

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

**VOL 33, NO. 40**    JUNE 20, 2018

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**AURORA PRIDE**  
City celebrates with first pride parade.  
Photo by Tracy Baim

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**ANGELICA ROSS**  
Trans actor takes her 'Pose.'  
Photo courtesy of Ross



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**ORLANDO CRUZ**  
Gay Puerto Rican boxer named Pride grand marshal.  
Photo courtesy of Rich Pfeiffer

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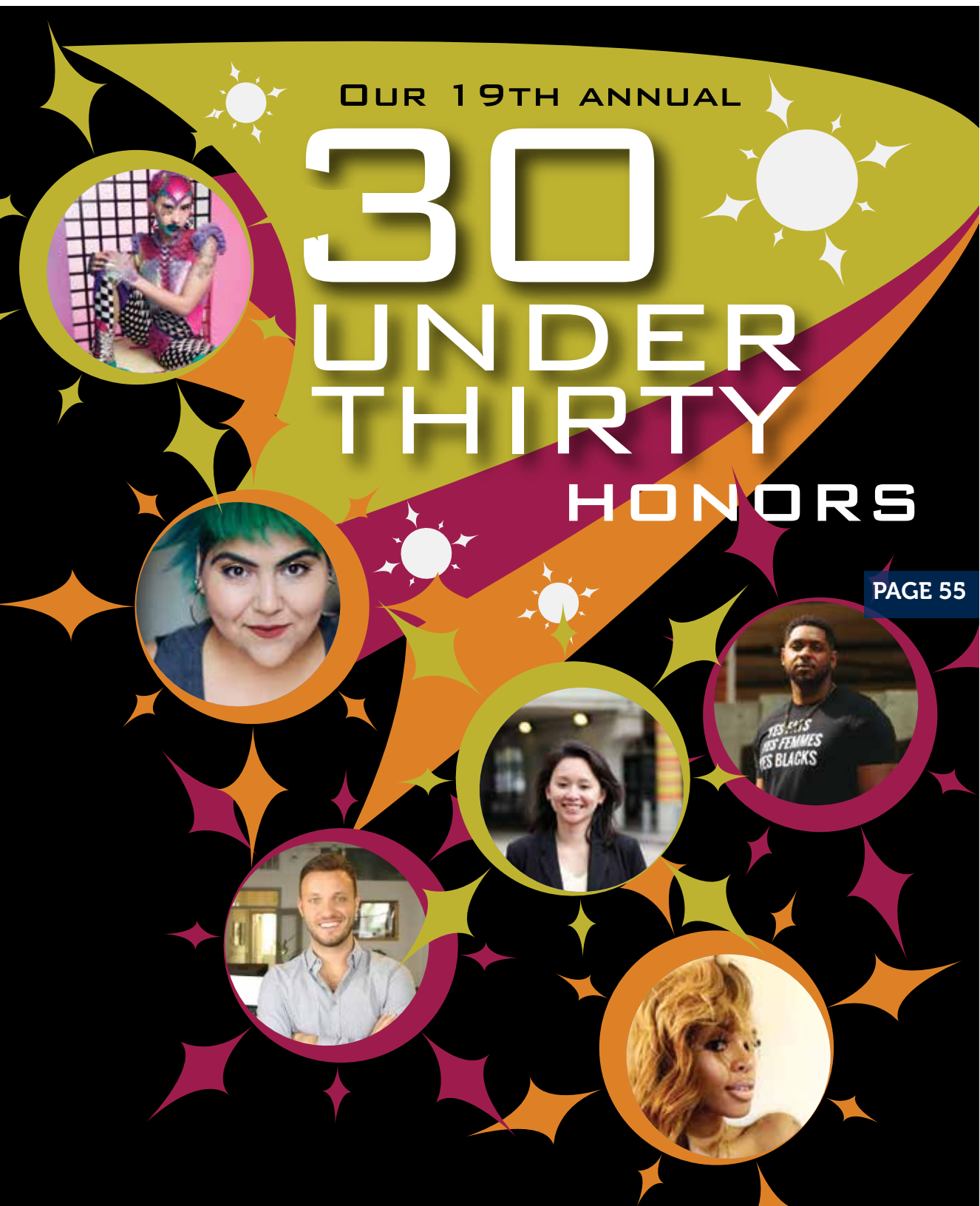
**JAN DEE**  
Jeweler marks more than 45 years.  
Photo of Dee (left) with partner Janet Gutrich by Hal Baim



