devour the poor, even if they’re in their own family,” he said.

As a doctor called in to treat Catherine, Wardell Julius Clark plays one of the drama’s most intriguing characters, a psychologist asked to do monstrous things by a woman he can ill afford to deny. Dr. Cukrowicz may be a supporting lead, but the weight of his decisions has a profound impact on every single person around him. In some ways, he’s the reluctant moral compass of the tragedy.

“He is passionate about his job and compassionate with his patients,” Clark said of his role. “He truly believes he is helping and the practice (of lobotomy) while fairly new and radical, does have positive initial effects. But he has a real problem about the lack of certainty with long term effects and the need for the procedure on many patients. He has a great deal of heart and weighs each decision very carefully.”

For Gerace, *Suddenly Last Summer* hits the sweet spot of provocation, leaving audience members to question their own beliefs the events leading up to the fateful meeting among Violet, Catherine and Dr. Cukrowicz.

“Why do we allow people who are wealthy and powerful say something factual is actually false just because they don’t like the facts? Gerace asked. “If enough people in power say so, what’s false becomes recognized as true.” The play also asks “what lengths we’ll go to in order to keep a woman quiet,” Gerace said.

For Catherine, those lengths are potentially lethal. For Violet, they’re rooted in denial as unmoving as granite. Gerace hopes the play lays bare the danger of complicity.

“When there’s a woman talking about something we don’t like, why are we always so determined to stop them any way we can? That’s something we’re dealing with today,” he said.

***Suddenly Last Summer* runs through Sunday, June 17, at Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St. General-admission tickets are \$43-46; \$38-\$41 for seniors and teachers; \$15 students for active military and veterans; and \$30 anyone under 30 for Thursday performances. Visit RavenTheatre.com.**

NUNN ON ONE: MOVIES

Sebastian Lelio on helming LGBT films 'Disobedience,' 'A Fantastic Woman'

BY JERRY NUNN

A new movie called *Disobedience* is in theaters now, and has an intriguing storyline.

A woman name Ronit Krushka (Rachel Weisz) returns to the Orthodox Jewish community in North London after her rabbi father passes away. The story heats up when a romance sparks up with childhood friend Esti Kuperman (Rachel McAdams).

Director Sebastian Lelio is on his own hot streak after his trans film *A Fantastic Woman* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film this year. Following *Disobedience*, he is releasing a reimagining of his 2013 film *Gloria*.

Windy City Times: How has your life changed since we talked last [when talking about *A Fantastic Woman*]?

Sebastian Lelio: The main difference is I won an Oscar, apart from that, it's the same. I feel very lucky because it's a time of working a lot. I just went right back to work! I am editing the new version of *Gloria*.

Strangely enough, I was in Chile, even though I live in Berlin. It has been interesting to be there after the Oscar, because over there it was a big deal.

WCT: Where are the awards that you won for *A Fantastic Woman* located?

SL: I have some of them with me, like the Spirit Award, the Goya Award and the Oscar, because I took them on one trip. That suitcase was like the one in *Pulp Fiction*, and really loaded!

WCT: How long have you been directing?

SL: My first film came out in 2006. It has been 12 years.

WCT: Was it hard to break into [U.S.] audiences?

SL: Yes and no. Yes, because it took awhile. No, because I never wanted to. It wasn't part of my plan. I didn't have a plan and just wanted to make films. After the first *Gloria* things changed. I was suddenly being offered to direct things in English. I was lucky because after that happened I got involved in *Disobedience*, then I made the new version of *Gloria*.

Those two things happened before the Oscar.

WCT: How would you describe *Disobedience* to people who haven't seen it?

SL: It is a forbidden love story between two women in the context of a Jewish Orthodox community in North London.

WCT: How was working with the Jewish community?

SL: We were very lucky because we found a lot of support and generous people that were willing to help. We worked with several consultants during the writing process and even more during production. We had quite a good number of allies.

Without them, it would have been impossible to get the cultural texture right.

