

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Photo by Worsom

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Photo by Clark Bender

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JETTA STREAM

Gaywheels takes a drive in the 2019 Volkswagen Jetta.
Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

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PR photo

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Singer, therapist Paula Walowitz dies

BY TRACY BAIM

Chicago-based singer/songwriter, therapist and activist Paula A. Walowitz, born Sept. 16, 1952, died May 30, 2018 after a short battle with cancer. She was surrounded by friends and her wife, Jean Durkin.

Walowitz was known internationally for her music, and was a regular at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago from the 1970s to 1990s. She was a member of the early women's band Surrender Dorothy, and her classic songs included "Goddesses' Rage (Neopaganomics)," "She's Been Waiting," and "Surprise! I'm a Lesbian."

In addition to a long music career, Walowitz was a professional therapist, including helping in the early years of Lesbian Community Cancer (now Care) Project. She was also an astrologer, and had a long-running and very popular astrology column in Nightlines, sister publication to Outlines (now Windy City Times), and also wrote articles for those publications.

Durkin and Walowitz, together since 1990, married in Canada in 2003 as soon as marriage equality was legal in parts of that country (the entire country legalized it in 2005).

Walowitz was diagnosed with late-stage pancreatic and ovarian cancer while hospitalized on Jan. 15, 2018. After a second hospitalization and one round of chemo, she made the decision to enter hospice. Walowitz found deep comforting care in hospice while able to stay at home. She died surrounded by lesbian musicians who have shared the stage with her as well as friends, neighbors, and her wife and family. After she passed, the group continued to sing as they created a ritual, washing her body, rattling the energy, saging her, her home, and her friends, and finally filling the cleared energy with Love singing "All You Need is Love."

"Paula drew her last breaths today as her wife Jean, women and lesbians, friends, family and chosen family from many parts of her colorful, kaleidoscopic life surrounded her, joining hands and singing out," said Laurie Lee Moses, a friend and musical colleague. "We sang some of Paula's own original songs, like the goddess chant 'She's Been Waiting,' and 'Surprise! I'm a Lesbian' and other old favorites. The blue notes of 'Angel from Montgomery' and sweet harmonies of 'I'll Fly Away' sung by those beloved voices lifted Paula up and away from this world, peacefully. There were some of us from the 'old days' who had performed with Paula at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse and other LGBT venues around town, so the singing of her music and those old blues/soul favorites were all the more poignant."

Longtime friend Toni Armstrong Jr. said, "Everyone alive touches many lives, but Paula's influence was 10 miles wide and 10 miles deep. Speaking personally just for myself, if it weren't for Paula I would not have moved to Chicago (and all that followed in terms of my community work), I would not have gotten the job at



The Durkin-Walowitz marriage.

Courtesy of Jean Durkin

Maine East (subsequently worked there 28 years), or met Karen Pritikin and bought a bass to be in Starkissed, the 1970s lesbian punk band. Paula introduced me to Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, and we experienced our early Michigan Womyn's Music Festivals and National Women's Music Festivals together. We went to Vegas for the first time together, and New Orleans. Paula found Laurie Lee Moses, and we formed Surrender Dorothy—the comedy show band—specifically to bring OUT LESBIAN MUSIC to Chicago at a time when that wasn't happening. Her goddess chant 'She's Been Waiting' is internationally loved—I was in a women's sacred circle in Australia, and they started singing it, having no idea it was a Surrender Dorothy hit. (Paula wrote an article for HOT WIRE magazine titled 'Anonymous in my own time.'). Those who know me and value anything I've done professionally, as a teacher, in travel, in relation to women's music, etc. since the late 1970s, please think of Paula ... if I hadn't met her, my life trajectory would have been extremely different. I say all this for perspective—I am only one person, but look at Paula's far-reaching influence. We truly cannot overestimate the impact Paula had in our individual lives, in the Chicago lesbian community, and in this world."

Mountain Moving collective member Kathy Munzer said, "I can think of no other who exemplified the creativity, talent and lesbian feminism of Mountain Moving better than Paula Walowitz."

Durkin shared these favorite memories: "Busting out our personal best Ethel Merman show tunes, embarrassing the women who brought us to a beach fireworks party, I realized that I could be free to be totally me with Paula. When we met

nine years earlier at Mundelein College, my desk clerk girlfriend barred Paula's janitor girlfriend and in their argument we escaped their drama into calm connection with one another. A year later we found privacy at a Capricorn party on the back stairs and sang Irish songs with gusto. Of course in the back row of Mountain Moving Coffeehouse would be where we fell for each other three months later.

"Paula really understood my large Irish Catholic family when on the Dan Ryan we all sang different songs at the top of our lungs ignoring the song on the radio while speeding back to the south suburbs. And I understood hers while singing in her cousin Jimmy's south suburban home where he always won 'Who Knows All the Lyrics' because he never sang a song written later than WWII to baby boomers and younger. But Paula beat him once in a while.

"Resolving a fight during a Grateful Dead concert cemented our commitment to one another, teaching me that listening and loving took labor. We belting out UU hymns bonding us to UCE (Unitarian Church of Evanston) and when Paula then shared her songs they brought free flowing tears and love to us.

"On her last days Paula harmonized with her deep labored breath to the birds outside our window.

"Of course we tripped on her lyrics while we sung to her as she was bed bound moments before she died. We leaned on her direction. Without we were a choir that needed a lyric sheet.

"When people have been asking what they can do for me these days I ask that they sing to someone."

Walowitz's great niece Ada was born on the same day she fell ill. Tragically, as Walowitz was nearing death, her dear friend and singing partner Elaine Burgher's youngest daughter Ryan sustained fatal injuries after a fall the day before her college graduation.

Durkin said, "As the crone died in peace and love becoming an ancestor, the maiden offered



Walowitz (left) with Laurie Lee Moses, Sharon Karp and Ella Szekely at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse circa 1980.

From GayLife archives

all her organs to those in need and a new baby girl was born. Walowitz believed she was a 'Drop that would join the Ocean.'"

Walowitz received a BA in English from the University of Illinois (Urbana) and an MA in Community Counseling, from Northeastern Illinois University (Chicago). She was also a former high school teacher and computer programmer.

In a 2007 interview for the ChicagoGayHistory.org website, Walowitz shared some of her own story.

"I have been mostly fortunate about other people's reactions to my sexual orientation," she said. "Even when I worked for 10 years in corporate America as a computer programmer, people were at least polite about it. (I was working late one night when a new employee was getting a tour of the workspace. I overheard this: 'That's the coatroom, that's the women's washroom, and over there is where our lesbian sits.')

"The glaring exception to my good luck about my sexuality was my father, who took the news very hard. An only child, I was very close to my father, but anything having to do with sexuality (even boyfriends) made him crazy. So I resolved not to tell him unless he specifically asked about it. One day, over the phone, he started asking questions. I deflected a little, but he seemed determined to know the truth. So I told him. The two of us barely spoke for a year—he told me he wished I had lied to him. Then he got a brain tumor and died from complications following the surgery. He never had the opportunity to get used to the idea. I don't regret telling him. But the fact that he died before seeing how being with women was right for me—that makes me sad."

Walowitz, describing her own legacy, said, "I am most proud of my music. My songs are often about personal change, loving women, and re-conceptualizing theology from a feminist perspective. All of my songs were tools for my own personal growth and later, others have said that the songs supported them to reclaim their power and have fun doing it.

"If I have a legacy, I hope it's that: helping lesbians and gay men feel better about themselves while having fun. I'm still aiming for that as a therapist in the community, though I do recognize that people generally don't have that much actual fun in therapy.

"Jean and I together have a legacy because we ran like the wind to Canada to get married when they made same-sex marriage the law of their land. We were among the first U.S. couples to cross the border to marry each other."

Walowitz was daughter of the late Joseph and Dorothy Walowitz. Familial relations include cousins Jimmy (deceased), Gale, Jeanne, Audrey, and Al. Cousin Larry, Anne, and Marvin (deceased). Sister and aunt in marriage to many Durkins including Joan, John, Chucky (deceased), Mary, Patrick, Mary, Michael, Susan, Monny, and Martin. Aunt to Mark, Matthew, Tim, Michael, Rebecca, Todd, Megan, Luke, Anne, Jack, Julie, Jenny, and Joelle. Great Aunt to Liam, Luke, Conor, Gabriella, Camron, Noah, and Ada.

Walowitz and Durkin worshiped at Unitarian Church of Evanston. There will be a memorial Sat., June 16, 5 p.m. at the church, 1330 Ridge Ave., Evanston.

Donation in Paula Walowitz's name can be made to Deborah's Place, 2822 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60612.

Video interview with Walowitz here: <http://www.chicagogayhistory.org/biography.html?id=570>.

See Walowitz and Friends concert here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soZq0fK6m8>.

Surrender Dorothy farewell concert here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4je3f-E9v-c&feature=youtu.be>.



State Rep. Kelly Cassidy.
Photo from Matt Steffen

State rep alleges retaliation from Madigan's allies

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago)—who, this past winter, spoke publicly about sexual-harassment allegations in House Speaker

Michael Madigan's political operations—is saying that she and her part-time employer have been dealing with retaliation efforts from Madigan's allies.

Cassidy, who is lesbian, said May 21 in a Chicago Sun-Times article that she quit her position with the Cook County Sheriff's Office after it received two calls inquiring about Cassidy's employment. The sheriff's office, for its part, has maintained that the calls were about legislative matters.

In a May 22 statement, Cassidy said, "In February, I first spoke publicly about the inadequate response to allegations of sexual harassment within Speaker Madigan's operation. On two occasions since that time, someone loyal to Speaker Madigan has attempted to intimidate me and my part-time employer. After the second occurrence, I knew it wouldn't stop, and I knew that the only way to ensure that these retaliation efforts cease is to place a spotlight on them.

"...As this story now turns to the inevitable he said/she said and denials, I remain firmly committed to being a steadfast voice for justice and equality, just as I have worked against harassment and discrimination throughout my career. I stand by my story. I did not want to leave the work and the team I loved being a part of, and I certainly did not want to spend the waning days of this session focused on anything other than passing my bills and getting a budget completed."

The Sun-Times article is at <https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/retaliation-state-rep-says-questioning-madigan-on-harassment-cost-her-job/>.

Ramirez-Rosa blasts Latino Caucus expulsion

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Openly gay Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th Ward) denounced a May 23 decision to expel him made by the City Council's Latino Caucus.

The expulsion came the same day as a City Council meeting brought to an abrupt halt by Mayor Rahm Emanuel after heated arguments about a \$95-million police academy that Ramirez-Rosa opposes.

Caucus leader Ald. Gil Villegas, 36th Ward, told the Chicago Tribune that the expulsion was not related to the police-academy issue—Ramirez-Rosa supposedly did not engage "meaningfully" with the Caucus, they said—and that Ramirez-Rosa could appeal the decision next month.

In a May 23 statement, Ramirez-Rosa said, "I have worked diligently to craft a progressive agenda for the Latino Caucus since my election to the Chicago City Council in 2015. I have scheduled policy briefings for the Caucus with legal experts and community leaders—including at the Caucus' last meeting. I have repeatedly sought the support of the Caucus for measures that will expand protections for undocumented immigrants, and address displacement and gentrification in our communities.

"It is unfortunate that a majority of my Latino Caucus colleagues would vote to expel me, their only gay millennial member, on the same



Chicago Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.
Photo by Matt Simonette

day I take a bold stand on police violence that disproportionately impacts our Black and Latino neighborhoods. There was no due process, not all Caucus members were present, and no prior notice that this item would be taken up today was provided.

"...Whether or not I am a member of the Caucus, I will continue to advocate for our Latino community's progressive values; I will continue to caucus with undocumented Latinos and Latino Chicagoans fighting and organizing for the best interests of our community."

Chicago Tribune's article is at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-met-city-council-police-academy-delay-20180523-story.html>.

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ELECTIONS 2018

LGBT wins, losses dot the landscape

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

There was big news out of Texas on May 22.

Lupe Valdez won the Democratic nomination for governor of Texas in a run-off primary Tuesday night, becoming the first openly LGBT person—and the first Latina—to win a major party nomination for governor in the state.

Valdez's win, with 52 percent of the vote, overshadowed three other important LGBT victories in the Lone Star State. Gina Ortiz Jones, as expected, easily won the Democratic nomination to represent the 23rd Congressional District in the western part of the state. Eric Holguin, who came in second place during the original March primary, won a Congressional nomination handily in the May 22 run-off for the 27th District's vacant seat. And Lorie Burch won her run-off for the Democratic nomination for the 3rd Congressional district in the Dallas area with 75 percent of the vote.

There were some disappointments in the May 22 voting, too. Jim Gray, the popular openly gay mayor of Lexington, Kentucky, lost his race for the Democratic nomination for a U.S. House seat. His opponent was a newcomer to politics and to the state: retired military fighter pilot Amy McGrath. Gray, who had been considered the front-runner for months, won only 41 percent of the vote. Republicans have already started calling McGrath, who sports a tough military-like demeanor, as a "radical liberal."

Valdez, 70, first made history in 2004 when she became the first openly LGBT person to be-



Lupe Valdez.
Photo from Facebook campaign page

come sheriff anywhere in the nation—in Dallas, defeating a 30-year white male veteran of the Dallas police force. Polls strongly suggest Texas will re-elect its current Republican Governor Greg Abbott.



Candidates Tippi McCullough and Josh Mers.
Photos from official campaign website

Other races in LGBT election news from May 22:

—Arkansas: In a dramatic comeback story, Tippi McCullough won the Democratic nomination for a House seat in the Arkansas legislature just five years after being forced to resign her private-school teaching job in Little Rock because she married a woman. Because there is no Republican candidate competing for the seat representing the state's most liberal district, Tuesday's win sets up McCullough to become the first openly LGBT person to be elected to the Arkansas State House.

—Georgia: Six openly LGBT candidates for the Georgia state House advanced to the general election. Five of them ran unopposed for their Democratic nominations. Two other candidates lost, but one incumbent, state Rep. Park Cannon, breezed to the nomination for re-election to her House seat representing the Atlanta area (Dis-

trict 58). An openly gay candidate for mayor of Athens, Richie Knight, lost his bid for the Democratic nomination, garnering only 10 percent of the vote in a three-way race.

—Kentucky: An openly gay candidate for the state House, Josh Mers, lost his bid for the Democratic nomination to representing the Lexington-Fayette district.

—Texas: Openly gay candidate Mary Wilson lost her bid for the Democratic nomination to represent the state's 21st Congressional District. One openly gay candidate for a state Senate seat lost her run-off Tuesday. Attorney-activist Fran Watson, in a district that stretches between Austin and San Antonio, took a respectable 42 percent of the vote.

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Stephanie K. Miller.
Photo courtesy of Miller

Lesbian appointed as associate judge

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Stephanie Miller—who, in early 2017, was appointed to fill a 6th Cook County Subcircuit judge's vacancy, but did not retain the seat in the March 20, 2018 primary—has been appointed a Cook County associate judge by the Illinois Supreme Court. The administrative office of the Illinois Courts made the announcement May 21.

Miller, who is a lesbian, was previously an assistant state's attorney and an assistant public guardian prior to her appointment and has been a board member for the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago.

In February 2018, Miller told Windy City Times, "I've always worked in public service, and I have always, from day one as an attorney, and even when I was a law clerk, been appearing in court. So I'm comfortable with how a courtroom runs and how a courtroom is to be

managed, and the appropriate demeanor to be given in front of judges who are maybe a little cranky and hot-headed, and how that affects the attorneys and the litigants who appear in front of them."

North Shore Pride Fest on June 2

To kick off Pride Month, Celebrate Highwood is "showing its pride on the north side" at its 6th Annual North Shore Pride Fest on Saturday, June 2, throughout downtown Highwood.

Events will kick off with a Pride Family Picnic in Everts Park (130 Highwood Ave.) at 12-2 p.m. There will be music, a bounce house, an ice-cream truck, and family crafts and games led by the North Shore School District 113 Spectrum Club.

At 5 p.m. the party moves indoors for the Family-Friendly Drag Show at 210 Live Restaurant & Lounge, which will also be the starting point of the Taste the Rainbow (adults-only) Pub Crawl. (Be the Match bone-marrow registry will be on site during the drag show and at the End of the Rainbow celebration at The Wooden Nickel.)

For more info, visit CelebrateHighwood.org or Facebook.com/celebratehighwood, or call 847-432-6000.

'OUT of the Office' June 6 at I/O Godfrey

OUT of the Office 2018 will take place Wed., June 6, 6-8 p.m., at the I/O Godfrey rooftop lounge, 127 W. Huron St.