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OUR 19TH ANNUAL

# 30 UNDER THIRTY HONORS



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**HAPPY PRIDE FROM WINDY CITY TIMES!**

# SO INCREDIBLY QUEER

Once considered a term of derision, the word *queer* has been embraced and redefined in the last few decades by LGBT activists. Today, *queer* has become both a general descriptor for the LGBT community and an identity embraced by some who connect to its roots in political and cultural resistance.

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## WINDY CITY TIMES

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



## UPON REFLECTION...

Glee actor Blake Jenner (left) talks with WCT about his newest movie, American Animals.  
 Photo of Jenner from The Orchid

## JUST BE KOZ



Out musician Dave Koz talks about his newest album and what Pride means to him.

PR photo by Antonio Dixon

## MAKING A DIFFA-RENCE

HIV/AIDS organization DIFFA/Chicago marked its 30th anniversary with a gala.

## THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Neil Patrick Harris, RuPaul and Natalie Portman.

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Pride Parade map, showing the route in green.  
Image courtesy of Rich Pfeiffer

## GUEST COLUMN

BY IRENE ROMULO, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY,  
CHICAGO COMMUNITY BOND FUND



### Money bond and pretrial incarceration are hurting Chicago's LGBTQ Communities

On any given day, more than 90% of people in Cook County Jail ("CCJ") are presumed innocent and yet are locked up pretrial while waiting their trial.

Although the number of LGBTQ people at CCJ is not officially available, we can assume that a disproportionate number of them are part of the LGBTQ community since national studies have found that LGB people are incarcerated at three times the rate as the general population. Transgender adults are even more likely to be incarcerated, with 16% of them having spent time in prison or jail as compared to only 2.7% of all adults.

As of today, the Cook County Sheriff reports that there are 12 transgender people incarcerated in Cook County Jail. We know, however, that there are many more transgender and gender-nonconforming people in CCJ who are not counted in this official estimate. Pervasive misgendering by criminal justice system actors, increased risk of targeted violence from correctional officers if someone self identifies as LGBTQ, and constant failures to follow the jail's own gender identity policy all guarantee that many queer, trans and gender-nonconforming people will not be included in official reports.

Disproportionate targeting from policing coupled with increased barriers to education, housing, employment, and increased likelihood to live in poverty all contribute to the overrepresentation of LGBQ, transgender and gender-nonconforming people, especially people of color, in the criminal legal system. The use of money bonds, which require posting of money in exchange for freedom, further increases their disproportionate pretrial jailing since many are simply less likely to have the personal financial resources or family support required to pay bond.

In a 2014 Black and Pink survey of LGBTQ prisoners across the United States, 74% of respondents were incarcerated pretrial because they could not afford to pay their bond. More than half of the respondents were incarcerated for a year or longer simply for being poor. Even if someone is able to pay a money bond, conditions of release that require a home address (such as electronic monitoring) also lead to disproportionate incarceration of LGBTQ people, who are considerably more likely to experience homelessness than cis-straight people, and also less likely to be able to access shelters and supportive housing. The increased likelihood that LGBTQ people will be incarcerated

pretrial is extremely concerning since LGBTQ people are at increased risk of experiencing sexual, physical, and emotional violence while in jail.

Pretrial incarceration also severely impacts the stability and safety of LGBTQ communities. Spending just a single day in jail can set off a chain of devastating events—not just for the person who is arrested, but also their families, whether biological or chosen. After just a few days of incarceration, people can lose their jobs, housing, access to medical care, and they can be kicked out of crucial opportunities like education and career programs. This is all punishment before conviction.

Separating people from their families, friends and support networks increases the likelihood that they will be trapped in cycles of arrest and incarceration, thereby making all of us less safe. The compounding negative effects of money bond and pretrial incarceration greatly outweigh any perceived benefits of jailing people before their trial.