WCT: Well, your consultant for *A Fantastic Woman* turned out to be the star.

SL: The consultant is the secret! I'm interested in people and how they live. I am not trying to create an artificial world. I want to get it right.

In the case of *A Fantastic Woman* it's a very artificial film, but she is real.



Disobedience director Sebastian Lelio.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

WCT: Describe filming that intense sex scene in *Disobedience*.

SL: It was delicate, but at the same time it was part of a conversation that took place very organically. I always knew that was the heart of the film. That scene needed to be long. It was all about how they were feeling. I was trying to achieve a certain level of eroticism without nudity. I became obsessed with that paradox.

It was more about the specificities of what they were doing while the camera was centered mainly on their faces. The spectator would be actively

filling in the blanks of what is out of frame. You are fantasizing but, at the same time, close to what they are feeling because you are watching their faces.

WCT: How did you make the Rachels feel comfortable?

SL: I storyboarded the entire scene. We had a private conversation where I went over the plan and if they were okay with it. They mentioned the spit thing. They were laughing and nervous, but they got it. They agreed to do it.

They understood what was behind it. It is not about pleasing the male gaze. It's about placing the camera for them more than for me.

WCT: How did you know you wanted to cast these two women in these roles?

SL: It is just like channeling. I accepted to do this film because of Rachel Weisz. I loved the story, but because she was there that was my main reason for doing it.

Who could be Esti was a huge question. I always thought Rachel McAdams was the one. I liked how unexpected the choice was. I liked the fact that we could see her in this register where we hadn't seen her doing something like this before. It going through the entire emotional spectrum and a big dramatic role for her. She has so much inner joy and light that it made it fascinating to hide that behind the wigs and unflattering clothes. It's impossible to suppress the joy of Rachel McAdams.

Disobedience is currently playing locally at Landmark Century Centre Cinema, AMC River East 21, Archlight Chicago 14 and Century Evanston. Read the full interview with Lelio at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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'Hamilton' exhibition in Chicago this fall

"Hamilton: The Exhibition"—a 360-degree, immersive exhibit that will travel to select U.S. cities—will premiere in Chicago this autumn for a limited engagement.

The exhibit, on display in a specially-constructed free-standing, all-weather structure the size of a football field, opens Nov. 17 for a limited engagement on Northerly Island in Chicago, where the production Hamilton has played a sold-out run since 2016.

The exhibit is a creative collaboration between creative director David Korins, who designed the set for Hamilton, Yale University professor/historian Joanne Freeman, Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, director Thomas Kail and producer Jeffrey Seller.

See HamiltonExhibition.com.

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NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION Transgender actor Marquise Vilson talks pivotal 'SVU' episode

BY JERRY NUNN

Law & Order: Special Victims Unit recently introduced a storyline surrounding transgender people serving in the military.

Titled "Service," the episode involved a trial about an escort who is allegedly raped in a hotel room. One of the reluctant witnesses in the case was soldier named Jim Preston (who later reveals he is transgender), played by Marquise Vilson.

Vilson starred in Philip Dawkins' play Charm as Beta in a story centered around LGBT youth, and has filmed a new movie with Julia Roberts called Ben Is Back that comes out soon.

Windy City Times: Where did you grow up?

Marquise Vilson: I grew up in New York City, in the Bronx, so I am native New Yorker. I lived down south for a few years before returning to New York last year. I decided to get more serious about my acting career. Part of that was because I booked an Off Broadway play called Charm. When working on that production I decided to return home.

WCT: Did you always want to be an actor?

MV: I have been performing for a long time, not specifically acting, but I am from the original underground ballroom community similar to the movie Paris Is Burning. I have been a part of ballroom since 1995. That was my first audience and first stage. I think there is a parallel because there is that same energy when you are competing.

When I decided to go into acting, it was a very natural transition. I started acting in 2016.

WCT: When did you come out as transgender?