Event beneficiaries Affinity Chicago and Chicago House will host a special pre-reception at 5-6 p.m. The reception enjoys libations, raffle and early access to lounge seating for the party.

Event founder Andrew Hayes is chairing this year's event with Brad Edwards (CBS 2 Chicago) and Mika Stambaugh (TMI & Susan G. Komen Chicago).

Admission is \$15-\$50 each (no refunds); see "OUT of the Office 2018" on Eventbrite.com.

'Do Black Lives Really Matter?' events in June

Chicago artist/activist H.L. Anderson is hosting "Spare the Rod: Do Black Lives Really Matter?," a two-part event that uses found materials to evoke memory, dialogue and provide resources for communities to consider alternative methods for discipline.

Anderson has stated, "We invite pro-spankers, non-spankers, and everyone in conversation without shaming or judgements" to the following events:

—Friday, June 15, Opening Reception: "Spare the Rod: Do Black Lives Matter?" exhibition, H.L. Anderson Arts & Culture Studio, 9451 S. Bishop, 7-9 p.m.

—Saturday, June 16, Entertainment & Panel Discussion with Asadah Kirkland, parenting strategist and author of *Beating Black Kids*, Shoshannah Yehudah, LCPC, and activist Noel Green, moderated by Octavia N. Tyson, LCPC, Carter G. Woodson Library, 9525 S. Halsted, 1-3 p.m., curated by H.L. Anderson, M.S., CQA by H.L. Anderson.

The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Michigan published the journal article, "Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses" in the *Journal of Family Psychology*. This study looked at 50 years of research involving over 160,000 children that provided an analysis of outcomes associated with spanking stated: "The more children are spanked, the more likely they are to defy their parents and to experience increased anti-social behavior, aggression, mental health problems and cognitive difficulties."

See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spare-the-rod-do-black-lives-really-matter-panel-discussion-tickets-44712297686>.

Genderqueer poet at AWM on June 5

At a June 5 "Tuesday First Books" event at the American Writers Museum, 180 N. Michigan Ave., playwright/activist Ana Simo (author of the new novel *Heartland*) will engage in conversation with genderqueer Appalachian poet C. Russell Price.

A Q&A session will follow at the event, slated to start at 6 p.m.

Admission is free for museum members and \$12 each for non-members; visit <https://american-writersmuseum.org/>.

Howard Brown wants symposium submissions

Howard Brown's Center for Education, Education, Research and Advocacy invites you to submit an abstract for the 2018 Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium.

It is looking for presentations, panels and posters that reflect the theme "Moving Towards Health Equity. Strengthening Our Community of Care." The symposium call for abstracts will be open until June 1.

The Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium Planning Committee is looking for submissions focused on the following competencies:

—Best practices for working with LGBTQ patients in clinic settings;

—Evidence-based strategies to reduce health disparities within communities, focusing on intersections of LGBTQ identity and race, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic factors;

—Organizational policies and strategies that facilitate LGBTQ health equity; and

—Understanding of key LGBTQ health advocacy issues and how healthcare professionals can influence LGBTQ health policy.

The symposium will take place Sept. 14-15 at the JW Marriott hotel, 151 W. Adams St.

Submit abstracts at https://events.bizzabo.com/MLHS2018/page/1332073/abstract-submissions?utm_source=General+News&utm_campaign=313d4274e0-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_04_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_caabf9aaaf-313d4274e0-134477077.

'Right Side of History' event June 10

"The Right Side of History? LGBTQ+ Rights Worldwide" will take place Sunday, June 10, at Skokie's Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education



Channyn Lynne Parker.
Photo by Nina Matti

Center, 9603 Woods Dr., 2-3:30 p.m.

Attendees will explore the history, early battles, defeats and victories in the struggle to achieve equality. People will also learn what they can do to stand in solidarity to defend human rights for all, including the LGBTQ+ community.

Panelists will include activist/entrepreneur/Equality Illinois co-founder Art Johnston; attorney Matt Nosanchuck, who helped craft President Obama's LGBT-rights agenda; and transgender activist Channyn Lynne Parker, the manager of the youth drop-in at Broadway Youth Center. Lora Branch, of Gilead Sciences, will be the moderator.

Equality Illinois, Windy City Times, Center on Halsted, The Legacy Project and the Chicago Alliance of Museums with Pride are community partners.

Admission is free for museum members, and \$6-\$15 for non-members; visit <https://www.ill-holocaustmuseum.org/pages/programs/events/>.

'Taking Pride in Our Story' forum June 19

"Taking Pride in Our Story: Chicago and Its LGBTQ Community" will take place Tuesday, June 19, at Maggiano's Banquets, 111 W. Grand Ave. The reception will be at 11:30 a.m., and the luncheon will start at 12 p.m.

Speakers will include Windy City Times Publisher Tracy Baim, Pride Action Tank Executive Director Kim Hunt, Howard Brown Health President/CEO David Munar and transgender activist Reyna Ortiz. Equality Illinois CEO Brian Johnson will moderate the panel.

Admission is \$35-\$50; visit <https://www.cityclub-chicago.org>.

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Chi-Town Squares marks 30 years with party, award ceremony

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Chicago's LGBTQ square dancing club, Chi-Town Squares, recently celebrated its 30th anniversary with a party and pot-luck dinner, "Take Pride," May 12 at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Andersonville.

The club began when Jerry Cohen and Ron Goodman joined forces in 1987 and put ads in the local LGBTQ newspapers to seek out more members. When the first class met in Sept. 1987 at Wellington Avenue Church on Wellington and Broadway there were about 30 people in attendance. Now the club calls Ebenezer Lutheran Church its home.

To solidify the club within the wider LGBTQ square dancing community, a delegation attended the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs 1988 convention, "Cross Trails." The association officially accepted Chi-Town Squares as members at that convention.

Longtime member Rick Simkin (since 1991) noted that many people think square dancing clubs are for performance and competition, however, that is not the case with Chi-Town Squares.

"The group participates for the fun of dancing and the pleasure of each other's company," said Simkin. "A lot of enduring friendships have started on the dance floor and even some romantic relationships. I was looking for a community activity and Chi-Town Squares seemed just right because it was social and did not involve alcohol."

"It is a fun group of folks that enjoy socializing while dancing and laughing," said longtime member Rob Sierzega. "It is a casual setting and welcoming to everyone. I joined in the fall of 1993 with my (now deceased) partner, Larry Burke. We

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Collage of Chi-Town Squares photos from their Crossfire 2016 event. Photo from the organization's website



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PANELISTS: Lora Branch, Art Johnston, Matt Nosanchuck, Channyn Lynne Parker

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CHI-TOWN SQUARES from page 8

knew some people in the group, and were encouraged to try it out. We had a lot of fun right away and made a lot of new friends."

One of the features of square dancing is the live caller who tells the dancers what moves to make. Simkin explained that square dancing started as a folk activity with each caller using their own calls (moves) so it was not standardized. Chi-Town Squares hired a live caller its first year to teach the Basic through Plus calls. Since then Advance and Challenge levels have been added to the roster. These CALLERLAB-based classes have continued to this day.

"CALLERLAB is an international organization of square dance callers that was formed to standardize the calls and group them into standard 'levels' of learning," said Simkin. "Now a square dancer who knows, say, the 'Mainstream' level, can dance at any Mainstream dance anywhere in the world."



Chi-Town Squares staff (from left): Incoming Board Vice President Diva Mihelic, Member-at-Large Penny O'Reilly, President Jeff Hutchins and Secretary Bob Siegel (missing: Treasurer John Wood).

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

The club hosts a "No Experience Needed Dance Party" on the first Thursday of each month and weekly dances for people who have attended the intensive weekends (blasts) in March and September to learn the Mainstream level. In addition to these weekly dances focusing on specific levels of achievement, the club holds seven dances so the entire group can mix and mingle with each other. During the Columbus Day weekend in October, the club holds "The Great Chicago Crossfire" for members and former members who come in from all parts of the country to reconnect with their friends.

Each year Chi-Town Squares recognizes long-time members and gives out the Eric B. Calimag Yellow Rock Award (since 1995) to one or more members who have shown outstanding service to the club. The genesis for this award began when Lin Jarvis gave the club a big rock painted yellow and mounted on a plaque to use as a way to honor someone.

"Eric Calimag was one recipient of the award," said Simkin. "He died during the year that he was the Yellow Rock's awardee. Chi-Town Squares left the rock with his family, got a new Yellow Rock, and re-named the award in Eric's memory."

The previous year's award winner(s) choose(s) the next year's recipients. This year's award was

given to Joe Kerouac at the anniversary celebration.

Upon receiving the Yellow Rock award, Kerouac said "someone needs to break this to my husband (who was at the celebration) that this award will be going on our dining room table." This statement elicited a lot of laughs from the crowd.

Following the awards ceremony, Kerouac told Windy City Times that the award "was a great honor and recognition for the work I have done as a board member for the past ten years. I have been square dancing since 1968 so to get an award finally is wonderful. It has been great to be a member of this club. I have met some fantastic people who have become close friends."

New board member assignments were also announced at the anniversary celebration—Jeff Hutchins (president), Diva Mihelic (vice president), John Wood (treasurer), Bob Siegel (secretary) and Penny O'Reilly (member-at-large).

"It is overwhelming to be taking on this new

role," said Hutchins. "It is good to see the veterans of the group who no longer dance come out for this celebration and I hope the club has 30 more years."

"I have made so many wonderful friends here," said Mihelic. "This club is the center of my life. I am eager to move the club forward in my new leadership role and I also just joined the education committee. I am excited to be a liaison between the board and that committee. It will be fun to learn how to run the club."

"I hope that square dancing grows as a hobby and the club has a better presence in the Chicago LGBTQ community," said outgoing President Jim Cosenza. "This is a really diverse community of people who come from all sorts of backgrounds. I have found that being in this club is an amazing way to make friends and connect with other members of the LGBTQ community outside of a bar setting."

"I especially encourage younger people to come check out the club," said Chi-Town Squares historian Phil Davis. "Anyone is welcome to come and dance and that includes our LGBTQ allies."

Membership is \$50/year and dances are \$8. Scholarships are available for those who cannot afford to pay. See <https://www.chitown-squares.org/> for more information.

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Sen. Pat Spearman: 'Look out, Washington; I'm on my way'

BY SARAH TOCE

Nevada state Sen. Pat Spearman plays the drums backward because her band director in high school told her he wouldn't let her transfer to the drum section because "girls don't play drums."

"Girls don't play drums; you play the clarinet. So I decided to teach myself how to play—and I taught myself how to play shop set."

Now, the pioneering Democratic Sen. Spearman is at the center of a heated congressional race in Nevada. The seat became open when a member of Congress representing her district decided to forfeit running due to sexual harassment and assault charges. At first, Spearman couldn't understand why her phone was buzzing repeatedly. "You should run," "You need to run," "Please, you have to do this for us." These messages came in minute after minute from unknown numbers until Sen. Spearman clicked on a story link and understood the weight of the moment.

"Oh, my goodness, oh, my goodness," she said. "And this was about the first of December, so I've got to think about this. ... So I did. I talked to my family and prayed about it. Talked to some friends who I count on to keep me grounded and they all said the same thing: 'Yeah, you really have to do this because No. 1, there aren't enough veteran voices in Congress. No. 2, as a member of the LGBTQ community and everything that's happening, you're strong enough to stand against that sort of thing and you won't back down and people who are being oppressed and emotionally abused by this sort of behavior, they need your voice.'"

That settled that and made the decision a relative no-brainer for Spearman. She followed her gut, her instinct, the cries from her constituents, and decided to enter the race.

Previously, Spearman chaired the bill to ratify the ERA in Nevada. As a former pastor and as a member of the African-American community, Spearman felt a calling to serve her community once again.

"I had some friends of mine who were pastors who heard about [the open seat] and they said, 'Are you thinking about running for this seat?' And I'm like, 'Well, I'm praying about it,'" she remembered. "And they're like, 'You know, as a former pastor you understand a lot of the same things that we face in terms of trying to do for our congregants and our parishioners and you know probably better than anybody else why we have to have a budget that reflects our principles for caring for people and the least of these.'"

Then something shifted in the race.

"We had the person who used to be in the seat decide to come back from Washington, D.C., and run for the seat [again]," she said. People began asking if she felt like backing down. They ob-



Sen. Pat Spearman.
Photo courtesy of Spearman

viously didn't know Spearman. She never backs down.

"African-American women have carried this party for a long time and I'm sick and tired of every time we get ready to run for something or we're sponsoring something or we're trying to make a difference, I'm sick and tired of people acting like we have no business at this party," she told them. "I am not getting out of this race and I'm offended that you would even ask."

She added, "I said, listen, hard I know, easy I've never had to do. So bring it. I mean, I'm an African-American; I'm a woman; I'm in the LGBT community; I've never caught a break. I've always had to work hard for everything that I got and the fact that someone would tell me up front it's going to be different raising money just emboldened me even more."

Spearman said she believes she is in the race for all the right reasons.

"I'm retired, I don't need to go to Washington to 'get a job' and get a paycheck," she said. "I'm going to Washington because I want to get a job done and I want to be a voice for all of those constituencies that called me and said, 'Please run.' And since I decided to run, with what the Presi-

dent has said and basically done to transgender members of the military, I'm like, you know if the election were held tomorrow, I'd say I'm ready to go to D.C. day after tomorrow."

Still, there are some barriers.

"It hasn't been easy," she said. "There's still some people who believe that women should step aside if a man wants the job and even more bizarre, there are African-American women who say that women should step aside. So, I'm in this. It's been different, but God has really provided. We have a real grassroots campaign—and a lot of small dollar donors. And a lot of people who have volunteered. And the fact that some people decided to shut me down because I was not their anointed one, I could care less. David had five smooth stones; I've got some tremendous volunteers."

Spearman spoke next about her first day of officer basics for military police school. A time in her life that most certainly prepared her for the battle she now faces.

"I was basically told by one of the instructors that I wouldn't make it," she said. "He walked all the way around the room and then he stopped in front of me and he said these words, 'Some of you all are not going to make it.' And I looked at Jerry, who was next to me, and I said, 'Oh, he's not talking about me. He's not talking about me.' And they did everything they could to make me quit."

That included sexually harassing the young student in January 1978, a time when the White Corp. had just been deactivated approximately five years prior.

"This was the first time that women were admitted to combat support roles," she said. "Instead of just being attached to them, we were actually branched into that. At the time, I thought I was the only African-American woman in the course and found about 12 years later there was another one, but she could pass—and she did. So there was, I caught hell. But I've always said if it's my goal to complete this and somebody else's goal is to make sure I don't, I'm going to prove you a liar. Tell me I can't do something and that's just like saying sic 'em to a pit bull. I'm going to do this."

Not to be lost in the conversation, "the reason the seat is open is because someone had a #metoo movement moment and decided #timesup," she said. "It's important for people to know that I'm running in a race where women came forward. And it's important for people to know that because the very fact that you're running, even if you don't know who the alleged victims are, the very fact that you're running will say to them, times have changed. The paradigm has shifted and most people know. The one thing you don't want to do is pick an argument with me about something I believe in. You don't want to do that."

Sen. Mark Manendo resigned in 2017 after several allegations of inappropriate behavior and sexual harassment that had gone on for more than 20 years. Spearman said that she was ap-

proached because the victims felt that she could "do something about it."

"Their stories reminded me about when I was a captain in Panama in 1986. I was an O3 and my senior rater, who is an O6, propositioned me in some very graphic terms," she remembered. "And he made sure to let me know that he could help my career. By default, he could also hurt it."

Spearman said she told her senior, "I don't do that, sir. I don't do that," but he didn't take the retort kindly. "He came to my hotel room, knocked on the door. ... I acted like I wasn't there. I was basically a prisoner in my hotel room for a whole day one Saturday. And the maid let me out; she ushered me over to the service elevator and I went down the service elevator, ran to my car, and went to some friends' house."

Spearman added, "There was really no place that I could go. I was in Panama. I couldn't even get off the island without orders and the orders would have to come from him. So I was trapped, scared to death." She recalled thinking, "If I say something, I'm going to lose my career. Because nobody's going to believe a captain and an O6 and someone who has a combat infantry badge. They're not going to believe me. I just knew it."

So she remained silent.

"I was silent, but it was a silent rage because I felt like I had been violated even though I did not agree to do what he wanted to do and I stayed away from him," she said. "I made sure that I was with somebody all the time. I was just so angry on the inside."

Spearman escorted Manendo's victims to the office of Sen. Aaron Ford, who is now running for Attorney General in the state.