Currently, there are 2,500 people incarcerated at Cook County Jail only because they cannot afford to pay their money bonds. Many have been in jail for more than a year waiting for their cases to resolve, and each additional day increases the chance that they will be forced to accept a guilty plea in exchange for their release.

The use of money bond and pretrial incarceration exacerbates issues in LGBTQ communities and communities of color, where long-term divestment and over-policing already deprive people of safety. These issues are even starker for queer, trans and gender-nonconforming people of color, who are often targeted simply for existing in public.

Eliminating the use of money bond and pretrial incarceration is necessary not just to ensure that accused people are able to fight their cases from a place of freedom, increasing the chance that their charges will be dismissed or that they will be given non-criminal dispositions, but also to ensure that we all have a chance to live and to thrive.

A person's access to money should not determine whether they will be forced to remain in jail or walk free.

To support bond reform in Cook County and ensure that people are not incarcerated because they are poor, sign this petition here: [https://chicagobond.org/support\\_bond\\_reform.html](https://chicagobond.org/support_bond_reform.html).

Irene Romulo is the Director of Advocacy at the Chicago Community Bond Fund. You can follow CCBF on Twitter @ChiBondFund and on our website [www.chicagobond.org](http://www.chicagobond.org).



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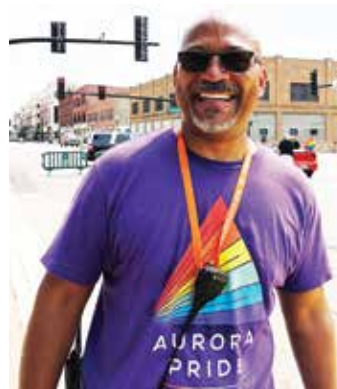


**The City of Aurora's float.**

All photos on this page by Tracy Baim. See pages 8-9 for photos from Tim Carroll Photography.



**Left: The Hines Veteran's Hospital contingent. Right: Indivisible Aurora founder and Executive Director Chuck Adams.**



**Youth Outlook supporters came out in larger numbers.**



**Left, above: The Lakeside Pride Marching Band at the Aurora Pride Parade. Left, below: The Vives Q and Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action contingent came in from Chicago. Above: Five anti-gays were surrounded by pro-LGBTQs at the start of the route.**

# Aurora's 1st Pride Parade draws thousands

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

After months of planning by Indivisible Aurora members and approval by the Aurora City Council Government Operations Committee during a Feb. 13 meeting, Aurora held its first Pride Parade June 17.

Despite the sweltering heat, nearly 100 degrees, more than 5,000 people descended on downtown Aurora to take in the festivities.

Ahead of the parade Indivisible Aurora Founder/Executive Director Chuck Adams (who spearheaded the parade) said, "We are ecstatic at the turnout in terms of participants and thrilled how this community has come together and rallied around the LGBTQ community for this celebration."

The parade stepped off at River and Benton with the Grand Marshall, Paramount Theatre Artistic Director Jim Corti leading a contingent of about 60 parade entries. Paramount Theatre supporters marched behind Corti wearing tee-shirts in the colors of the rainbow flag.

"I like leading this whole charge for Pride," said Corti. "I do not feel worthy in any way but to be chosen for this role is a great honor and privilege."

Aurora Mayor Richard C. Irvin walked the parade route and greeted parade-goers. Gov. Bruce Rauner marched, as did representatives from Democratic gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker's campaign. Democratic U.S. Rep. Bill Foster marched alongside Democratic congressional candidates Sean Casten (running in the 6th District) and Lauren Underwood (running in the 14th) as well as other elected officials and candidates.

"Today is a great day in the city of Aurora," said Irvin. "There is so much energy and excitement. This parade truly represents what Aurora is by including everyone."

"I am delighted to be here," said Casten. "I think this will be the most fun parade this year. I just wish I did not have to wear long pants."

"I am so excited to be here," said Underwood. "How could we not participate in this inaugural parade. We got all of our friends in the community to walk with us, to show we are inclusive, welcoming and celebrating love. It is hot out here but our hearts are warm."

Parade emcees and 95.9 The River weekday morning show hosts Scott MacKay and Danielle Tufano introduced each contingent as they passed by the viewing stand. This elicited cheers from the nearby crowds.