MV: I have been living male and as Marquise since I was 16 years old. It took me a while to see what that would look like, because this was back in the '90s, [when] there was no language at all understanding what trans was. I just knew I was a male and a boy.

In terms of medical transition, I started that in 2005.

WCT: You served in the military in 2001?

MV: Yes, shortly after 9/11. The conversation back then was not about transgender people in the military. It was very specific to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Since there was no conversation around people of trans experience in the military, I feel there was a natural assumption about what my sexual orientation was versus my gender identity and expression.

There were real challenges that I had in terms of being myself in the military. Anyone that falls out of the heteronormative box is going to face challenges naturally, but nothing like what is happening present day.

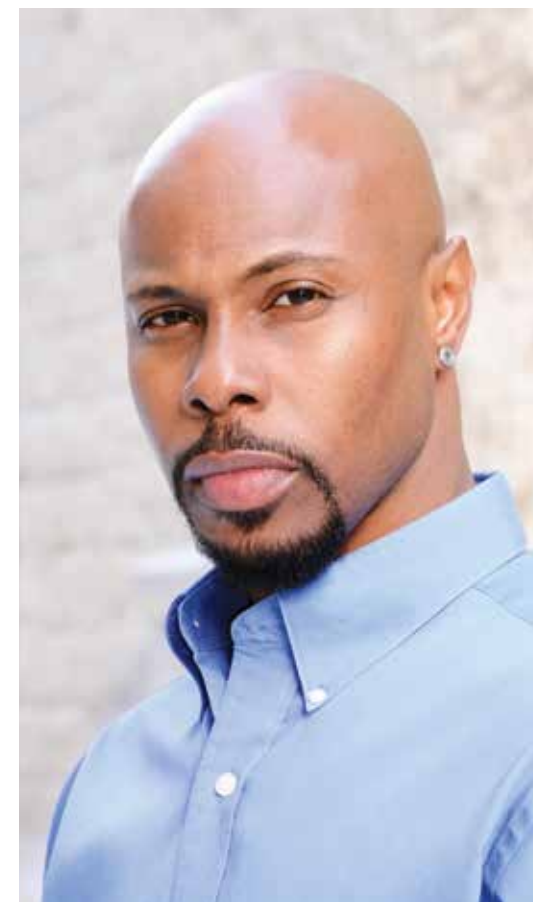
I have to go back to my experiences and how that made me feel, but also do the legwork for folks going through it right now in this moment. They are basically being told that they can't serve and their country is not going to stand by them as they make the decision to serve.

WCT: What led you to the role of Jim Preston?

MV: The Casting Society of America had an open casting for people of trans experience and gender nonconforming. Law & Order: SVU was already working on this character. When I went into the casting one of the people that was there works very directly with the SVU.

A few months later I had an official audition. It went from there.

WCT: How was it portraying this character?



Marquise Vilson.
Publicity photo

MV: It was such pleasure and an honor. There is finally more inclusiveness around gender non conforming and trans people in the media. I am glad it's happening and hope it continues so that people can provide more authenticity to these roles.

As a [trans] male who is Black, I think it's super-important to have these images in media. I can think of only one right now with Brian Michael Smith, who recently played a role on Queen Sugar and was on Blue Bloods.

There are just not enough roles or visibility. It was an honor to play this role especially what is going on around politics currently.

WCT: How emotional was it for you when all of the other soldiers were saluting you at the end on that episode?

MV: That was extremely emotional. When I first read the script, I did tear up. It was powerful and moment in time. I think there is a lot of misinformation and myths about who we are and what we represent. To have Jim Preston stand there and be respected was extremely powerful. It meant a lot. This was an opportunity for a trans person to be a hero.

WCT: Do you feel Hollywood is waking up to having trans people play trans characters?

MV: It seems that way. I think trans people can play all different roles and I have seen it go different ways. I hope casting directors continue to be open to it.

WCT: Did you hear from viewers after the "SVU" episode aired?