"I could see him getting visibly, physically upset," she recalled. "He said, 'I'll handle it.' And so he initiated an independent investigation. Hired a private investigator. And halfway through the investigation, said to those in leadership, 'There's some credible evidence that has arisen and there are a lot of women whose stories have been corroborated. And so, we're going to have to do something.' And he did. He took him out of his Chairmanship for Transportation—and then silenced him."

Spearman added, "Now here's why that's important: That was 20 years of women having to go through that. It was 20 years of them telling people and nothing happened. They told Republicans who were in leadership. They told someone who was a Democrat who was in leadership and nothing was done. And so the fact that I'm running in a race that the seat is open because of this, is significant to every woman who's ever come forward and people have said we don't believe you."

Spearman's platform could not be any clearer.

"We're going to win and we're going to make sure that pay equity is the law of the land," she said. "We're going to make sure that people who do mean things and people who act inappropriately are not shielded by their gender. We're going to make sure that equality is the law of the land. All of those things that I've said in my 2016 speech at the Democratic National Convention, all of that stuff is going to happen. So look out Washington; I'm on my way."

Learn more about Spearman via her campaign website: <https://www.spearman4congress.com>.



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BOOK REVIEW

Transgender History

By Susan Stryker

\$17.99; Seal Press; 303 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

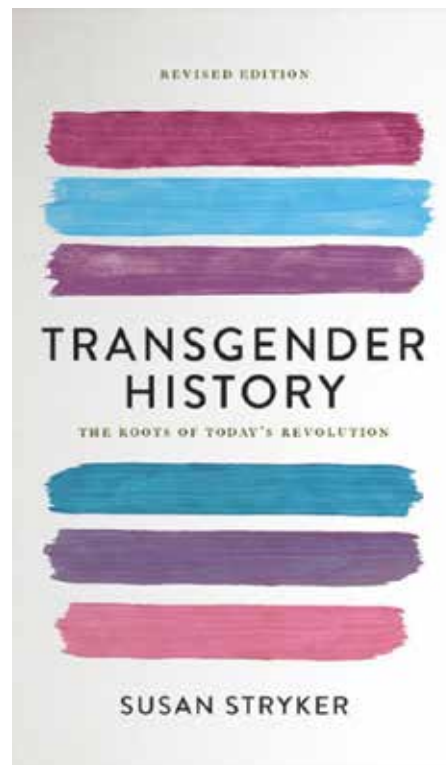
It had to start somewhere.

Someone had to make the first step, to pave the way, to stick a fork into the ground and say, "Here, now." Someone had to be the first so that others could follow, and in the newly updated book *Transgender History*, by Susan Stryker, you'll see where we go next.

Opening a history book with a chapter on terms and words might seem odd but, says Stryker, "remarkable changes" over the last decade demand it. Thus begins this book, with new language for what is an old lifestyle.

Indeed, the United States' first recorded "inter-sex" individual was Thomas(ine) Hall, who lived in the 1620s, "sometimes as a man and sometimes as a woman." Seventy years later, however, the colony of Massachusetts made "cross-dressing" illegal and it spread: by the 1850s, many U.S. cities had ordinances against dressing in clothing normally worn by the opposite sex.

And yet, it was hard to stop people who wanted to dress as or fully transition to another gender. Throughout the 1800s, records show that women dressed as men for battle, cross-dressers braved the frontier, men ran away from their families to be true to their feminine selves and Native American cultures embraced transgender people. Says Stryker, after anesthesia was invented and sur-



geries were safer, "individuals began approaching doctors to request surgical alteration of ... parts of their bodies."

For a time, then, the movement was relatively quiet—by necessity, as the Nazis proved when they torched Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute

for Sexual Science in Berlin—until American Christine Jorgensen "burst onto the scene" in late 1952 when she traveled to Copenhagen for trans surgery. Her ensuing fame didn't signal full acceptance for trans people, but it was a start: Riots in 1959 led to activism in the 1960s, and post-Stonewall groups consolidated to lend support and work through "difficult decades" of the '70s, '80s, and the AIDS crisis. Today, says Stryker, though we live in interesting times of Trump and turmoil, the news is heartening. Millennials and "post-Baby Boomers" have expressed more acceptance of "trans-gender as part of the 'anti-heteronormative' mix."

Although *Transgender History* is a revised edition of a book first published a decade ago, it has a fresh feel thanks to that which author Stryker has added. The first chapter, somewhat of a dictionary, schools readers on new ways of talking about LGBTQ issues and individuals, while the last chapter of trans history brings readers up to the present, including topics of politics, potties, and celebrity.

What makes it unusual is that, although it's not always chronological, it's breezy and casually readable. There's no stuffiness here, and no air of the scholarly: Stryker makes this history accessible for people who want a story and not a textbook.

And so, this book is a pleasant surprise. It's easy to read, not overly wordy, and there are a just-right number of illustrations here for a reader's enjoyment. For anyone who wants a basic, yet lively, overview of trans life in the United States, *Transgender History* is a great start.

'MEN' photo exhibit at LA&M until June 7

The Leather Archives & Museum has announced the mounting of a new exhibition in its Guest Artist Gallery (GAG). "MEN as seen through the lens of inkedKenny"—a retrospective of male erotic/fetish photography—will run through Thursday, June 7.

inkedKenny, who resides in Canada—spending most of his time between Toronto and Montreal—has developed a career in photography, working not only in the area of fetish photography, but on style and fashion shoots as well as portraits of celebrities like Sandra Bernhardt and Monica Bellucci. From an early photography interest in the 1980s (fueled by a simultaneous interest in barbering), inkedKenny's work has included corporate work for Macy's, Nordstrom's, Nike and Levi's. See LeatherArchives.org.



One of inkedKenny's works.

Image from Leather Archives & Museum

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Volunteer information sessions will be held on June 2 at 10 a.m. and June 12 at 7 p.m. at Gompers Park Field House, 4222 West Foster Avenue, in Chicago.

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History UnErased, Making Gay History: Working to bring back LGBTQ people, feats

BY JOE FRANCO

In 1948, the United States Congress passed an act “for the treatment of sexual psychopaths.” That law combined with an executive order from President Eisenhower began a systematic and legal purge of gays and lesbians from government employment.

It is events like this that many people have forgotten—and it is also events like this that have been “erased from our history.” Preventing that erasure is one of many goals for teachers Deb Fowler and Miriam Morgenstern, the co-founders of History UnErased. (HUE). The program, currently in use in public and private schools in Massachusetts and New York, is “in response to the urgent need to present LGBTQ-inclusive history to all students as a method to address the educational disparities between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students and to mitigate the staggering statistics relating to LGBTQ youth,” Fowler told Windy City Times.

The aim of HUE is not to “out” people in the past who may have had same-sex relationships. “That is not LGBTQ history; that is gossip,” explained Fowler. “People who we label and understand today as LGBTQ have always existed; therefore, LGBTQ history has always been woven into our shared historical narrative, but until now has been invisible.” Fowler does not see a division between an exclusively LGBTQ history and a heterosexual history. Rather she has found a relationship and interconnectedness. “For LGBTQ youth, learning a more accurate and inclusive history demonstrates that they are not alone, and that others like themselves have championed for LGBTQ equal rights. For non-LGBTQ identifying students, learning the stories and history of LGBTQ people develops an appreciation of human diversity, which in turn creates safer schools and communities,” said Fowler.

Fowler and Morgenstern’s method for bringing the LGBTQ topic into the classroom has a multiple-pronged approach. There are workshops where educators are trained to bring LGBTQ history into classrooms. “We have to help them unlearn some of the prejudices or assumptions they bring into the workshop and give them the methods and strategies they can use to bring this erased history into their classrooms,” said Fowler.

HUE also provides educators with “academic inquiry kits.” The kits introduce students to an inquiry-based method of history to “broaden the context of what currently is presented in curriculum and encourage a rich exploration of historical sources. All materials are designed to be age- and grade-appropriate,” explained Fowler. “Policy change in education is important and will continue to evolve, but real change happens when

teachers are empowered to make changes in their classroom practice.” In addition to these tools, HUE has begun a collaboration with the Making Gay History podcast.

Eric Marcus launched Making Gay History in 2015. “This topic has been my life’s work,” said Marcus. He began pursuing the topic of LGBTQ history while at Vassar College in 1976. The work eventually led to the book Making Gay History, and this included research with more than 300 hours of audio interviews that are now archived in the New York Public Library. “It’s that archive of interviews that I’m now mining for the Making Gay History podcast,” added Marcus.

But writing about and speaking about gay history was not easy for Marcus, who told WCT, “I had to create a timeline from scratch. Many of the people used pseudonyms during the years they were involved in the movement. If you wanted to find out about Lisa Ben today, who published the first newsletter for lesbians in 1947, you can just Google her name and you find out that her real name was Edythe Eyde. I didn’t have that option in 1988.”

Making Gay History, like HUE, is about uncovering the narrative of LGBTQ people. “So much of LGBTQ history has been hidden that unless you looked very hard you’d never know how integral our stories are to the American story,” said Marcus. “For young people today, there are lessons to be learned in how the early LGBTQ civil rights advocates achieved what they did.” History, explained Marcus, is “our story” and “gives us a sense of place.” Marcus added, “it roots us in a narrative- in a proud history. For straight people, knowing our history gives them some insight into why we are the way we are and why we have an ax to grind with all the people who have tried to bury us and continue to try to bury us.”

Given that Making Gay History has a diverse audience that includes both gay and straight youth, it is not surprising that HUE and Making Gay History began to work together. “I was introduced to History UnErased by Andrew Wallace, who was then working at StoryCorps. He thought that Debra and Miriam would be interested in knowing about my archive,” said Marcus. Fowler could not agree more: “It was kismet. We began discussing our vision of LGBTQ inclusive curriculum that incorporated Eric’s stories. When Eric told us about the archive of his oral history interviews that had been living in the library for years, we almost jumped out of our skin!”



Teacher Miriam Morganstern.

Photo courtesy of Colangelo and Partners

Although is currently in operation in limited jurisdictions in the East, Fowler stressed the need for parent and teacher advocates across the United States. “They bring HUE to the attention of their schools and communities and recommend HUE’s workshops and materials. We are scaling the organization and building capacity so we can reach schools across the country.” Fowler added, “we understand that this work is a long game. Policy change often occurs more rapidly than the evolution of hearts and minds.”

For both HUE and Making Gay History bringing to mind the history of LGBTQ men and women who, whether purposely or merely by virtue of

being less glamorous than other topics, has been hidden. Unerasing gay history is not about creating something new but calling to modern audiences’ and students’ attention the contributions that LGBTQ people have brought to the American story. “If teachers are not prepared, then coverage takes the place of exploration and compliance takes the place of deep learning,” said Fowler. She added, “This is a visionary approach to disrupt the cycle of bullying and harassment, advance the equitable treatment of LGBTQ people and continue the path toward lasting LGBTQ equality.”

For more information on History UnErased, visit Unerased.org. For more information and where to find the Making Gay History Podcast, visit MakingGayHistory.com, or stop by Apple or Spotify to download and listen.



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LGBTQs in Memorial Day parade

The rainbow flag, along with the American flag and those representing the various military service branches, was prominent in an early position in Chicago's 2018 Memorial Day parade on Saturday, May 26.

The American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) Chicago Chapter and The Lakeside Pride Freedom Marching Band combined to form a veteran and musical contingent which attracted loud appreciation from the crowd all along the route.

AVER has participated in the parade for the past 17 years and the band has joined them for most of those years.

The following day, AVER conducted a remembrance ceremony for Allen Schindler, a sailor who was murdered in 1992 by shipmates for being gay. AVER joins Schindler's family each Memorial Day weekend and Veterans' Day at the gravesite in Steger, IL.

AVER is a national non-profit, chapter-based association of active, reserve and veteran members of the armed services dedicated to full and equal rights and treatment for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The chapter holds open meetings at the Center on Halsted the first Thursday of each month and, during 2018, is presenting quarterly LGBTQ Veteran MeetUps with social time, food, drink and presenters at the Center. Call 773-752-0058 for information.

Photos and text by Jean Albright

POST CARD.

THIS IS A REAL PHOTOGRAPH

Wish you were here!

"Boats, Buggies & Broadway," Sullivan serves as the county seat of Moultrie County and is home to The Little Theatre On the Square, the only Equity (professional) theatre located between Chicago and St. Louis. In addition, the city serves as the north gateway to Lake Shelbyville, and also marks the west edge of the area's large Amish settlement.

Boats | Buggies | Broadway

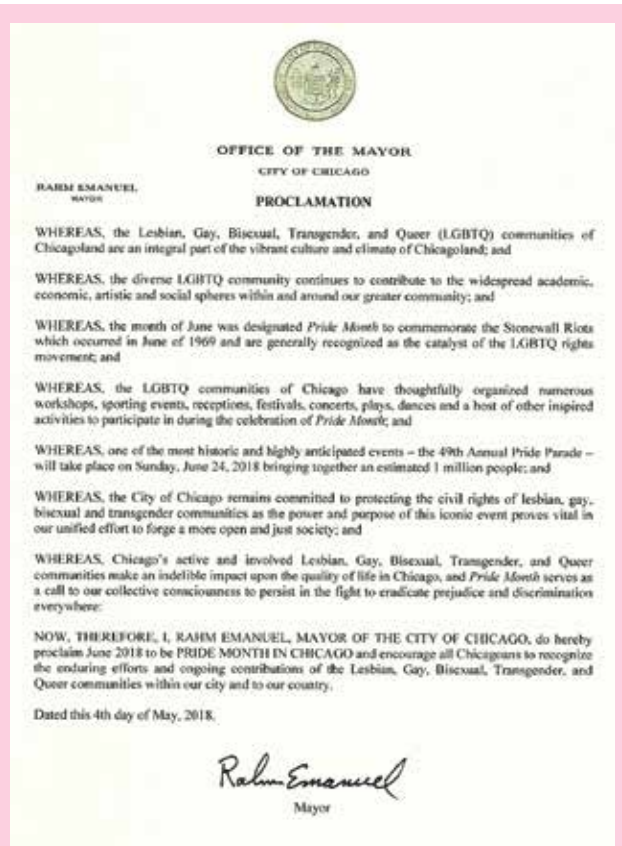
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Emanuel issues Pride proclamation

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently issued his annual Pride Month Proclamation.

Image courtesy of Rich Pfeiffer



Anna DeShawn talks E3 Radio's expansion, Affinity activism work

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Chicago-born media maven and social entrepreneur Anna DeShawn has been a mover and shaker within Chicago's LGBTQ community her entire adult life.

One of the ways DeShawn has made an impact is through her media company E3 Radio—an online radio network curated from a queer point of view. Her show, Anna DeShawn & the QCrew, is co-hosted with Brandee Dyson and has been live every Thursday night for the past eight years. The next show to join the lineup was Conversations with Angie Harvey. Harvey has been helping grown folks grow up on her show since 2012. Recently, DeShawn expanded E3 Radio's reach from two to three concurrent shows to being on the air around the clock.

"My vision for E3 Radio has always been to grow, expand and be the number one queer radio network in the country," said DeShawn. "It started as an online college radio network that distributed PSA's and grew from there. E3 Radio produces authentically edgy streams that I call the new age NPR. With this expansion, we have more shows joining the lineup and we play dope queer and independent artists in high rotation. We are #QueerRadioDoneRight. I am invested in us thriving and not just surviving. We deserve a platform created by us, for us."

E3 Radio operates on three pillars: education, enlightenment and entertainment. These pillars drive everything DeShawn and her team does in

terms of programming and community outreach efforts.

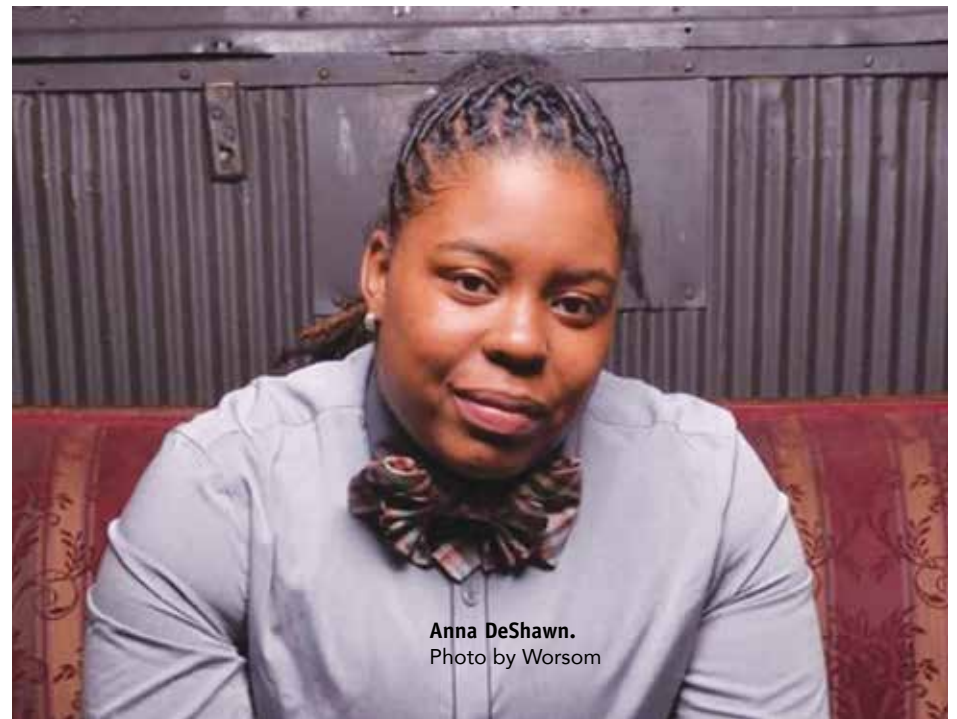
DeShawn said that Lena Waithe and the late Vernita Gray's appearances on her show were the most memorable.