Marchers from Moms Demand Action held signs and chanted "Disarm hate," while the Everytown for Gun Safety group chanted "Trump, Pence must go."

Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action (ALMA) and Vives Q, both of Chicago, joined forces to march. ALMA Board President Julio Rodriguez said of their participation in the pa-

rade, "I am very excited about being a part of this parade because Aurora has one of the largest Latinx populations in the state. We think it is really important come to these events to show our support for the community."

"Vives Q is excited to join our Latinx LGBTQ community in Aurora to mark this historic moment," said Vives Q Founder Emmanuel Garcia. "It is imperative that we send a loud message that we're everywhere and are part of the tapestry of communities across Illinois. Especially in this moment of heightened attacks on our communities."

Planned Parenthood of Illinois External Affairs Manager Julie Lynn said, "We are super excited to be a part of Aurora's first Pride Parade. We want to make sure the people of Aurora would be able to live their best, happiest, healthiest lives. It is important that everyone is equal wherever they go and be able to access the healthcare they need no matter who they love/how they identify and we are here for them."

"We are so happy to be in this parade," said PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley Vice President Lynn Steele. "We have had a chapter here for over 20 years and are hoping that people notice us and make even more use of our services."

When asked about the parade, Waubensee Community College Spectrum (LGBTQ+ student group) Vice President Neil Horne said, "I am extremely proud and happy we have such a large community [at this parade] that we can find fellowship and support, including our allies."

Lakeside Pride Musical Ensemble members closed out the parade with their signature style of performing.

Among the other parade marchers were members of Illinois National Organization for Women, Open Door Health Center of Illinois, Indivisible Naperville, East Aurora HS GSA, Waubonsie Valley High School GSA, West Aurora High School PRIDE Club, East Aurora High School's pride group, Youth Outlook, Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Target, ComEd and many LGBTQ-affirming churches.

Hours before the parade began anti-LGBTQ flyers with the slogans "Love kills Pride" and "Homosexuality is a sin" were posted at the beginning of the parade route. They were quickly taken down by parade volunteers. During the parade, a few protestors with anti-LGBTQ signage were stationed across from the viewing stand chanting biblical passages and anti-LGBTQ messages. Five more anti-gays were at the front of the route but LGBTQs and allies stood in front of them and shouted their chants.

In addition to marching in the parade, Open Door also provided free HIV tests throughout the day.

See <https://www.aurorapride.org/> and <http://www.indivisibleaurora.org/>.

The online version of this article has many more photos, and video from the parade.



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More photos from

# Aurora's 1st Pride Parade

All photos on these two pages by Tim Carroll Photography



West Aurora High School GSA.



Jim Corti, Paramount Theatre Artistic Director, Parade Grand Marshal, starting off the parade.



East Aurora High School GSA.



Left to right: Aurora Mayor Richard Irvin shaking hands with people along the parade route; Gary McCann, Pastor of New England Church and Nancy Mullen, Exec. Director of Youth Outlook of Western Suburbs; Gov. Bruce Rauner.

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# Bolingbrook holds Pride picnic

Adding to the Chicago suburbs holding festivals to mark Pride Month, Bolingbrook held its own picnic June 10.

The picnic was held at the James S. Boan Woods, 410 N. Schmidt Rd., Bolingbrook. Boling-

brook Pride put on the event, which included everything from chalk art to puppies, among family-friendly items.

Photos courtesy of Bolingbrook Pride



**Bolingbrook Pride Picnic.**

Photos courtesy of Bolingbrook Pride



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**Mokena Pride.**

Photos by Kathleen Hummitsch

## Mokena Pride event held at Yunker Farm

Pride Fest: Mokena took place June 10 at 10925 W. La Porte Rd.