MV: I heard from a lot of people, including the LGBTQ community, friends, family, and battle buddies from old military days. All of the feedback was absolutely positive.



'SpongeBob,' 'Mean Girls' lead Tony nods

The Tony nominations for the 2017-18 season were announced May 1—and *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical* and *Mean Girls* led the way with 12 nods each.

Angels in America got 11 nods, edging the almost six-hour-long *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, which received 10.

A few of the other productions that received nominations include *Latin History for Morons*, *Farinelli and the King*, *Frozen*, Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* and *My Fair Lady*. Some of the nominated performers/actors are Andrew Garfield (*Angels in America*), Denzel Washington (*Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh*), Condola Rashad (*Saint Joan*), Amy Schumer (*Meteor Shower*), Laurie Metcalf (*Edward Albee's Three Tall Women*), Nathan Lane (*Angels in America*), Noma Dumezweni (*Harry Potter*), Renee Fleming (*Rodgers & Hammerstein's Carousel*) and Ari'el Stachel (*The Band's Visit*).

Chita Rivera and Andrew Lloyd Webber will receive Special Tony Awards for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre. John Leguizamo and Bruce Springsteen will also receive Special Tonys.

Leslie Odom Jr. and Katharine McPhee announced the nominations from the New York City Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. The 2018 Tony Awards will be broadcast live on CBS on Sunday, June 10; Sara Bareilles and Josh Groban will co-host.

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.

MCA announces \$100K art prize

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago has announced the creation of the Dunya Contemporary Art Prize, a major new contempo-

rary art prize that is awarded biennially to mid-career artists from the Middle East or its diaspora.

For its first award, the jury has selected Qatari-American artist Sophia Al-Maria, who will receive a \$100,000 prize as well as a commission for a new work that will be presented in a major exhibition, accompanied by a catalogue.

The name "Dunya", meaning "world or universe," reflects the global focus of the award and the shared vision of the MCA and the Shulamit Nazarian Foundation to represent diverse perspectives as well as bring attention to new artistic voices.

WMG 26th-anniv. gala May 11

Woman Made Gallery (WMG) will hold its 26th-anniversary gala Friday, May 11, 6:30-9:30 p.m., at Lacuna's Reverie Gallerie, 2150 S. Canalport Ave.

There will be a cash bar, a silent auction, a three-prize raffle and musical entertainment by

Emanon. Also, artist and WMG board member Sandra Perlow will be honored.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/wmg-26anniversariy gala2018> for tickets.

Comedy Prep School opens May 12

Stage 773 producers of The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival and Chicago Women's Funny Festival have announced the return of Comedy Prep School (CPS), a one-day festival for young comedians ages 12-17 on Saturday, May 12, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Comedy Prep School features four, age-appropriate workshops that are taught by highly skilled professionals in the comedy industry: Comedic Song Writing, Advanced Improv: Go For It!, Physical Comedy and Writing for Diverse Voices.

Registration for Comedy Prep School is \$100; visit Stage773.com or call 773-327-5252.

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SVU from page 18

WCT: I heard Mariska Hargitay was also supportive.

MV: Ten minutes after the episode aired, she called me directly on my cell phone. It was the most reaffirming conversation I ever had. She gave me some very kind words.

WCT: You mentioned misconceptions about being trans. What are some of them?

MV: People that don't know anyone trans often think I am transitioning from male to female. They don't realize I am already where I am supposed to be.

Also, that we aren't employable. That is a huge misconception.

WCT: Talk about the new Julia Roberts film.

MV: *Ben Is Back* is the name of it. It was written and directed by Peter Hedges. I have a smaller part in it, but it is a speaking role, so I am proud of it. I ended up nailing it in one take oddly enough! It comes out this summer.

WCT: Are you playing a trans person in the film?

MV: No—I am a cis guy.

WCT: When are you visiting Chicago?

MV: I will whenever Chicago invites me!