"When we had Lena on the show she was an up and coming writer and now she is an Emmy award winning writer. She was so down to earth and has been supportive of what we are building," said DeShawn. "Interviewing Vernita was an honor. I had the opportunity on a couple of occasions and each time was so meaningful. She is a legend and what I love about doing this work is not only talking with people and hearing their stories but being able to share that with the world."

Among her many E3 Radio team members across the country is music curator Jace Smith.

"I have enjoyed working with the entire E3 radio family in my various roles within the company," said Smith. "We cover stories that are pertinent to our community and raise the Black queer voice loud and proud. Most importantly, we bring our authentic selves to the work. Anna is a natural born leader and has invested her time and expertise into growing her brand. It is beautiful to watch her dream unfold and it is even more exciting to be on the journey alongside her. Anna is grounded in her faith, and with that is able to do this hard work while breaking ground in radio."

Media has always been DeShawn's passion going back to her childhood watching ESPN with her dad. Her first on-air inspiration was Robin Roberts who covered many major sporting events



Anna DeShawn.
Photo by Worsom

before moving on to general reporting and Good Morning America.

DeShawn grew up on Chicago's south side and graduated from Drake University with a degree in radio/television and Ithaca College with a master's in communication. During her undergrad years, DeShawn learned how important it is for people in marginalized communities to tell their stories from their perspective.

For DeShawn, being in leadership positions has been a given since high school where she was the student body president. She was also Drake University's Coalition of Black Students president and is currently Affinity Community Services' board president along with her ownership of E3 Radio.

Through Affinity, DeShawn showcases her activism on a daily basis.

"I have always advocated for equity even before I knew what equity meant," said DeShawn. "For example, during high school I thought it absurd that the cheerleaders did not cheer for the girls basketball team. So, when I became student body president we changed it. The core of my activist work is justice."

DeShawn has been a part of Affinity for 13 years beginning with the young adult drop-in group XPU. She came to the organization because she wanted to find community.

"I followed them a long time before I built up the courage to go visit during a break from college," said DeShawn. "I remember having so much anxiety. I actually make it a point not to forget that feeling because it grounds me. It reminds me that I was not always confident in who I am and who I love. I was not always comfort-

able in my own skin. Affinity provided a space for me."

Over the years DeShawn has helped Affinity with their website and other creative work. Five years ago, former Executive Director Kim Hunt reached out to her about joining the board and at first she was not sure about it but one question kept cropping up while she was contemplating



e3 logo.
Image by Brett Jones

the invitation, "What are you doing to help sustain Affinity?" and her answer was always, "Not enough."

That answer sealed the deal for DeShawn and she has been on the board ever since. She calls being the board president an honor and a huge responsibility.

"I am humbled by all the work, love and commitment that is poured in by our executive director, Imani Rupert-Gordon, our Board and core group of volunteers," said DeShawn. "We are in our 23rd year and it is our job to ensure the organization is here for many years to come."

"I could not be more impressed with Anna across the board," said Rupert-Gordon. "Even in the short time that she has served in this role; her love, appreciation and respect for Affinity shines through all of her ideas and decisions. I am excited for what our team has been able to accomplish together, and even more excited for what we will accomplish in the future. I love working in partnership with Anna, and I am inspired by her leadership at Affinity."

Another piece of DeShawn's activism emerges around faith and sexuality. In 2011, DeShawn joined the Church Within a Church Movement (CWACM). CWACM is a collection of LGBTQIA theologians, scholars, and members who intentionally disrupt privilege, fight against religious violence, develop justice ministries across the country, and celebrate the spectrum of identities. DeShawn has previously served on the coordinating team and in 2013 collaborated with CWACM for the "My God is Not a Bully" campaign. They interviewed over 40 people about their relationships or non-



e3 Radio team (from left): Angie Harvey, David Dodd, Brandee Dyson, Jace Smith, Kaya Rainey and Lex Lawson, with Anna DeShawn in front.

Photo by Severe Photographics

relationship with God as well as how they have reconciled with their faith and sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Additionally, E3 Radio has hosted the annual Purple Tie Affair benefit gala (since 2014) at Sidetrack. To date, the event has gifted over \$4,000 to various Chicago non-profits. This year's gala will take place Oct. 4 at Sidetrack with the proceeds earmarked for Affinity and CWACM.

When DeShawn is not busy with E3 Radio; she likes to cook, run and watch/play basketball. She also loves spending time with her wife Kaya Rainey.

In terms of DeShawn's commitment to the greater community and her vision for the future she said, "I am determined to ride media into its next era by utilizing online radio streams to tell the stories that need to be heard. We must build and own our own. I want to be a part of the social entrepreneur movement that believes you can be a successful business owner while giving back at the same time."

See <http://www.E3radio.fm/>, <http://affinity95.org/> and <http://www.mygodisnotabully.com/> for more information.

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**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

Can the LGBTQ community trust Pope Francis?

Once again, Pope Francis is rocking the world.

“God made you like this and loves you like this and I don’t care. The pope loves you like this. You have to be happy with who you are.”

According to reports from Spain’s *El Pais* newspaper and the Associated Press, Pope Francis said the abovementioned statement in a private conversation with Juan Carlos Cruz, who is gay and one of the Chilean sexual-abuse survivors by a Catholic priest.

Some LGBTQAI Catholics see Pope Francis’ pastoral moment with Cruz having dogma-transforming ramifications.

“The pope saying that God created an individual as gay goes far beyond a statement of welcome,” said Marianne Duddy-Burke, DignityUSA’s executive director, in a statement. “It sets a new foundation for Catholic teaching about sexual orientation that is very different than what has been traditionally stated. If God creates us with our sexual orientation or gender identity as part of who we are, the doctrine that LGBTQI people are not part of God’s plan for humanity cannot stand. We can no longer be considered ‘objectively disordered,’ and the entire theology of human identity and relationships will need to be reconsidered.”

The pope’s pastoral moment with Cruz, however, is fraught with not only the long history of the Catholic Church sex-abuse scandal, but, also of the ecclesiastical higher-ups turning a blind eye to it—and, in some cases, flatly denying the allegations of its pedophile priests. (Pope Francis is reportedly one of those who turned a blind eye.)

For example, the pope ignited anger in Chile after accusing Father Fernando Karadima’s victims of slander, and there was no cover-up by Bishop Juan Barros.

“There is not one single piece of proof against him [Bishop Barros]. It is all slander. Is that clear?” the pope said.

What happened to compassionate listening and an open heart?

In 2011, the Vatican, however, found Karadima guilty of abusing teenage boys and was sentenced



Pope Francis.

Image by Jason Seiler

to a lifetime of “penance and prayer.”

In depicting the abuse and cover-up, Juan Carlos Cruz tweeted, “As if I could have taken a selfie or photo while Karadima abused me and others with Juan Barros standing next to him watching everything.”

In 2016, Pope Francis appointed Barros the bishop of Osorno.

I am elated that Cruz had a private moment with the pontiff. It allowed Francis to provide the needed pastoral care to Cruz as a sex-abuse survivor. Also, it allowed Francis to make amends for his callous acts toward Cruz and others as a conciliatory gesture for his and the church’s sin.

However, I don’t interpret Francis’s pastoral moment with Cruz as having dogma-changing ramifications, because he has flipped-flopped on us too many times, as he has with the church abuse scandal.

For example, in the pontiff’s 2015 tome, *Pope Francis: This Economy Kills*, Francis compares transgender people to nuclear weapons. His reason is that this unlikely pair both destroy and desecrate God’s holy and ordained order of creation.

In an interview with the National Catholic Reporter, Francis spewed the following transphobic remarks:

“Let’s think of the nuclear arms, of the possibility to annihilate in a few instants a very high number

of human beings,” he continues. “Let’s think also of genetic manipulation, of the manipulation of life, or of the gender theory, that does not recognize the order of creation.”

Francis’ clear denunciation of our present-day gender theories and understanding of the fluidity of human sexuality not only perpetuates spiritual harm and alienation to our trans community but it also unwittingly invites physical harm to our trans community—done in the name of God with righteous wrath and indignation.

“God has placed man and woman and the summit of creation and has entrusted them with the earth. The design of the Creator is written in nature,” the pontiff has stated.

In 2000, The Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith also denounced the existence of transgender people.

“The key point is that the transsexual surgical operation is so superficial and external that it does not change the personality. If the person was a male, he remains male. If she was female, she remains female.”

Sadly, Francis’s views on women’s role within the Catholic Church hierarchy are both retro and spiritually abusive, too.

Pope Francis continues to command attention around the world with his liberal-leaning pronouncements, but the pontiff is a complicated, if not confusing figure to LGBTQAI people. On the surface, Francis displays a pastoral countenance to his papacy that extends to all of our community, but

I recall remarks Pope Francis made while flying home after a weeklong visit to Brazil in 2013, responding to a question about a possible “gay lobby” in the Vatican. His answer set off global shock waves.

“When I meet a gay person, I have to distinguish between their being gay and being part of a lobby,” he said. “If they accept the Lord and have good will, who am I to judge them?”

This public statement is the most LGBTQ-affirmative remarks the world has ever heard from the Catholic Church since 2013, when the LGBTQ publication *The Advocate* named Pope Francis its “Person of the Year.”

But, Pope Francis is the consummate flip-flopper of our time. He doublespeaks on issues: First he defends the abusive priest and now the survivor. He embraces the LGBTQAI community and then he doesn’t.

It’s not enough for Francis to say he embraces our community—privately or publicly. He must also do it.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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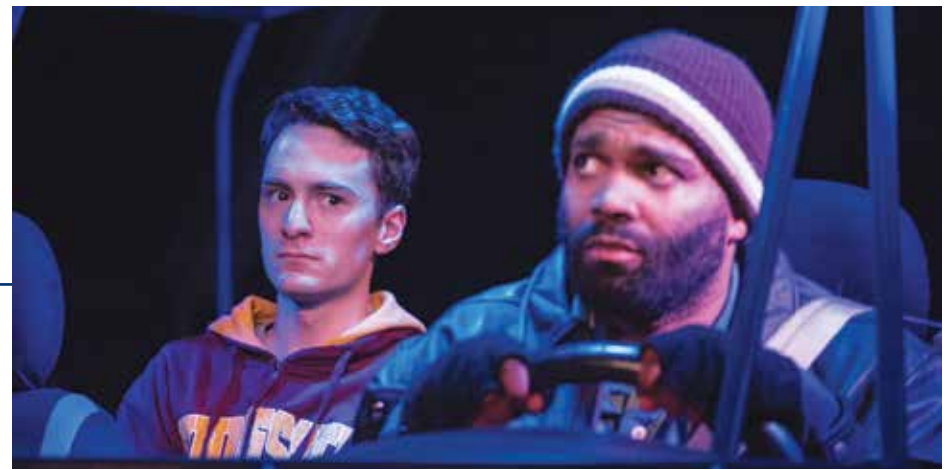
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WCT reviews **Damascus.**

Photo of Sam Hubbard (left) and Terence Sims by Clark Bender

THEATER

Queer policewoman, ghostly vandals trip 'The Light Fantastic'

BY SARAH BOWDEN

For fans of horror onstage, there are more than jump scares to be found in Jackalope Theatre's *The Light Fantastic*. (See the review on page 18.) The production, penned by in-demand playwright Ike Holter, digs deep into the humanity hiding behind what lurks in the shadows, and asks the audience questions about identity and community.

The play involves Grace (Paloma Nozicka), who has returned to her small Indiana hometown in order to take care of her mother, Fiona (Janice O'Neill). She's not home long before being faced with a supernatural crisis that threatens her entire existence. Grace encounters the local law enforcement in the midst of her troubles, and Officer Harriet (Brianna Buckley) plays a crucial part in dealing with both natural and supernatural forces.

The homecoming scenario is part of what drew director Gus Menary to the script.

"I'm a millennial," Menary said. "For my generation, we're at this point where we have kids and jobs and we are starting to have to take care of our parents. This motivates a certain amount of self-reflection, he argues, and this thought process lies at the heart of Grace's struggle with larger forces. "There is this idea of, 'Can I be a good person now?' Can you fake it till you make it?"

While investigating these thematic inquiries, *The Light Fantastic* pulls from horror classics of

the 1960s, '70s and '80s, such as 1982's *Poltergeist* and 1967's *Rosemary's Baby*. Menary said the production team also drew inspiration from the more recent *The Pretty Thing That Lives In the House* in order to create a sense of dread throughout the performance, rather than relying solely on jump scares. Menary's emphasis for the show is on creating a thousand tiny cuts in the audience's psyche.

Since *The Light Fantastic* is a world premiere, new pages were being delivered to the production team on a regular basis. Menary asked designers to employ a wide palette of disquiet in their work. Scenic designer Sotirios Livaditis "gave us a canvas to paint on," Menary said, while sound and projection designer Steve LaBedz, lighting designer Slick Jorgenson, and "ghost wrangler" Brandon Moorehead experimented with new terrors using their respective crafts.

Brianna Buckley plays Harriet, a queer woman of color in a small town. Playing the truth of that situation, chills included, brings the audience deeper into the reality of the play.

Holter is known for giving characters powerful monologues about their place in the world, and Buckley delivers such a speech. She credits Holter with developing dialogue full of beats that help tell Harriet's story, and parallel frustrations people struggle with in real life.

"I think it's also [about] being a woman of color living in a world that's not always friendly, not always kind, and not always hearing your voice," Buckley said. Buckley added that she finds

that portion of the script deeply relevant to today, and said she is honored to hear those words listened to in performance.

The Light Fantastic was written to reflect the uncertainty the current time, without making bald-faced political statements about society. Holter's work often deals with ongoing events without explicitly telling an audience how to feel about a particular issue. Often, characters or communities transform in his plays, and Holter's fleshed-out examination of flawed, vulnerable people creates what Menary terms "the deep magic of theater."

Menary said he believes that big choices in *The Light Fantastic* change the characters, and that witnessing those moments allows the audience to

ask whether their own choices—why we do what we do—matters.

Of course, there is also comfort to be found in a horror story onstage. The real world confronts theatergoers with frightening circumstances every day. There's something incredibly relaxing about being scared [in a show], Menary said, in part because the audience gets to be terrified as a community. "How much better is that," he asked, "than being scared in real life?"

Jackalope Theatre's *The Light Fantastic*, by Ike Holter, continues through Wed., June 13, at the the Broadway Armory Park, 5917 N. Broadway. Tickets are \$20-\$30; visit <https://www.jackalopetheatre.org/>.



Paloma Nozicka and Brianna Buckley in *The Light Fantastic*.

Photo by Joel Maisonet

THEATER REVIEW

The Originalist

At: Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave.
 Tickets: \$44-\$74; CourtTheatre.org;
 773-753-4472.
 Runs through: June 10

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Here are some facts about the late Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia, the conservative judge at the epicenter of John Strand's play *The Originalist*. Scalia died in 2016, after nearly 30 years on the Supreme Court bench.:

—He wanted to make gay marriage illegal.

—He wanted to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

—He advocated for open carry.

—He wanted to end affirmative action.

—He wanted to reinstate capital punishment for juvenile criminals.

—He was on record as insisting that “liberals” make decisions based solely on their emotions.

Here is what playwright John Strand's *The Originalist* is: a 90-minute apologia for a man who would like to strip basic human rights from every

last member of the LGBTQIA community and half the population of the United States (women).

Strand makes Scalia a gruff, grandfatherly type—the kind of relative you shake your head at at Thanksgiving because he's just so out there. Out there is one thing when you're a private citizen. When you are in a position of supreme power? It's very sinister.