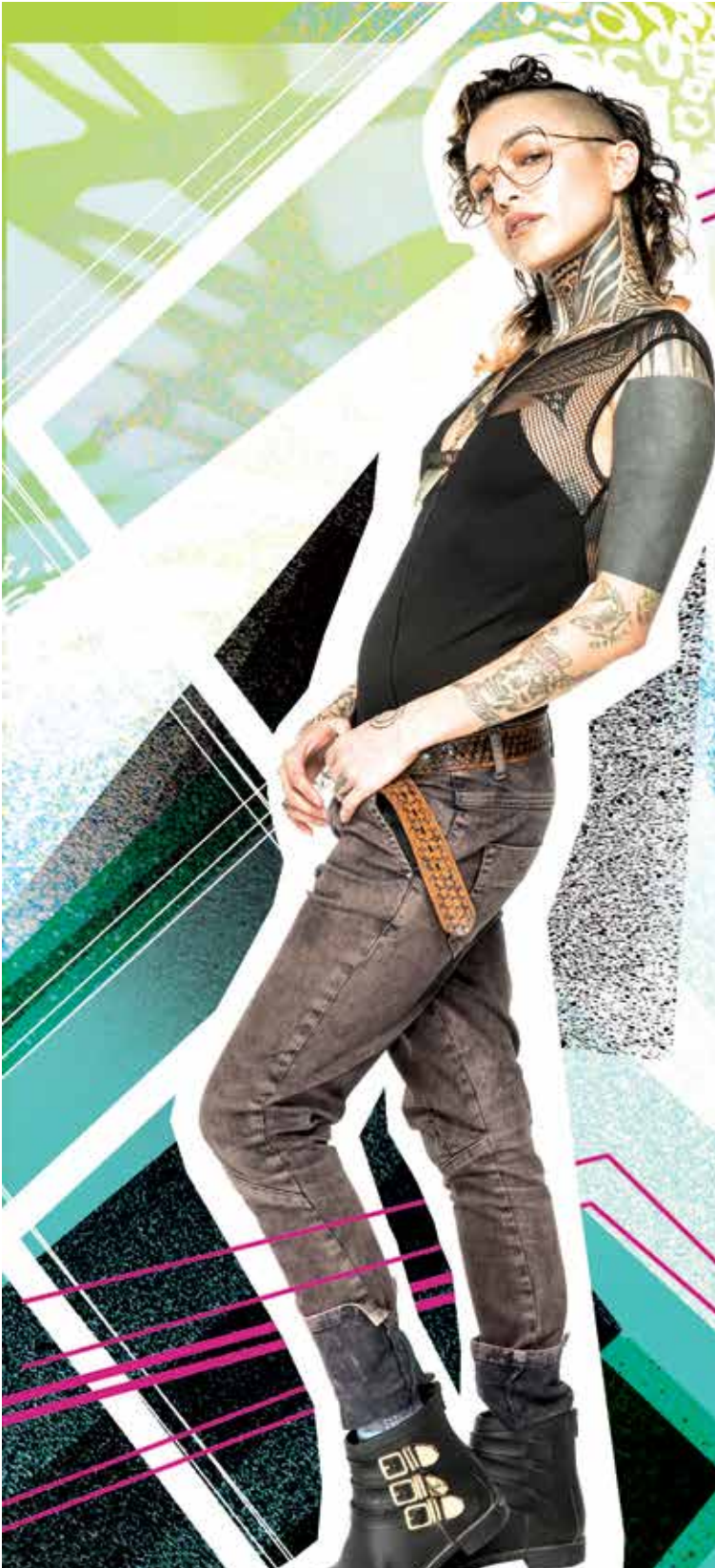
According to the event's Facebook page, it was the first Pride event in this area, as Southwest Suburban Activists (SWSA) staged their first Pride Fest at Mokena's Yunker Farm, The Chicago Tribune noted. There were bands, speakers, readings of children's books, yard games, informational booths, food trucks, vendors and more.

SWSA Director Emily Biegel said, "This should have happened a long time ago. "We really want the Lincolnway area to be known for tolerance and equity. Our work is cut out for us."

The Tribune article is at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-mokena-pride-fest-st-0611-story.html>.

Photos by Southwest Suburban Activists member Kathleen Hummitsch





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# Parkland students launch peace tour in Chicago

BY VERNON HESTER

The Annual End of School Rally and Peace March presented by Saint Sabina Church June 15 got a lift this year with the attendance of students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School of Parkland, Florida—the school which saw the murder of 17 students and teachers on Valentine's Day this year.

Grammy winners Chance the Rapper, Jennifer Hudson and Will.I.Am, former U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords and former Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn were among the speakers joined by many youth activists from Parkland and Chicago.