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Andersonville's newest LGBT bar set to open

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

When business and life partners Mark Robertson and Mike Sullivan decided to open an LGBT-specific bar, **Meeting House Tavern** (Meeting House), they chose the Andersonville neighborhood because of their long history as business owners in the community. The multistory Meeting House will be at 5025 N. Clark St.

The couple has been in the restaurant and bar business in and around Andersonville since 2010, when they bought Crew Bar + Grill and then in 2011 when they bought Sofo Bar and re-branded it The Sofo Tap. Robertson is also a consultant and financial advisor who has guided a number of hospitality businesses both in and outside of Chicago.

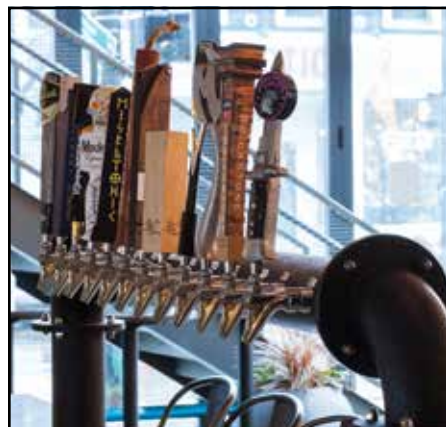
"The Sofo Tap is one of the top destinations in Andersonville and we hope to do the same with Meeting House," said Sullivan.

Robertson noted that adding another bar to the Andersonville landscape was an easy decision



Mark Robertson (left) and Mike Sullivan of Meeting House Tavern.

Photo by Mike Murray



Meeting House Tavern taps.

Photo by Grant Kessler

May 9, 2018

WINDY CITY TIMES

because the neighborhood is becoming "another Main Street for the LGBT community."

Sullivan explained that, as active members of the Andersonville community for the past seven years, they "have watched the neighborhood grow and flourish as a diverse community with a continued influx of LGBT and young residents. Andersonville is also a destination neighborhood for entertainment."

"The SoFo Tap brings in a lot of customers from outside the neighborhood—as do many other places in Andersonville—like The Magic Lounge, Neo-Futurists and the great shops and restaurants up and down Clark Street which have received national media attention in the past few years," said Robertson. "With the boom in residential and retail development along the South of Foster [SoFo] part of Andersonville, we wanted to offer a casual, affordable, hangout bar to serve a regular clientele as well as visitors shopping and dining in the neighborhood."

When asked why they chose the name for the bar, Sullivan said, "We think Meeting House evokes exactly what we are trying to create with our next bar—a place to meet up with friends and meet new ones. We want Meeting House to be a social gathering place for the community."

One of the ways Meeting House plans to stand out among the other bars in the neighborhood is its diverse selection of free of charge games—darts, pool tables, Skee-Ball, shuffleboard and arcade offerings. There will also be retro and indie tabletop (board) and card games.

The televisions will rotate between showing sports programming, music videos and popular TV shows for viewing parties. Robertson and Sullivan plan to later add video-based trivia games via tablets and TV screens.

"An awesome bar is not just about the interior or the physical features although we think people will like the look inside," said Robertson. "A bar is really about the customers, community, service team and overall experience. Meeting House will feature a diverse mix of programming and events to complement the games available all the time. Our team will strive to create a safe, no attitude hangout for everyone, every day."

Along with a diverse selection of spirits, wines and beers (10-12 on tap with rotating seasonal offerings); Meeting House will also have Prosecco and their signature margarita on tap. A seasonal cocktail menu will be available as well as two rotating frozen cocktails made with pure sugar and real fruit juices, purees and nectars.

Not only will Meeting House have signature drinks, they will also offer a special Tavern Bites menu from Hutch American Kitchen + Bar (Hutch) located in the rear of the building on Winnemac Ave. Meeting House guests will be able to order the bites from the bartenders and have it delivered to them by Hutch staff or have a drink at Meeting House while waiting for a table at Hutch.

Meeting House will be opening its doors ahead of the Memorial Day weekend. Robertson and Sullivan told Windy City Times to stay tuned for details about their opening day plans.