Here's how Scalia defined an “originalist,” the label he claimed for himself:

“The Constitution that I interpret and apply is not living but dead, or as I prefer to call it, enduring. It means today not what current society, much less the court, thinks it ought to mean, but what it meant when it was adopted.”

But as Scalia's voluminous decisions make clear, Scalia was only an “originalist” when it suits his beliefs.

Take the right to privacy for example. Scalia's writings showed a man who believed fiercely in the right to privacy—except if you were a woman who wants an abortion or a same-sex couple who wanted to wed. Then—as with so many other issues—he was fine with the government being all up in your business.

Then there's this: If you are an originalist, you are fine with slavery. Most of the Constitution

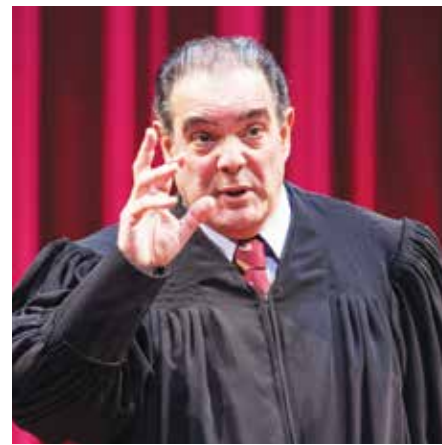
measures as escape routes or disposal of evidence, so that even if suicide wasn't part of the original mission, confusion during the aftermath often drives them to view self-destruction as the only way out of the emotional turmoil.

This principle is what locates us, five minutes into our play, inside an airport shuttle van making its way from Minneapolis to Chicago. It is occupied by two men—one, a terrorist bomber fleeing the scene of his recent crime, and the second, the owner of the vehicle, who is unaware of the reason for his passenger's urgent return to his home in Northern California. Oh, and by the way, one of the men is the darker-skinned son of Somali immigrants and the other is white and

sure-to-make-you-jump world premiere at Jackalope Theatre under Gus Menary's direction—Holter moves away from the mean streets and dysfunctional social institutions of Chicago he's explored in past plays to small-town Indiana. (You're forgiven if *Stranger Things* comes to mind, as that seems a deliberate echo.)

Grace (Paloma Nozicka), a woman who habitually leaves destruction and disgruntlement in her wake, has returned to town and is crashing at her sometime-boyfriend's house. At the beginning of the play, she's having an uncomfortable reunion with local cop and former classmate Harriet (Brianna Buckley), who is checking out Grace's claims of strange noises in the house. Their history is clearly thorny. But when Harriet departs, things get even messier. An accidental shooting from Rufus (Andrew Burden Swanson), an anguished home invader, causes Grace to call out for help. It arrives, but at what price?

In part, Holter is playing with a trope popular since at least *A Christmas Carol*: the selfish person who gets a second chance and resolves to make good. Grace, despite her name, is a piece of work who takes Eddie (Diego Colon),



Edward Gero as Antonin Scalia in *The Originalist*.

Photo by C Stanley Photography

was written in the 18th century, when almost all African-Americans in the United States were slaves without rights. If you are an originalist, you see nothing wrong with adhering to that barbaric status quo. Ditto women's suffrage.

Scalia would have been a great Supreme Court

a descendant of Depression-era migrants. If they should be detained, whose version of the facts are the police likely to believe?

The dramatic question, then, is not merely how far each is prepared to go to forestall losing everything he has in this world and the next, but who is willing to sacrifice others in service of his goal. A six-hour road trip could have provided the premise for a bunker-drama workshop exercise proposing contrasting archetypes swapping lofty polemics, but Bennett Fisher isn't interested in op-ed symposiums—both his characters are beyond persuasion, anyway—so much as stripping down his argument to the stark outlines of a locked-room two-handed mind-game thriller.

her long-suffering friend-with-few-benefits, for granted and ignores phone calls from her eccentric mother, Fiona (Janice O'Neill), who has her own grim secret. Grace is determined to change after surviving the shooting. When mysterious stranger Katrina (Elena Maria Cohen) shows up at her homecoming party, Grace gets a warning that it's too late for personal redemption.

That's reinforced once we meet Peter (Swanson), who denies he's Satan but definitely has a whiff of sulfur about him. He goes after those with “no love, no home, no power”—the things that Grace has either lost or thrown away in a lifetime of narcissism.

The scary moments come together beautifully in the small space thanks to a crack design team. But Holter's story is equally effective at startling us by upending expected tropes (particularly with regard to Harriet, who gets one hell of a monologue delivered perfectly by Buckley). And it takes a certain kind of authorial swagger to pin a crucial twist on a monodegreen.

There are a few slack moments before the end. But for the most part, *The Light Fantastic* is a mind-bending, gasp-worthy trip.

justice—at any time before 1776.

As Scalia, Edward Gero matches wits with his clerk, Cat (Jade Wheeler), an African-American woman who ferociously questions him on his beliefs. We are to believe that Cat comes to both respect and like her boss—a man who purported to uphold a Constitution wherein slavery is not expressly prohibited.

I was rolling my eyes within five minutes of *The Originalist*. At 40 minutes, I was ready to walk out. At curtain call, I was mentally going through my medicine cabinet to see if I had any good Sativa left.

Directed by Molly Smith, the cast in this three-person show is fine. They'll hold your attention. They breathe life into their characters. But make no mistake: You are watching the worst kind of revisionist history. Scalia was not the bloviating uncle who everybody ignores at the barbecue. He was a dangerous bigot.

I'm calling bull on this show—especially now, when the rights of women and gays and minorities are being rolled back seemingly every damn day. Spending once minute with a man who would strip you of your personhood would be annoying. At 90 minutes, it's gaslighting.

GTF00H.

Atmosphere is everything in this genre (aptly named “Night Journey” in literary parlance), but never has the isolation of lonely highways and the intimacy generated thereby been so vividly evoked as in Strawdog Theatre's bare-bones room where the purr of the real-life El train outside its walls blends with the artificial traffic noises supplied by Sarah Espinoza's sound design. Terence Sims and Sam Hubbard likewise reject simplistic subtexts to deliver caricature-free performances, along with Eleni Pappageorge as assorted bystanders, but the true star of the show is Jeffrey Kmiec's sleek GMC Chevrolet Savana—a surprisingly lightweight sculpture of aluminum tubing, fully functional engine parts and the smoothest-rolling platform wheels in the history of shifting scenery.

THEATER REVIEW

Damascus

Playwright: Bennett Fisher
 At: Strawdog Theatre Company,
 1802 W. Berenice Ave.
 Tickets: \$35-\$40; Strawdog.org;
 773-644-1380
 Runs through: June 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Crime writers claim that inexperienced killers are easy to catch because they only plan up to the moment of the murder, neglecting such post-op

THEATER REVIEW

The Light Fantastic

Playwright: Ike Holter
 At: Broadway Armory Park,
 5917 N. Broadway
 Tickets: JackalopeTheatre.org; \$5-\$30
 Runs through: June 16

BY KERRY REID

Horror and comedy both depend on the narrative twist you didn't see coming to land with maximum effect. We gasp in fright at a perceived danger, then laugh with nervous self-deprecating relief when we find out it's nothing to be afraid of—or is it?

Blending those elements requires pinpoint precision in tone, timing and atmosphere to keep both the story and the audience on its toes. Blending them with a contemporary gloss on the Faustian bargain takes the alchemical skills of Ike Holter.

In *The Light Fantastic*—now in a stellar and

CRITICS' PICKS

Spy Magic Bar, SafeHouse, open run. James and Jane Bond wannabes can practice their surveillance skills with Eric “Agent Blackjack” Train's table magic in this combined espionage museum, fantasy game arcade and Mag Mile night club. MSB

Flies! The Musical, Pride Films and Plays at the Broadway, through June 10. Cindy O'Conner and Larry Cousineau spoof William Golding's 1954 shocker, teen musicals, puppet-animals, botanical menaces and fourth-wall breakdowns and make us laugh at every minute of it. MSB

Grace, Interrobang Theatre at the Athenaeum Theatre, through June 3. There's but a few performances left of Craig Wright's ferociously funny tale of a couple who attempts to strike it rich by opening a chain of “evangelically themed motels.” Whatever your take on big-D divinity, Grace will make examine the Big Questions on life, afterlife and the hospitality industry. CES

—By Barnidge and Sullivan



**Martha Nussbaum
and John Corvino.**
Photo by
Carrie Maxwell

**THEATER:
'THE ORIGINALIST'**
**Talk on LGBT rights,
law and religion
follows performance**
BY CARRIE MAXWELL

University of Chicago Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Law and Ethics Professor Martha Nussbaum and Wayne State University Philosophy Professor and Debating Religious Liberty and Discrimination author John Corvino discussed religious liberty and LGBT rights Supreme Court decisions May 20 at the University of Chicago's Court Theater in Hyde Park.

The talk followed a matinee performance of *The Originalist*, which John Strand wrote. The play imagines what a professional relationship between a fictional Black lesbian progressive Harvard Law School graduate named Cat and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia would look like over the course of the year prior to the *U.S. v. Windsor* Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) decision in June 2013.

Nussbaum spoke about her admiration for Corvino's work "to further what I think is the most powerful theme in this play. That is the need for understanding and dialogue between people who hold different positions."

She noted that Scalia was a law professor at the University of Chicago and while at the school he published a famous article in the law-review publication called "The Rule of Law as a Law of Rules," in which he described how he used to believe in the British Common Law method of judging but he turned away from that way of thinking. Nussbaum illustrated, from two areas, where Scalia's "search for rule-governed law led

him to results that disappointed conservative scholars"—religious freedom (in certain instances) and the Armed Career Criminals Act which he said was too loose and vague regarding what instances would fall under enhanced penalties.

"We need to understand that there was a deeper layer to Scalia's thought, namely his search for fixed rules. But did it give him what he wanted?" said Nussbaum. "You never get away from judgment in how you choose which level of generality you are going to look at the Constitution with. Is it these abstract ideas such as liberty or specific things the Constitution does and does not talk about and that is of course what Scalia did in his rulings."

Corvino noted that Nussbaum has inspired him for many years. He said the play was powerful because it was an example of two people with opposing views coming together with the goal of understanding one another better. Corvino explained that he has debated people from the religious right over the years and has become friends with Maggie Gallagher and Glenn Stanton, both of whom are anti-LGBT. He said these friendships are important to him because "we have to share the world together."

In terms of LGBT Supreme Court cases, Corvino said Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the majority opinion while Scalia wrote the dissenting opinion in four of the five cases already decided by the court. Corvino outlined the issues involved in each of these four cases—*Romer v. Evans*, *Lawrence v. Texas*, *United States v. Windsor* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*. He said all of Scalia's anti-LGBT dissents were based on his originalist interpretation of the Constitution. Corvino pondered how Scalia would rule in the pending case *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* if he were still alive.

A Q&A session closed the discussion.

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SPOTLIGHT

In playwright Caridad Svich's *De Troya*—a fever dream of a drama—a wounded young woman emerges from a river and sets into motion a family saga rich in magic, fantasy and the specter of a fallen city buried deep below the world we know. Two sisters are at the heart of the tale, both fearful that their beloved niece could disappear without a trace. Saying much more would result in spoilers—just know that Svich is a master of magical realism and Halcyon Theatre has been championing works by women since long before doing so was trendy.



Halcyon Theatre at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, 3253 W. Wilson; \$20 in advance, or free at the door day of performance; HalcyonTheatre.org/de Troya

Caption: Photo by Tom McGrath

THEATER

With 'The Displaced,' homeowners find possession isn't easy

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

For horror fans, this is a season of fearsome bounty. While Ike Holter's frightfully good *The Light Fantastic* brings the screams to Jackalope Theatre, Haven Theatre premieres Isaac Gomez' *The Displaced*, opening in previews Thursday, May 31.

Gomez applies the genre of terror to an everyday occurrence that can be as scary as any demonic possession: *Gentrification*. In his Pilsen-set play, an upscale interracial couple finds their new home isn't exactly uninhabited. Non-spoiler: The previous tenants, a Mexican family, are determined to make life hell on earth for newcomers Marisa (Karen Rodriguez) and Lev (Rashaad Hall).

"This play began as a vehicle to help me understand where my place here was," said Gomez, 27. "It was also to hold myself accountable. What does it mean to be on each side of gentrification? And what if you have similar roots as the people you're displacing?"

Gomez's plot begins as the couple settles in to their new home. Seemingly innocuous minor nuisances (lights flickering, pictures falling off the walls) rapidly escalate into events both inexplicable and alarming (bloody, headless chickens turning up where you least expect them). Eventually, the plot veers dead-on into the realms of the



Isaac Gomez.
Publicity photo

fiendish. Gomez draws on the strikingly similar rituals of Catholicism and Santeria as he explores the impact of well-off newcomers moving into a historically working-class Latinx neighborhood.

"I had family members who are deep, deep into Santeria," Gomez said of the ancient, ritualistic African-Caribbean religion that slave owners and other colonizers tried to co-opt into Christianity. Gomez doesn't practice santeria, but he understands it. "Faith gives you power. We all need things to believe in, things that are bigger than ourselves whether it's Islam or Judaism or Christianity or Buddhism," he said.

As a Mexican-American who grew up in El Paso, Texas, surrounded by kin- and skinfolk, Gomez is familiar with the perils of gentrification. "I love Pilsen—the murals, botanic gardens, spiritual seers. It seems so familiar to me," he said of the long-time Latinx neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest Side. "It's heartbreaking to me to see business and families that have been in Pilsen for generations getting pushed out, little family-owned taquerias turning into white-napkin restaurants."

For Director Jo Cattell, a native of the United Kingdom, the current political climate is horrifying even without the specter of a chickening.

"As immigrants, we struggle to find our place. When you feel you've finally achieved that and then you start getting pushed out? That feels like a horror story to me," Cattell said.

Also among life's most terrifying elements: Breaking up with your significant other of many years. For Lev and Marisa, the move to Pilsen is supposed to be a fresh start for their crumbling relationship.

"Everything is breaking around them and so is their relationship," Cattell said. "That feeling of being trapped, with no safe place to turn. That feeling is something we're all afraid of."

Gomez has been in Rogers Park for more than two years. He moved to Chicago for an internship at the Goodman after earning his bachelor's degree at the University of Texas, Austin. He now teaches at DePaul, and is the director of new play development at Victory Gardens Theater, where he also curates the Public Programs series and heads up the annual Ignition Festival of New Plays.

"This is a city where artists are not afraid to ask hard questions. That's what really impressed me and a big part of why I wanted to stay here," he said.

Gomez's first Chicago home was in South Shore, where he had first-hand experience with some of the issues in *The Displaced*.

"One of my earliest memories in Chicago is going to a Target on Cottage Grove and the



Karen Rodriguez and Rashaad Hall in *The Displaced*.
Photo by Joe Mazza/Brave Lux

cashier telling me, 'You are the wrong shade of brown to be here,'" he recalled.

"I knew I wanted to write a play that dealt with race as well as gentrification," he said. "I knew my main characters would be an interracial couple—Mexican and African-American—because I wanted to explore the dynamics when race and gentrification intersect," Gomez said.

In *The Displaced* that intersection is the stuff of nightmares—something else of which Gomez is aware.

"As a kid, I had terrible nightmares. Horrible, violent, dreams. When I was younger I would talk about them. Lots of times when I dreamed something bad would happen to someone, it would then actually happen. So after this happened a few times, my mom and dad were like, 'we don't want to hear about your dreams anymore.' So I stopped talking about them. But I still have them."

Cattell hopes *The Displaced* both frightens people and makes them think.

"I hope they're scared," she said. "I also hope [the play] helps people take a look at their own role in their community. This conversation is so much more complex than any single person or single couple."

Haven is giving *The Displaced* its world premiere, but the production's story goes back millennia.

"We are all living on stolen land," Gomez said. "Before gentrification we had colonialism. Physically, emotionally and spiritually the displacement takes a toll. Obviously on the people being displaced. But also on the people pushing them

out."

Haven Theatre's *The Displaced* runs May 31-July 1 at The Den Theatre's Bookspan Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.. Tickets are pay-what-you-can for previews through June 5, and \$18 during the regular run. Visit HavenTheatreChicago.com.

Second City to host Pride sketch show

The Second City has announced a June run for "The Second City's Let's Make It Perfectly Queer: A Salute to Pride," a sketch show performed entirely by an all-LGBTQIA cast.

Under the direction of Mick Napier and with Nick Gage's musical direction, "Let's Make It Perfectly Queer" is Second City's first foray into celebrating all things Pride with a rainbow of classic and original sketches featuring an inclusive cast: Corey Caldwell, George David Elrod, Lanny Fox, Maya Haughton, Claudia Martinez and Riley Mondragon.