The rally and subsequent march were aimed directly at spotlighting the need for “common sense” gun laws and legislation, the need for social services in impoverished urban areas, and the

importance of the youth of America registering to vote in the November midterm elections. The event took place at Saint Sabina Church, 1710 W. 78th Place. The following day, Chicago and Parkland youth joined together for breakfast and socializing, followed by a voter registration event for the public.

Hours before the official start of the June 15 rally, there was plenty of activism, by high school students and parents alike, on display. Adorning the fence surrounding the church were bright scarves representing more than 100 high school victims of gun violence since the Sandy Hook massacre in December of 2012. On the north-west corner of 78th Place sat an art installation designed by Nik Berg Ono and presented by The Escape Pod Agency titled The Metro Gun Share Program which featured assault rifles in vending



Chance the Rapper speaks to the crowd.

Photo by Vern Hester



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fences. As students and parents wrote the names of students, friends and other victims of gun violence on the surrounding sidewalk with chalk, Manuel Oliver, whose son Joaquin died at the Parkland attack, created a mural with images of his son, a grinning Donald Trump, and a number of high school graduation caps stenciled on it.

The rally got off to a thunderous start with a performance by the Selah Youth Choir followed by a multitude of words from Chicago-area students and student activists. Chicago student Diego Garcia said, “We are the Rosa Parks of the 21st century.” Student activist Maria Hernandez spoke out against the controversial new \$95 million police academy which is planned in Chicago: “The same lynchings that we were fighting against a hundred years ago we are fighting against today. You think we’re goofy because we’re young but we are taking over ... this violence has got to stop.”

Activist Juan Reyes spoke about the need to vote but to also do the research on each candidate. He said, “It’s not good enough to vote for a candidate because they have a ‘D’ next to their name.”

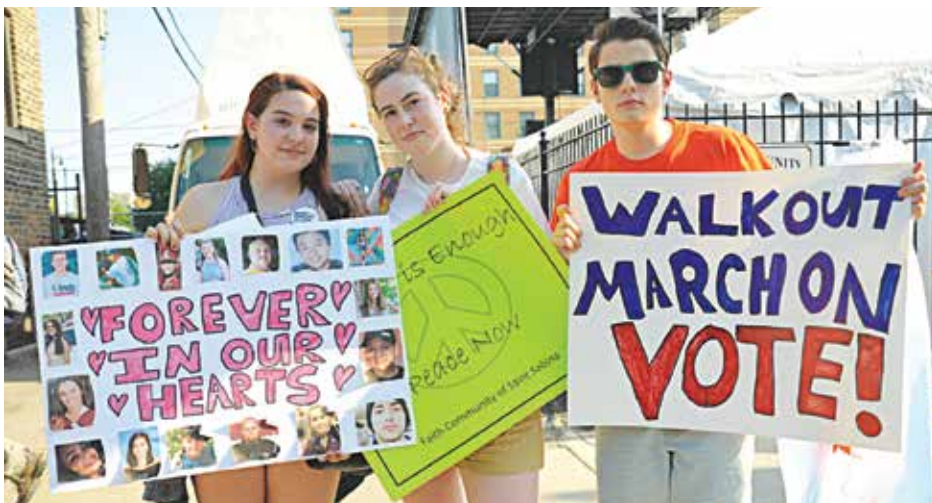
Later in the presentation, Giffords, who had been shot in the head during a gun attack in 2011, said, “These are scary times, it’s time for us to stand for what’s right.” Giffords urged parents and adults to protect our students, and let them lead the way.

St. Sabina’s Father Michael Pfleger, who has a reputation for being outspoken, said, “Something is happening in this nation, young people are rising up and taking over. I love your impatience and passion ... usually grownups say, ‘it takes time, it takes persistence.’ You are saying ‘I WANT IT NOW.’” Pfleger also said, “To hell with political correctness ... either support our young people or get out of the way. ... The NRA is over. ... These young people will outlive you.”

Pfleger and other speakers commented on the death of She’Nyah O’Flynn, 12, from Michigan who was visiting her father for the summer and was fatally shot in Garfield Park the night before the rally.

Producer Will.I.Am performed a new song, followed by Jennifer Hudson, who had lost her





From top: Participants write thoughts on a wall, The Seiah Youth Choir and marchers carry messages.