RPDR stars Mayhem Miller and Monique Heart.
Photos by Jerry Nunn



BILLY Masters

"You obviously have your mother's incredible compassion ... and your father's steely ambition— whoever that may be."—**Bill Maher to Ronan Farrow.** It sounds like a case for 23AndMe.com.

Marriage is kinda like eating at Chipotle. It seems like a good idea at the time, but shortly thereafter you may find yourself rushing for the bathroom. I'm not opposed to marriage, in general—or even same-sex marriage, specifically. I think that this generation sees it as the natural progression of a relationship. But many gay people "of a certain age" never had the reality of marriage on the horizon. Once it became legal, loads of people took the plunge to be part of the movement. Alas, some movements race toward one's bowels.

Colton Haynes has one foot in that older group, and one in the younger generation. I guess one could say Colton straddles the age brackets—among other things. So I was not particularly surprised that he got engaged less than a year after coming out. That was as predictable as news that his "happily ever after" lasted roughly six months—which, to be fair, is longer than Kim Kardashian's first attempt. No official statement has been made, but Colton has unfollowed his hubby on Instagram and deleted all photos of them together from his social media—so that sounds official to me! As the coup de grace, Colton has recorded a song, because apparently now he's a chanteuse! This little ditty is called "Man It Sucks." If the man sucks well, I don't see a problem.

Then there's the marriage of **Nate Berkus** and **Jeremiah Brent**. I give this one odds of lasting till at least 2020. But that doesn't matter to a member of the Duggar family—well, a Duggar-in-law: **Derick Dillard**, who is married to **Jill Duggar** (of the "we don't believe in contraception" Duggars) and was previously on TLC's *Counting On*. Curiously enough, he disappeared from the show under murky circumstances. Some say he was fired; others say he left of his own accord. Either way, he's unemployed and bitter. So why not lash out at a gay couple who has a show on the same network? Derick said, "What a travesty of family. It's sad how blatant the liberal agenda is, such that it both highlights and celebrates a lifestyle so degrading to children on public television as if it should be normal." First off, is TLC "public television?" Is Nate & Jeremiah By Design on between *Masterpiece Theatre* and *My 600-Pound Life*? Nate and Jeremiah are not perfect (although they do have pretty fabulous hair). I'm sure there are lots to criticize, but it's not like the oh-so-Christian Duggars are beyond reproach, either. Nate responded, "My hope with having a show like #NandJByDesign on @TLC, where we go into people's homes and welcome viewers into ours, is that we can start to break down barriers & normalize the way our family looks & the way our family loves."

When it comes to gay couples who might make



Billy sees great things ahead for couple Lance Bass (left) and Michael Turchin.

Photo by Rodrigo Varela/Getty Images

it, my money's on **Lance Bass** and **Michael Turchin**. Just a hunch. Lance was in the news when *NSYNC got their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. It gave the famed quintet a chance to reunite, and Lance talked about why he didn't come out of the closet earlier: "I thought if I had come out, *NSYNC would be over. So I kept my secret, and our wildest dreams were coming true, and we were so incredibly thankful. And I still am. But so many nights on stage, I'd see so many young, gay fans, singing their hearts out, and I wanted so badly to let you know—I was you. I just didn't have the strength then. But I do today, and so let me say loud and proud to all my LGBT brothers and sisters who embrace me and show me the way to be who I am, thank you so much." Bravo!

After the star ceremony, there was a dinner at WeHo hotspot Delilah. All five boys were confirmed to attend, along with their loved ones and numerous friends. Alas, **Justin Timberlake** was a no-show. He did, however, join the others on a taped episode of *Ellen* where they played a spirited game of "Never Have I Ever." This game featured the group telling the truth about their previous sexual exploits (not surprisingly, Lance had the least to contribute). There were questions like have you ever hooked up with a fan, on the tour bus, with someone twice your age, etc. When asked if any of them had ever hooked up with a Spice Girl, Timberlake sheepishly said, "I Have." Of course, anyone reading this column already knows that he had a one-nighter with Baby Spice, **Emma Bunton**. She previously confirmed it to UK chat-show host Jonathan Ross, saying, "We hung out and partied a bit, and he was very sweet. He spoke about it first, 'cause otherwise I would have never said a word. He's very sweet."