Proceeds from merchandise sales and audience donations will benefit local LGBTQ-focused non-profit organizations.

The show will run Fridays at 9 p.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m. on June 1-24. Tickets are \$15 (students)-\$20 (general admission); visit <https://www.secondcity.com/shows/chicago/lets-make-it-perfectly-queer-a-salute-to-pride/>.

'Falsettos' in Chicago in spring 2019

Broadway in Chicago has announced that the 2019 national tour of the Lincoln Center Theater Broadway Production of Falsettos—William Finn and James Lapine's Tony Award-winning musical—will play at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St., on May 28-June 9, 2019. Lapine is directing the North American tour.

Falsettos will join the line-up of performances at the annual Broadway In Chicago Summer Concert on Monday, Aug. 13, 2018, at 6:15 p.m. at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph St.

The production is a comedy that revolves around the life of a gay man named Marvin as well as his wife, lover, about-to-be-bar-mitzvahed son, their psychiatrist and the lesbians next door.

See BroadwayInChicago.com and Falsettos-Broadway.com.

Stage Left undergoes leadership changes

Co-Artistic Directors Jason A. Fleece and Amy Szerlong as well as Co-Literary Manager Zev Valancy left Stage Left Theatre as of April 30, a press release noted.

Annaliese McSweeney, the current co-literary manager, will continue in that capacity, stewarding Stage Left's new play development program into the future.

Stage Left is currently working on its Spring Downstage Left Residency program, to be completed in May. The company has put plans for any mainstage programming in the 2018-19 season on hold so that the company can focus on the search for new leadership.

GLAAD report: Steep drop in LGBTQ characters

GLAAD has released its sixth annual Studio Responsibility Index (SRI), a report that maps the quantity, quality and diversity of LGBTQ people in films released by the seven largest motion-picture studios and their subsidiaries during the 2017 calendar year.

The organization found that, of the 109 releases from major studios in 2017, only 14 (12.8 percent) of them included characters that are LGBTQ. This represents a significant decrease from the previous year's report (18.4 percent, or 23 out of 125) and the lowest percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive major studio releases since GLAAD began tracking in 2012. Also, there were no transgender characters in those 2017 films (and there was only one the previous year, who served as a punchline).

In this year's Studio Responsibility Index, GLAAD President/CEO Sarah Kate Ellis called on the seven major film studios to make sure that 20 percent of annual major studio releases include LGBTQ characters by 2021, and that 50 percent of films include LGBTQ characters by 2024.

The SRI reviews films based on GLAAD's "Vito Russo Test," a set of criteria analyzing how LGBTQ characters are situated in a narrative.

The report is at <https://www.glaad.org/sri/2018>.

30th annual Lammys in NYC on June 4

The 30th Annual Lambda Literary Awards ("Lammys") will take place Monday, June 4, in New York City at the NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts.

Edmund White will receive the Visionary Award, and Roxane Gay will be honored with the Trustee Award. Special guest presenters include Alan Cumming, Rebecca Solnit, Juliana Huxtable, Alison Bechdel, Michael Nava and Carmelita Tropicana, among many other film and literary stars.

Also, Lambda Literary will celebrate the nominees and winners of 23 Lammys categories. Among the many nominees are Gay, Nava, Ariel Gore, Mark Zubro, Zoey Leigh Peterson, Jennifer Finney Boylan, Hida Viloria, Janet Mock, Tommy

Pico, Eileen Myles, Kenny Fries and Nina Pakke-bush.

As part of Lambda's 30th-anniversary celebration, The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art is hosting an exhibition of 12 portraits of Lambda Literary Award winners and nominees from the 1980s and 1990s.

Also, Lambda Literary announced that Jeanne Thornton and Mecca Jamilah Sullivan have been named winners of the 2018 Judith A. Markowitz Award for Emerging LGBTQ Writers.

The Judith A. Markowitz Award for Emerging LGBTQ Writers recognizes LGBTQ-identified writers whose work demonstrates their strong potential for promising careers. The judges for this year's prize were authors Cat Fitzpatrick and Manuel Munoz.

The award includes a cash prize of \$1,000. Thornton and Sullivan will be recognized as winners of the Markowitz Award at the 30th Annual Lambda Literary Awards ceremony.

See <https://www.lambdaliterary.org/>.



Janet Mock, one of the Lammy nominees. WCT archival photo

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WINDY CITY TIMES

Kameron Michaels.
Publicity photo



NUNN ON ONE

Kameron Michaels muscles in on drag scene

BY JERRY NUNN

“Bodybuilder Barbie” Kameron Michaels continually walks the line between strength and beauty.

His real name is Dane Young and he joined the tenth season of the hit TV show RuPaul’s Drag Race hailing from the Nashville. His social-media following was massive even before being on television; however, it continues to grow with Instagram, currently hitting almost 400,000 followers.

Michaels races to Roscoe’s Tavern with fellow cast member Miss Cracker by her side for a viewing party on May 31, and a performance on June 1.

Windy City Times: You are originally from Ohio?

Kameron Michaels: I was born in Massillon, Ohio, then moved away from the north when I was about five years old. I grew up in Nashville.

WCT: You began your drag career in Nashville?

KM: Yes. I started doing drag my senior year in high school. I was going to the gay bars in the big city. I am from a smaller town in middle Tennessee. I was doing drag on the weekends.

WCT: You have performed at the gay bar Play in the past?

KM: Yes, I was a part-time drag queen. I was a full-time hairstylist and doing drag on the side here and there. I worked at Play once or twice last year.

I was part of the cast there on an amateur show

called Glam Squad every Sunday night for a year. Hair then took over my life and I had to give drag up for my hair career.

WCT: How did your social media grow so much?

KM: Well, I still liked to drag, but didn’t have time to work at the bars. I delved into doing more makeup and my art. I started on social media to use that as an outlet to get my drag out to the world. It blew up for me.

WCT: Do you every worry about bulking up too much at the gym and not be as feminine?

KM: Too big is not an option for me now, considering that I haven’t been to the gym in two weeks. I don’t have the time for my lifting schedule. I used to lift six days a week. So now, that’s not a worry at all [laughs]!

WCT: Being a muscle queen is a niche for you though, isn’t it?

KM: Yes, it is a niche for me. I have to figure out how to keep the body a little bit, because it is kind of my thing. I will, but I am just so busy and have to find the balance.

WCT: Is the name “Kameron” an homage to the Kardashians?

KM: No, not at all. When I chose my name I wanted something androgynous. I wanted a boy-ish girl name. It’s just a random name.

WCT: Where did the last name come from?

KM: There were no other Michaels in Nashville at the time. Many drag names come from the family last name, but I didn’t have a drag family. I wanted to differentiate myself from everyone. I had heard Micheals from somewhere in the drag universe. I don’t know it was Chad Michaels or somewhere else, but I thought it fit with my first name really well.

WCT: Was it difficult to get cast on RuPaul’s Drag Race?

KM: I sent in one audition tape a couple of years ago. I sent it in on the deadline and don’t think they even saw it. So unless they got that tape, this was my first year auditioning.

WCT: How did it feel winning the Cher challenge?

KM: I don’t know if they showed it a lot, but the other girls were clapping for me when Ru announced I was the winner because the girls know how hard I worked the entire competition and how close I was to winning several challenges by the time it came for me to win a challenge.

WCT: What has surprised you the most about RuPaul’s Drag Race?

KM: The attention for me has surprised me. Going back and watching the show, I don’t really have many confessionals and not on the air a lot of episodes. So I am surprised about the attention because I am so reserved and shy on the show, which is not how I am in real life. It is definitely my character on the show. I am happy with the amount of attention my character gets though.

WCT: What’s a fun fact about you that you haven’t talked about before on Drag Race?

KM: I have touched on the video-game thing on the show, but people are learning about it in my outside life. I am such a homebody and a video game player, which I don’t have a lot of time for. I am a huge nerd outside of being a drag queen. I don’t think a lot of people know that, but they are starting to learn that about me.

WCT: Why not develop your own drag game?

KM: That would be amazing. I actually talked to someone about doing an app before the show came out. Apparently it is ridiculously expensive— upwards of \$30,000 just to make a simple app. Maybe not right now, but maybe something in the future.

WCT: I saw a variety of merchandise on your website. Do you always think outside of the box for those items?

KM: Yeah, and people love that. “Bodybuilder Barbie” is a nickname for me, but doesn’t exactly fit my drag aesthetic. Fantasy characters are more Kameron’s aesthetic. I love that I inspire a lot of people. I want that to always be a part of my drag career.

WCT: Do you have a favorite tattoo?

KM: My whole left arm. It is Jurassic Park and Aliens. When I finish out my left arm it will be all movies and video games from my childhood.

WCT: There’s a new Jurassic Park movie coming out.

KM: Yes, Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom comes out in one month. I can’t wait. Whatever gig I have that week I will try to work around or cancel it so I can go see the movie.

WCT: How was your relationship with Chicago’s The Vixen?

KM: The Vixen and I had a lot of conversations outside of the cameras. She was always very lovely to me, very warm, and welcoming.

The only tiff we had on the show was when I spoke up when she mentioned that everyone said Eureka was overbearing. I didn’t say that. It wasn’t really a tiff, I just wanted to speak up and say that wasn’t something I said.

We had a very good conversation at Drag Con recently. I have never had a problem with her honestly.

WCT: Is drag about money these days?

KM: It’s not about the money. It’s about the love of drag in general. Money is nice. Yes we need money to create the things that we want to do for the fans, for the show, and for our careers, but it is not necessarily about the money.

Can you create more with money? Absolutely. That is with everything in life.

I never do it for the money. I am an entertainer and need to entertain to live. Money is not a thing for me.

WCT: What are your plans for Roscoe’s?

KM: I am there with Cracker. I actually do some comedy numbers. I haven’t done any of them since the show has been released. I might pull out one of my old comedy numbers, because Cracker does comedy. I would love to show I do that as well. I think that would be a great weekend to pull that out.

I am going to start touring with a Cher number this week, which I think is fitting for me.

I pick four songs for one week of travel and then rotate them.

WCT: Your Cher picture on Instagram was amazing.

KM: Thank you. I did that the day before I left DragCon. I realized I didn’t have a Cher picture to post and didn’t know how big a deal it would be. I painted the day before I packed and posted it.

WCT: What are you doing the rest of the year?

Turn to page 29

CULTURE CLUB



Nick Sula.
Photo from Facebook
account

'Out and Proud' June 3 at Pride Arts Center

Melissa Young and Nick Sula are returning to Chicago with "Out and Proud: A Rainbow Celebration" on Sunday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m. at Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway.

Nine years ago, Young performed the music of LGBTQ icons to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, which took place June 28, 1969—and now returns to celebrate the progress the country has made. Daryl Nitz, Jeannie Tanner and Dan Riley join Young and Sula this time around, with proceeds benefiting Pride Films and Plays.

Admission is \$25 each and reservations are recommended; visit <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe.c/10266304>.



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Milwaukee Pride to feature Danica Roem

Milwaukee Pride kicks off the 31st Annual PrideFest Milwaukee opening ceremonies at the Dance Pavilion on Friday, June 8, at 3 p.m.

Journalist and politician Danica Roem will be the keynote speaker. When elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 2017, Roem became the first openly transgender individual to be elected and serve in any U.S. legislature.

To increase community access to PrideFest Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Pride Board of Directors is offering free admission with a \$1 donation per person to the PrideFest Plus One Campaign. This year's campaign supports Diverse & Resilient, which impacts thousands of local LGBTQ lives every year with critical health care programs. This offer will only be valid on Friday, June 8, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Also, the 2018 Pride Awards will be presented, to 1st Annual Ride with Pride Cormac Kehoe (Individual); Ald. Cavalier Johnson of the Milwaukee Common Council (Ally); the Queer Zine Archive Project (Organization); transgender prom queen Nikko Nelson (Valor); and History of Gay Milwaukee's Facebook administrator, Jamie Taylor (Legacy).

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

PrideFest Milwaukee 2018 will be held at Henry W. Maier Festival Park. Visit Pridefest.com.



Danica Roem.
Photo from
Facebook
account

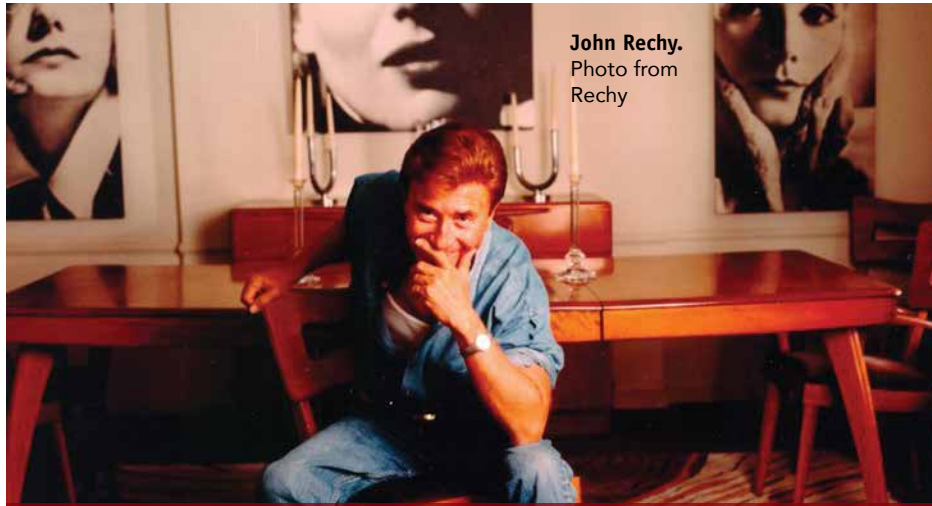
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John Rechy.
Photo from
Rechy

BOOKS

Paperback hero: Iconic author John Rechy

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

Gore Vidal hailed John Rechy as “one of the few original American writers of the last century,” and with good reason.

In 1963, Rechy exploded onto the literary scene with *City of Night*, a gritty gay novel about an unnamed street hustler’s adventures. The book of endless tricks and broken dreams careens from the streets of New York to Chicago to Los Angeles and was an international best seller. *City of Night* is also widely attributed with breaking numerous taboos in the mainstream publishing world. Though a best selling author, Rechy continued to work as a street hustler for years afterward as well as teach. His subsequent novels include *Numbers* (1967), *The Vampires* (1971), *The Fourth Angel* (1972) which was also adapted into a play, *Rushes* (1979), *Our Lady of Babylon* (1996), and *The Coming of the Night* (1999). His non-fiction includes *The Sexual Outlaw* (1977) and the memoir, *About My Life and the Kept Woman* (2008).

Recently his 13th novel, *After the Blue Hour*, was released in paperback. *After the Blue Hour* is the story of a character named John Rechy, a young gay writer, who spends a summer on a secluded island with a man, his mistress, and the man’s teenage son. The novel is tense, sexy, claustrophobic, and filled with powerful scenes. The novel is also a clear indication that Rechy’s edge as a writer has not diminished one iota over the past 55 years.

Recently I had a chance to chat with the author—who turns 87 on March 10—about *After the Blue Hour*, his previous novels, hustling and his incredible career.

Windy City Times: In *After the Blue Hour*, as well as many of your previous works. You manage to capture the sexy competition/sexual dance between men. But the book contains so much more. What did you set out to do when you wrote it?

John Rechy: I wanted to explore the sexual dynamics between two men, a gay man, the narrator, and a heterosexual, Paul, the owner of the private island on which the book is set. I deal with the subterfuges they employ to mask sexual desire, like intellectual discussions, but those devolve into retelling of past erotic encounters. I brought Paul’s mistress and his teenage son into the dangerous cross-currents, extending my theme.

I’ve run into problems with this book because of the most graphic sex scenes I’ve ever written, gay and straight (one scene in a church), to convey the growing potential for violence.

WCT: After the *Blue Hour* also blurs the line between fiction and nonfiction, another hallmark of much of your work. You name John Rechy as the main character and include many autobiographical details. One of the quotes in the book is “Fiction is more honest in its disguise.” Was that what the line blurring was about?

JR: In *After the Blue Hour*, I’ve developed my concept of “true fiction,” a conversion of autobiography into fiction, done right on the page. An example: At a tense moment, John Rechy, the main character and narrator, is sure that a teenage boy on the private island is about to tell a lie about an ugly encounter. The narrator prepares to rebut him in front of others there. But the boy says nothing. When the narrator begins to write about that event, he realizes that a reader will not believe that nothing was said. So he rewrites the same passage, twisting it into fiction that the reader will believe. This approach also allows the author to be more honest.

WCT: How did it allow you to be more honest?

JR: All biographers are liars, no matter how great. How can anyone know another’s life? The autobiographer is a much bigger liar, claiming that what he’s narrating is the absolute truth, exactly as he remembers, because it happened

to him. But memory is unreliable, constantly revising into its own shifting narrative, different tomorrow from what it is today. In the hierarchy of writers, the fiction writer is the most honest, declaring: “This is a fiction that I’m trying to make you believe.” That also allows the writer to “confess” as fiction what he might not admit as “autobiography.”

WCT: One of the parallels between your real life and *After the Blue Hour* is that you began writing pieces about your experience in gay life in late 50s/1960. How did those stories develop into *City of Night*?

JR: I never intended to write about my years the streets. In New Orleans during Mardi Gras, days and nights of sex, booze, drugs, I felt out of control in a world that had been wondrously exciting, but was wrenching into terrifying.

I fled back to El Paso, and, there, wrote (now on a rented Underwood typewriter which I’ve kept in kind retirement) about that time. I didn’t mail the letter, found it later, and sent it to “Evergreen Review,” where “Mardi Gras” appeared, I still didn’t write the book. I returned to “the streets” for several years. Back again in El Paso, I wrote *City of Night*.

I’ve never stopped wondering what happened to the “real people” I developed into characters. For many, the hustlers, the queens, life was lived on the edge, no exit, a dead-end once youth is gone. Writing “saved” me. But what was left, for the others? They haunt me.

WCT: After these stories were published, you received letters from several authors, one of which is another idol of mine, James Baldwin. What did he say in the letter?

JR: He encouraged me in a series of postcards. Norman Mailer wrote, too. After *City of Night* came out and I was in New York, Baldwin invited me to a lunch. I was overwhelmed, this writer I admired so highly. But at the last moment, I pulled away, frightened that my life would change radically if I become a public “writer.” For years I remained anonymous; impostors made news as me in tabloids.

WCT: Were you surprised by the success of *City of Night*?

JR: I was sure it would be widely praised and would sell only a few copies. The opposite happened. The first review, in the lofty New York Review of Books and written by a gay man, has become notorious for its malice. It took me about 30 years to get the editor to use my rebuttal. Alas, the malignant reviewer was dead. The book did become an international best seller, and, slowly, its critical reception changed.

WCT: I want to hear about one of the most memorable characters from the novel, the incomparable Miss Destiny.

JR: Oh, yes, Miss Destiny. She continued to be “indomitable.” Catching sight of me on Hollywood Boulevard one day—and having somehow read “The Fabulous Wedding of Miss Destiny” in a very obscure literary journal—and, somehow, deducing that I had written it—rushed across the street and gasped at me, “My dear, I want to thank you for making me even more famous!” After *City of Night* came out, she was on the cover of a gay publication, resplendent in full drag, all a-glimmer. I think of her often, and wonder. She was a defiant pioneer.

WCT: What about you made you want to keep working the streets as a hustler long after you achieved literary fame?

JR: The seductive euphoria it continued to provide. To extend it, I remained anonymous. Apparently I was successful: Once, in Griffith Park, a man drove up and said that someone had written a book about me. What book? “Numbers,” he said. “Oh? Who wrote it?” “A guy who calls himself John Rechy, but that can’t be his name. No one would write a book like that under his real name.” As he drove off, he called back, “Goodbye, Johnny Rio.”

Some people did deduce who I was. Past midnight once, in an area of shadows and sex, I was leaving an encounter in a garage when a man, approaching, shattered the night’s dark silence by shouting: “Author! Author!” Another time, when I was teaching at UCLA and then going on the streets after class, I was standing on a corner, shirt off, on Santa Monica Boulevard, and a car drove by, windows down, and the driver said to me, “Good evening, Professor Rechy, are you out for an evening stroll?”

WCT: So, after *City of Night*, you lived in Los Angeles, continued to work as a hustler, and were a famous gay author in a time when a lot of people were still closeted. I imagine you got hit by a lot of famous gay men.

JR: I didn’t want to rely on my so-called fame. I found it impossible to be welcome as a writer when the welcome became a proposition. A noted professor invited me to dinner with him and his partner. After scintillating literary conversation, they started to come on to me. To not insult them with rejection, I told them that my sexual activities were now confined to Griffith Park. One of the men said, “What if I bring in a potted tree from outside?”

WCT: What sort of censorship issues did you face with *City of Night* at the time?

JR: Some bookstores wouldn’t carry it, some kept it under the counter, it was seized by customs in Canada and Australia, along with a favorite book of mine, Nabokov’s *Lolita*. As the American entry in the Prix Formentor international competition for “first novel,” it caused the Spanish representatives to threaten to withdraw if it remained a contender. It was withdrawn. It’s been published in over a dozen countries now, including in ... Spain. The *Sexual Outlaw* was “banned” in England before it appeared. A loony religious group, “Festival of Light,” threatened the publishers with a censorship battle if it was released.

I’ve faced an equally deadly “censorship” with *After the Blue Hour*. Some book review editors have refused to review it. In one instance it was assigned, twice, and both times the reviewers returned it, and no review appeared.

WCT: Why do you think you continued to be censored, like with the review?

JR: Ostensibly its very graphic gay and “straight” sexuality and a misinterpretation of Paul’s concept of “willing victims,” a concept whose dark core, its potential for cruelty, the narrator uncovers in a turbulent erotic scene.

WCT: Earlier you mentioned another of my favorite books of yours, *Numbers*, a terrific pre-Stonewall novel about a gay man (Johnny Rio) determined to have sex with as many

guys as he can over the period of a week. This book worked for me on several levels, it's sexy and at the same time harrowing. What were you trying to achieve with it?

JR: The idea for Numbers came as I drove out of Los Angeles, after a brief visit to the city, and back to El Paso, where I was then living. My mother had come with me to spend some time with my sister. During that 10-day visit I discovered Griffith Park, then a notorious sexual playground, miles and miles of coves and hills and sex. I spent every day there, collecting "numbers." As I drove out of Los Angeles—my mother next to me—I looked in the rearview mirror and saw a reflection of Los Angeles, a smoky dome before the blue sky opened. I placed a pad of paper on the console; my mother kept the paper steady as I wrote the first lines of Numbers, trying to extrapolate some order from my sex-driven sojourn in what now seemed a city of revelation and "lost angels."

You're right—it is a sexual horror story. The "park" turns into the "Park," an almost warring presence against Johnny Rio's impossible attempt to run against time, an assertion of life in orgasmic moments.

Let me make an aside on your reference to "pre-Stonewall." What happened there is a triumphant event, but it is not the only one in our history. Years before, in San Francisco, Los Angeles (and I assume elsewhere) powerful bursts of defiance occurred, left unrecorded. In those "earlier times," just being in a gay bar exposed you to arrest during recurrent raids. Discovered—or claimed by cops to be—in even an attempted gay sexual act ("solicitation")—might result in a prison sentence of up to five years. Our history is an evolution against entrenched oppression, still manifest today. There's also this: Those years referred to as "pre-Stonewall" were years of liberating literature—Ginsberg, Burroughs, many more.

WCT: Speaking of, what writers most influenced you as a novice writer?

JR: A whole range: the classic writers, Greek tragedies, modern writers, Faulkner, Lorca, Styron, Carson McCullers (Reflections in a Golden Eye is a tight masterpiece in which every character is despicable, and I love that), Nabokov, Bronte, Thomas Berger, Proust, Joyce, Djuna Barnes, Flannery O'Connor. So many more. But I've been influenced by movie serials, comic books [and people such as] Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Billie Holiday, Maria Ewing [and] Chuck Berry.

Movies are a major influence, too, including that old garish masterpiece *Duel in the Sun*. At times I write in "Technicolor" (*Bodies and Souls*), at other times in "Black and white" (*The Sexual Outlaw*.)

WCT: Another of my favorite books of yours is *The Fourth Angel*. I'm curious what you set out to do with that novel.

JR: After my beloved mom died, my life seemed to shatter. I fell in with a group of people—adults, like me—who had every drug imaginable; and I joined in that deceptive feast. The drugs eventually came roaring at me in suicidal days and nights. When I finally could write about that time, I turned the adults, including myself, into children, which in a reckless way we were.

WCT: In your career, you veered from gay literature with novels like *The Miraculous Day of*

***Amalia Gomez (1991)* and *Marilyn's Daughter (1988)*. Was the writing experience different? Was it more difficult to get into the minds of straight characters?**

JR: It's true that several of my books can't be classified as "gay fiction," but it's also true that every one of my books has gay characters essential to the narratives. In *Our Lady of Babylon*, narrated by a woman, I include a sex scene between Jesus and Judas, viewed from a distance. About your asking whether there is a vast difference in writing "straight characters": A British reviewer said that I wrote the best hetero sex scenes he had ever read—and I certainly hope that's true of my gay sex scenes. I've often said that all you have to do to write a good sex scene is to make at least one participant beautiful or handsome, male or female, to arouse the reader's focus.

Writers should not be restricted, ever, in the act of creation. Alas, gay writers are often pushed into a "ghetto," away from the mainstream of literature, not widely reviewed, put into occasional "roundups." Attaching restrictive labels to any artist results in a depletion of art itself.

WCT: You were arrested multiple times for prostitution in L.A.'s Griffith Park at a time when that was a pretty major offense and could result in years in prison. How did you avoid that?

JR: Three times. In Griffith Park and on the streets. If you were on the "front lines," you couldn't avoid encountering the fascinated cops.

WCT: So how did you avoid jail when you were arrested three times? What was your punishment?

JR: Expensive attorney. Probation. Fined. Those recurrent arrests were routine. Many resulted from the cops' heated lies, and they did lie routinely, easily.

WCT: Was your quote, "S&M reenacts the oppression that gay people received from the so called straight world," a comment about all BDSM activity or was it specifically in reference to your novel *Rushes*? Could you give it a context?

JR: Let me clarify this: I know that world from the inside, having felt its powerful lure for a short period. ... Sometime in the '70s, leather folks held a "slave auction." "Masters" in leather and brandishing handcuffs, bid for "slaves" in cages, crawling out when they were "bought" and handcuffed by their "masters." Of course it was all charade, and consensual. Still, a squad of uniformed cops raided, clamping real handcuffs on both "masters" and "slaves", both hauled away to be arraigned. Nothing revealed more clearly to me what gay people were reutilizing. When I was arrested, I felt the cold power of real handcuffs.

WCT: Tell me about your partner, Michael.

JR: When I first saw him, he looked like a cross between an angel and Tom Sawyer, which he had played on stage. Throughout the more than 40 years we've been together, he has been my love, my partner, my spouse, just as I have been for him. And it all continues and grows.

Full version of this interview is at <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/BOOKS-Paperback-hero-Talking-with-iconic-author-John-Rechy/62007.html>.

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Meet your new daddy: IML 40 chosen at Auditorium Theatre

From a record-setting field of over 70 contestants, James Lee (Mr. Kentucky Leather 2017) was chosen to reign as the new International Mr. Leather (IML), Sunday, May 27, at the Auditorium Theatre. The Sunday contest was the culmination of an extended weekend of workshops, brotherhood, camaraderie and the infamous Leather Vendor Market, found at the host hotel, the Congress Plaza Hotel.

Lee stood victorious alongside first runner-up Sandro Cossaro (Mr. Leather Belgium 2017), second runner-up Stephan Ferris (Mr. friendly SF 2018) and the newly-chosen International Mr. Bootblack Lucky Rebel.

This year's contest was particularly poignant for two reasons. Firstly, James has the honor of being the 40th IML, the first having been chosen in 1979 at the Gold Coast bar. Second, this was the first IML contest after the death of its founder, Chuck Renslow, who passed away last June at the age of 87.

The winners were feted at the annual Victory Party, taking place at House of Blues Chicago after the contest.



International Mr. Leather 2018 James Lee (second from left) flanked by first runner-up Sandro Cossaro (left), second runner-up Stephan Ferris (right) and International Mr. Bootblack 2018 Lucky Rebel.
Photos by Verdell Shannon



We are the champions: IML 40 Victory Party at House of Blues

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography



In fashion:

Cram Fashion w/Nasty Pig

Photos by Jerry Nunn



Fuzzy, was he?:

Furball at Metro Chicago

Photos by Verdell Shannon



Spotted: Producer/motivational speaker Buck Angel at the Perfect Fit Brand booth at the IML Leather Market.

Photo by Kirk Williamson

Feel the force:

Brüt at Fantasy Nightclub

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography





BILLY Masters

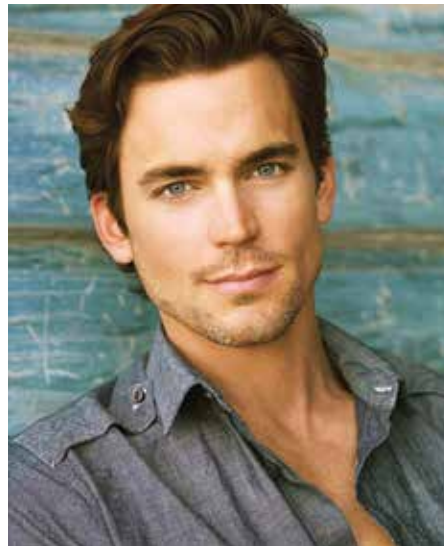
"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."—I came across this quote during my month abroad. My attempt to live by it lasted 24 hours. On the second day, I was annoyed that my traveling companion didn't take a photo of me giving spare change to a homeless woman. If I can't prove how benevolent I am, what's the point?

Since I'm spending some time in Boston, I missed out on the May 23 festivities known as **Stormy Daniels Day**. While many criticized West Hollywood for honoring the porn star, I thought it was somewhat appropriate. After all, the ceremony took place in front of **Chi Chi LaRue's** store on Santa Monica Boulevard, and was presided over by Mayor John Duran, who is partners with my husband, **gay-porn superstar Kurt Young**. (It's very complicated, but also very WeHo.) News of these festivities enraged Fox host **Tucker Carlson**: "She is not even gay!" Let me tell you, Tucker—just so you know and your children will someday know—West Hollywood has honored other non-gay persons such as Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong, *En Vogue* and others too numerous to mention.

Intriguingly enough, the West Hollywood City Council considered honoring yet another "celebrity" back in 2015. Then-Councilman Duran said, "In my mind, Bruce Jenner has not earned anything by coming out as a transgendered person." Now, three years later, Duran said, "Lady Godiva rode naked through the streets of England to protest injustice and taxes, and we have our own Lady Godiva here in the city of West Hollywood." And, Tucker, it turns out there is a gay angle. In her speech, Stormy said, "As a woman with two wonderful gay dads, Keith and JD, I feel especially at home here." And because I know you'll ask, Daniels' hot lawyer Michael Avenatti was in attendance and earned more than his fair share of attention—as well he should.

From Stormy Daniels Day to **George Takei** (it rhymes if you say it aloud): Remember last year when a former male model alleged that the *Star Trek* actor sexually assaulted him back in 1981? Turns out it may not have happened at all. Scott Brunton claimed that he fell asleep at Takei's house and woke up with his pants around his ankles—if I had a nickel! He even said, "I know unequivocally he spiked my drink!"

Now he's changing his tune. According to Shane Snow of *The Observer*, Brunton slightly altered his story each time he recounted the incident. Brunton told Snow that he thought Takei just wanted to be friends; he was shocked when the actor hit on him, saying, "He was 20 years older than me and short. And I wasn't attracted to Asian men. I was a hot, surfer, California boy type, that he probably could have only gotten had he bought, paid for or found someone just willing to ride on



Matt Bomer has revealed a bit, according to Billy.

his coattails of fame." Oh, MY! Then Snow came right out and asked, "Did he touch your genitals?" Shane said, "You know...probably...He was clearly on his way to...to...to going somewhere." I'm going to the next Caucasian surfer boy—and I ain't payin'!

If you were at one of the first previews of the Broadway production of *The Boys in the Band*, you got to see a bit more of **Matt Bomer** than usual. He said, "My character takes a shower within the first five minutes. I realize that there was no towel when I got out of the shower. I had the choice to do the rest of the scene buck naked, which would not have made any sense, or there's like a glass partition, so I had to coyly reach around and grab my tighty whities and put them on my soaking wet body and do the rest of the scene in wet tighty whities." With these choices, I consider this a win/win. Left to a vote, I can guess which way the election would have swung ... if not the rest of Bomer.

While we wait patiently for NBC to decide the fate of *Timeless*, I decided to take matters into my own hands—literally. There must be nude photos of **Matt Lanter**, who I have enjoyed ever since his brief stint in the White House as Geena Davis' son in *Commander In Chief*. And then, as if a gift from the heavens, Lanter appeared in my lap. If people got to see these alleged nude shots of Matt, I suspect *Timeless* would have a long, throbbing run on the network. I'll do what I can to help and post the pics on BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Josh in Chelsea, England: "Big fan of yours—met you at 'Chess,' with Elaine Paige. What a thrill! I remember you saying you saw **Ben Whishaw** in *Cock*. So that got me wondering: Do you have any pics or footage of his actual cock?"