Since I'm still across the pond, it seems appropriate to answer an "Ask Billy" question from Tim in Surrey, England: "Have you come across the nude photos of **Freddie Woodward**? My mate told me they were online, but when I went to the

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website, they were gone."

This happens a lot to nude photos. First, for my U.S. fans, let me explain who Freddie Woodward is. He's a 22-year-old British diver—sigh, I know: yet another hot diver! It's SO tedious. Whilst he claims to not be gay, one cannot deny his attractiveness—or his perfectly pert posterior, which he's previously paraded. Now we can add to that his ponderous penis, which appears to be close to three meters (but you know how things appear larger on camera). You'll spring out of your shorts when you see it on BillyMasters.com.

When we're measuring in meters instead of inches, it's time for me to end yet another column. No matter whether you're a metric or an imperial man, you'll wanna check out BillyMasters.com—the site that'll always leave you all wet. If there's something on your mind, jot it down and send it to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Colton returns my wedding gift (and I regift it to that other wedding I'm headed to). Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, May 10

Reception with Matthew Shepard Foundation and Center on Halsted Reception open to the public. 6:30am - 10:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15392> Tickets: <http://www.giveeffect.com/campaigns/6915-chicago-reception>

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

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/>

Courageous Conversations: What The L Lesbian spaces in Chicago have been



THE FIGHT GOES ON Thursday, May 10

A reception with the Matthew Shepard Foundation (headed by Judy Shepard, above) will take place.

Photo by Jamie Anne Royce

and are alive and thriving. Enjoy a candid conversation with those who have and are creating these spaces. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://community.centeronhalsted.org>

Queer Genre Fiction 2nd Fridays 7:00pm

- 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

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 theater. VIP reception 7pm. 8:00pm Museum of Broadcast Communications 360 N. State St Chicago 773-784-8565 <http://www.aboutface theatre.com>

Saturday, May 12

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

"Striking Out: A Gay Baseball Musical" Every Saturday through June 16. \$20 and \$15 for students. \$20/\$15 for students 8:00pm MainStage at the Annoyance Theater 851 W. Belmont Ave. 773-697-9693 <http://theannoyance.com>

Sunday, May 13

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

Friday, May 18

Jesus Christ Superstar North American premiere with Heath Saunders as Jesus, Ryan Shaw as Judas, and Jo Lampert as Mary Magdalene. Through May 20. \$35. 7:00pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N. Wacker Dr. Chicago Tickets: <http://jcsuperstar.org>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave Chicago <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Saturday, May 19

21st Annual National Ovarian Cancer Coalition run/walk Break the silence on ovarian cancer 9:00am Arlington International Racecourse <http://runwalk.ovarian.org/illinois>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm North Shore Center for the Performing Arts 9501 Skokie Blvd. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Monday, May 21

Pride Films and Plays Nominee Night Concert Performances by Non-Equity Jeff Award-nominated musical theater performers. Produced and music directed by Robert Ollis. \$30 VIP (includes drink ticket), \$20 general admission, \$17 seniors, students, military 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, Chicago 773-857-0222 <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Wed., May 23

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/>

Thursday, May 24

IML Opening Ceremonies Ticket Packages available Ticket Sales Desk at Congress Plaza Hotel, 1st floor. Event includes the introduction of judges, contestants and number selection. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., show begins at 8 p.m. 8:00pm - 10:30pm Congress Plaza Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave. <http://www.imrl.com>

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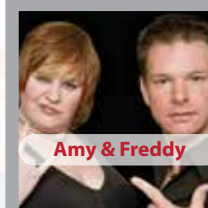
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