I hate to say this, but can you send me a photo, Josh? I remember meeting Elaine Paige, but I don't remember you. And I'm not entirely sure what thrilled you—being at the opening of "Chess," meeting Elaine Paige or meeting me! Moving swiftly along to Whishaw, I can certainly

give you a hand. While nothing quite equals being in a small venue with his *Cock*, he's been even more in a variety of films, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When we're thrilled about cocks, it's time for me to end yet another column. Before ending, I'd like to acknowledge the passing of Broadway legend: Patricia Morison. The original star of *Kiss Me, Kate* was one of the loveliest and most gracious people I've been privileged to know. Up until her 100th birthday, she not only appeared at benefits to raise money for important causes (including HIV/AIDS), she also sang...and usually in the original keys! Fitting to remember her on Memorial Day. Of course, you don't need any excuse to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that's always willing to take a knee (although most simply kneel). If you have a question, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Matt Bomer wins Broadway's *Wet Briefs* contest! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Local chefs show cooking styles on new TV program

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

WTTW delivers flavor with its new show Dishalicious, which features Chicago chefs cooking up different cuisines and dishing on their experience and cooking tips.

Each episode features a different cuisine and, so far, has covered Italian, Mexican and Korean fare. Having three different chefs who specialize in each cuisine, the emphasis is on collaboration between chefs and those chefs teaching audiences how to create their dishes at home. The show began airing on April 6 and is available for streaming.

"It's interesting, you get a glimpse into how chefs work together, a little bit about their history, culture, tips, you learn something," said



Rick Bayless, Alfonso Sotelo, Sarah Grueneberg and Diana Davila.

PR photo

Dishalicious Creator/Executive Producer David Manilow. "So, it's part talk show, part cooking demo."

The Italian cuisine episode included chefs Tony Mantuano, of Spiaggia and Bar Toma; Giuseppe Tentori, of GT Fish & Oyster and GT Prime; and Leigh Omilinsky, of Nico Osteria. The Mexican cuisine episode included chefs Rick Bayless, of Frontera Grill and Topolobampo; Diana Dávila, of Mi Tocaya Antojeria; and Alfonso Sotelo, of 5 Rabanitos.

The Korean cuisine episode included chefs Bill Kim, of Urbanbelly and bellyQ; Dave Park, of Hanbun; and Beverly Kim, of Parachute.

"I've been to a lot of kitchens and I was always kind of fascinated with how chefs cook and collaborate together and it's a very warm

community in Chicago," said Manilow. "It's a very generous, sharing, chef community, so I just thought that would be a very interesting glimpse into that life. I think people love cooking demos also. So you have a little bit of both."

Monteverde Restaurant & Pastificio chef/partner Sarah Grueneberg is the show's host, serving energy, keeping the flow of the show going and asking the questions that viewers at home may be asking themselves. Grueneberg explained some of the questions she aimed to ask and have answered center around the chefs' life experiences, what they are doing as they cook, what their inspiration is as well as helpful hints.

"I think a lot of times we try to think about how can you adapt this chef recipe to a home cook," said Grueneberg, also a James Beard Award winner as well as a Top Chef and Iron Chef Gauntlet competitor. "It's a fun show to get to talk about different things that make chefs tick at that moment."

Grueneberg explained the various restaurants that the chefs come from range in style as well as price ranges.

"Doing this show now, I have found even I am looking for more ethnic, off-the-beaten-path restaurants, which before I think as a chef, we always go to our friends' restaurants, but doing this show has made me want to go and try other places, which is also fun," she said.

Bill Kim, who is featured in the Korean food episode, said cooking in front of a live audience was a new experience for him. His cooking, he

described is uncategorized. His "food without borders," is inspired by his background, travels, love story and other personal experiences. The idea, he explained was to have something different than to what people are accustomed. He aims to take something people know and give them a different take on it.

"Chicago is my home, I grew up here almost 40 plus years and I want to bring something really, really, truly from the heart and I want to be able to feed a lot of people," said Bill who moved to Chicago when he was 7-years-old from Korea.

"I would love for them [people] to obviously come to our restaurants, but also to have that boundary kind of be broken," said Bill who has a new cookbook out with Chandra Ram called Korean BBQ: Master Your Grill In Seven Sauces. "It doesn't always have to be a mom and pop restaurant that makes it good, but it can be a busy restaurant and there could be all ethnic groups in those restaurants to be good. To me, that word authentic is a very personal thing, so your authentic and my authentic is totally different and that's what I really want people to understand."

"Even within the same cuisine, there are so many differences," said Beverly Kim, also featured in the Korean food episode. "It still makes it interesting, even though the commonality might be Korean, but all our restaurants might be different and have different spectrum of

Turn to page 29



Congrats to Boy Gregory, the new Mr. Chicago Bear!

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography



SIDETRACK

Bears and pups in the sun: Such fun!

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography



Pucker up for the Make Out Party.

Photos by Kirk Williamson



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DISH from page 28

how Korean or how traditional or what other influences you bring in to mix with the Korean part. It's definitely interesting and great for the audience and great for people's awareness of what's going on.

Saying it was an honor to cook with Bill Kim, Dave Park and Chef Sarah in the one episode, she added that it is a rare and fun opportunity to collaborate.

Beverly described her cooking style as not traditional Korean, but having a Korean-American perspective. Having been born and raised in

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Downers Grove, her parents are immigrants from Korea, now American citizens and brought over a rich culinary history, which was a big part of her life. Her food at Parachute, as she said, has a Korean American touch with different global influences.

"I think it's good to show different cultures," Beverly said of Dishalicious. "I think sometimes a way to put a culture down could be through food and sometimes that's the first way to try to make other cuisines sound really foreign or primitive and it's a kind of subconscious racism, so I think it's good to show different cultures. Talking about racism is a very dark thing, so I think celebrating

applicants for the position of Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center. View position details and apply online at <https://jobs.uic.edu/>. For fullest consideration, please upload a resume and cover letter by August 8, 2018 (8/8/18-13)

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cuisine in a very positive way is a good solution to that."

"I hope we get to do more of them [episodes] because I think it celebrates the love of food in a way through different lenses, through different chefs, not just through the same chef cooking everyday," said Grueneberg of the show. "I think that's really interesting, the idea that it shows us in our natural habitat of being inspired by each other and not in competition is also really unique."

To stream episodes of Dishalicious, get recipes and more, visit <https://schedule.wttw.com/series/26607/Dishalicious/>.

MICHAELS from page 22

KM: I am on tour across the United States for a 30 city tour and I know we are going overseas as well.

I have been recording some music, but that is on the back burner right now. I may revisit that later. I don't know when that's coming out. We might use what we have done or write some new stuff.

WCT: Many of your fans have crushes on you. Are you single?

KM: I am perpetually single. A running joke in Nashville is, "If Kameron Michaels isn't doing drag, it's because she is in a relationship."

I got dumped last year and decided to revisit drag. I was giving up my passion for these relationships. I couldn't do both so I just chose one.

I sent in my audition tape and here I am. Being single and concentrating on my drag career has gotten me to this point. I think I need to stick with that for a while.

I'm not interested in a relationship right now, but I am not opposed. If it happens then it happens. I am not seeking it out though.

Roscoe's Tavern is at 3356 N. Halsted St., and Michael's performances start at 10 p.m. See the calendar at <http://roscoes.com/> for more information.

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST
 by Greg Fox

E-Mail - gregfox727@gmail.com

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WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., May 30

L Lounge Informal, social space for lesbians to come together for friendship and support. Snacks and soft drinks included 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://centeronhalsted.org>

NewFounders Awards Dinner 6:30pm - 9:30pm Savage Smyth, 920 N. Franklin St., Chicago <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/newfounders-awards-dinner-2018-tickets-43997004224>

You Joke Like a Girl, All-Women's Open Mic and Showcase Once monthly all-women's comedy night, 7pm sign up, 7:15pm open mic and 8:45pm showcase. Beer or coffee drinks at the in-house cafe at Volumes Bookcafe. Donations are split amongst the showcase members. Find You Joke Like a Girl on Facebook 7:00pm Volumes Bookcafe, 1474 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago

Friday, June 1

Queer Prom 2018 13th annual Queer Prom will feature dancing, food and information booths about LGBTQ youth and allies. Tickets are \$20-\$30 each; visit "Queer Prom 2018" on Facebook. 6:30pm - 11:00pm National Museum of Mexican Art 1852 W. 19th St. Chicago

CAKE Kick-off, Five Cartoonists One City: Minneapolis Showcase Spotlight on one of the Midwest's greatest comics presses, Uncivilized Books. New memoir book cataloguing the '80s & '90s music scene, ew comics on immigration and nostalgia. 7:00pm Quimby's Queer Store, 1854 W. North Ave. Chicago, <http://www.facebook.com/events/771938883002517/>

Speak Truth to Power Major touring exhibition based on the book, Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing Our World, about activists working tirelessly to defend justice in political rights, freedom of expression, honor killings, demilitarization, environmental activism, mental health, children's rights, and national self-determination. 10:00pm - 8:00pm Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center 9603 Woods Dr. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://ILHolocaustMuseum.org/speak-truthtopower>

Keith Haring: The Chicago Mural Exhibition Celebrating the monumental mural created by Haring and Chicago Public School students in 1989. Free admission. Through Sept. 23 10:00pm - 7:00pm Chicago Cultural Center 78 E. Washington St. Chicago <http://chicagocultural-center.org>

Flannel Forever Pride Kickoff LezBe is all about queer women and femmes but welcomes all friends, family, allies and identities. Special guest DJ Zel 10:00pm - 2:00am Mary's Attic 5400 N Clark



FUND HOUSE Sunday, June 3

Victory Fund CEO
Annise Parker will speak
at Equality Illinois'
Pride Brunch.
Photo from Victory Fund

Chicago <http://www.lezbeevents.com>

Saturday, June 2

Chicago Undy Run/Walk to fight colorectal cancer. 7:30 am registration. \$30 advance. \$35 race day. E-mail special-events@ccalliance.org for registration code 9:00am Lincoln Park South Fields, 1627 N. Stockton Dr., Chicago

57th Street Art Fair Midwest's oldest juried art fair featuring 200+ artists, live music, kids activities and food court. Glass, jewelry, leather, photography, printmaking, furniture, painting, sculpture, wood, ceramics or fiber. Free 11:00am - 6:00pm 57th St. between Woodlawn and Kenwood Ave., Hyde Park <http://www.57thstreetartfair.org>

North Shore Pride Fest Family friendly/all ages day-long event includes Pride Family Picnic in the Park (Everts Park, 130 Highwood Ave. from 11 AM to 3 PM) followed by the Taste the Rainbow (adult only) Pub Crawl through restaurants and bars. 11:00am - 2:00am Downtown Highwood, IL 847-432-6000 <http://www.ripplepublicrelations.com>

Rock the Boat Daytime Party Cruise with Back Lot Bash & TaTa Tops. Featuring DJ Nixon. Proceeds benefiting Chicago Women's Health Center. Full buffet, limited open bar and entertainment. 11:45am Burnham Harbor (Dock J - Slip 27), 1559 S. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago <http://tatatop.brownpapertickets.com>

Screening Milwaukee 53206: A Community Serves Time Looking at the code that incarcerates the highest percentage of black men. Black Lives Matter group of University Church hosts screening, panel discussion with survivors of police torture 6:30pm University Church: 5655 South University Ave., Chicago 773.363.7086 <http://events@universitychurchchicago.org>

We Still Like You Pride 2018 show Featuring top LGBTQ+ storytellers with most

embarrassing stories and darkest confessions, underground cult favorite of the comedy scene, half storytelling show, half party. 10:00pm The Flat Iron Arts Building, 3rd floor, COLLABORATION salon space, 1579 N Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, <http://www.westilllikeyou.com>

Sunday, June 3

Out and Proud: A Rainbow Celebration Melissa Young's tour of the LGBTQ movement through song and comedy returns with a little help from Chicago's best Cabaret stars. \$30 7:30pm The Buena, Pride Arts Center 4147 N. Broadway <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Equality Illinois Pride Kickoff Brunch Guest speaker Annise Parker, former Houston Mayor and current CEO of the Victory Fund. Celebrating leaders advancing LGBTQ equality all year. 11am-1pm brunch program and party continues as Brunch Remixed 1-4pm with drag show, DJ, and specialty cocktail bars. \$35 11:00pm - 4:00pm Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St.

Monday, June 4

Bi Movie Night: Rebel Without a Cause James Dean's character falls in love with both Natalie Wood, and, more impliedly, with Sal Mineo. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Tuesday, June 5

Tuesday First Books event with Ana Simo Playwright, activist, author of new novel Heartland, in conversation with gender-queer Appalachian poet C. Russell Price, followed by a Q&A 6:00pm American Writers Museum, 180 N. Michigan Ave. <http://americanwritersmuseum.org>

Wed., June 6

17th Annual OUT of the Office Pride Networking Party VIP reception opens at 5 pm, party 6 pm 5:00pm - 8:00pm Godfrey Roof Top I/O, 127 W. Huron, Chicago <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/out-of-the-office-2018-tickets-45363835453>

Pink Orchids Five eloquently interwoven and often funny monologues on living with HIV. Through July 7 7:30pm The Buena, Pride Arts Center 4147 N. Broadway 866-811-4111 <http://www.pride-filmsandplays.com>

Paul Simon's Homeward Bound - The Farewell Tour Culmination of a performing career that began in the troubled times of the early 1960s as half of Simon & Garfunkel 8:00pm United Center 1901 W Madison Ave Chicago <http://PaulSimon.com> Tickets: <http://www.unitedcenterchicagotickets.com/event/3415979?ppscrc=bing>

Thursday, June 7

Taste of Diversity Chefs, alumni and students of the Center on Halsted's Silver Fork culinary arts and job readiness program present tasting samples from a diverse cultural landscape. Passed hors d'oeuvres, food stations, and wine pairings. \$40 ticket includes wine, beer,

soda. Tickets at link 5:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15418> Tickets: <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15418>

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

Friday, June 8

By Women for Women: Lip Sync Battle Center on Halsted's Women's Action Committee kicks off pride month with teams battling for championship. Begins with reception. 6:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/BWFW?erid=7972222&trid=227e6ea8-72e0-48d6-abd5-51888aedb380>

Queer Genre Fiction 2nd Fridays 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

Saturday, June 9

Andersonville Midsommarfest Annual street festival with music, dancing, kids' entertainment, food, vendors from around the region, dance troupes, DJs, and bands. \$10 donation. 11:00am - 10:00pm Clark Street between Foster and Catalpa www.andersonville.org/events/midsommarfest/

44th annual Wells Street Art Festival Nearly 200 juried artists, traditional and eco-friendly art and "Remix" recycled art area. Performance by 16 Candles, Big Suit, Wedding Banned. Kids art corner, acrobatics, Happiness Club musical troupe among Old Town restaurants.

Two days. Through June 10. 12:00pm - 7:30pm Wells Street between North Avenue and Division 773.868.3010 <http://www.WellsStreetArtFest.us>

Joan Armatrading 46 The Tour. Three Grammy nominations, has performed for Nelson Mandela, is one of the first female artists to be honored by Queen Elizabeth II, first female U.K. artist to have debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Blues chart. June 9,10,12,13 &14 Time:TBA City Winery Chicago 1200 W Randolph St Chicago <http://www.citywinery.com>

Artemis Singers' More Than Music Includes poet e nina jay, author of Body of Rooms, and DJ OCD in a soaring gothic acoustically beautiful space. 7:00pm First Unitarian Church of Chicago 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave. Chicago <http://morethanmusic.brownpapertickets.com/>

Lesbian comedian Fortune Feimster Out comic has played Last Comic Standing, Chelsea Lately, numerous Comedy Central and late night show appearances. First show 7pm 9:30pm Zanies Rosemont <http://rosemont.zanies.com/>

Sunday, June 10

Mokena Pride Fest First Pride Fest to be held in Lincoln-Way area, mixing education, fun, music performances, drag segment, children's author, vendors, games for kids, counseling services for kids and adults, a family friendly event open to all 11:00am - 5:00am Yunker Farm <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/pridefest-mokena-tickets-46337881852>

Lesbian comedian Fortune Feimster Out comic has played Last Comic Standing, Chelsea Lately, numerous Comedy Central and late night show appearances. First show 6pm 8:30pm Zanies Rosemont <http://rosemont.zanies.com/>

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