Photos by Vern Hester

mother, brother and nephew to gun violence in 2008. She spoke briefly then, at the insistence of Father Pfleger, led the audience in a rendition of "Amazing Grace."

Chance the Rapper then came out to wild applause which he shushed, and said, "It's so important for us to link up and talk about the stuff that's going on here. Everyone on this stage is anti-gun violence, from people in our community to people policing our communities."

After the rally, Pfleger led participants in the

rally, the Parkland students, and everyone in attendance on a peace march down 78th st. to 83rd st. then down to south Halsted back to the rally's start.

For the Parkland students this was the first of more than 75 stops on the nationwide "March for Our Lives; Road to Change Tour" which is designed to push the issue of gun control and violence to national attention in the wake of the attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. See [www.marchforourlives.com/tour/](http://www.marchforourlives.com/tour/).



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# Boxer Orlando Cruz leading Chicago's Pride Parade

BY BRONSON PETTITT

Professional boxing's only openly gay star is coming to Chicago.

Orlando "El Fenónemo" Cruz, of Puerto Rico, was the grand marshal in the Puerto Rican People's Parade on June 16—and will fulfill the same role in the 49th Chicago Annual Pride Parade.

Cruz came out as gay in 2012—first to his family, then to the public a few weeks later—becoming the world's first professional boxer to do so. He currently lives with his boyfriend in Miami.

**Windy City Times: How are you feeling? Are you ready for these parades?**

Orlando Cruz: I'm as ready as I can be. I'm completely out. *[Laughs]*

**WCT: Can you talk about your decision to come out when you did, in 2012?**

OC: I felt that I was lying to myself at first. I had a girlfriend and I was also lying to her. I spoke to my mom—she's always supporting me through my life and my career—and I talked to her and she said, 'You do it and I'll back you up.' The whole family actually backed me up. My fa-

ther and I had a little misunderstanding at first, but then he came onboard as everybody else and he still supports me to this day.

**WCT: How was the reaction from other boxers when you came out?**

OC: One of my best friends since I started, him and a lot of other guys, who came into this boxing career with me, I'll say 100 percent they backed me up. They supported me, and to this day we're best of friends.

**WCT: Were you surprised by it? Did you expect that reaction, that they'd be supportive?**

OC: I expected that reaction from maybe one or two, but the support was overwhelming. As everything else, you got supporters and you got haters, but everybody does. It's not just because I came out.

**WCT: Did your fans react just the same? Were they supportive as well?**

OC: You've always got haters here and there. But the majority—98 percent of my followers—are people that admire me.

**WCT: Do you know of any other boxers who have come out?**

OC: Honestly, no. I don't know of any that might or not be [gay]. I think there might be more, because we're humans.

**WCT: What advice would you share with someone who's in the closet and a boxer or athlete, based on your own experience and perspective?**

OC: No one has approached me directly on the subject, but what I do is just tell that person, whether a man or woman, struggling to come out, with family or whatever, that once they can accept themselves first, the rest is a lot easier.

**WCT: Are you currently boxing?**

OC: Yes, I'm still boxing. I had a fight with a younger guy last May, with Lamont Roach; I trained a lot for that fight, I knew it was going to be hard. It was a draw. But people can expect to see one or two more fights, probably by the end of this year.

**WCT: How do you prepare yourself physically and mentally for a match?**

OC: It's a marathon. I have to wake up at four in the morning, start running, come back and relax; then at midday I have to go to the gym and make another training, and then two hours later, go back and start again—it's hard. You have to keep your weight down; my weight is 130 lbs.—that's my fighting weight.

**WCT: What's on your mind when you're in the ring?**

OC: When I'm in the ring, I'm all boxing mode. Sometimes I can't even hear the crowd. I'm just focused on the fight. If you get distracted, that's it. That's the end of it.

**WCT: Have you been back to Puerto Rico since September, when Hurricane Maria hit?**

OC: The hurricane hit before the last fight. I was here in Miami when the hurricane hit. A few months after, I was there.

**WCT: Can you talk about what you saw there?**

OC: It is bad, but we are very proud people in Puerto Rico. Even when we struggle, we come back up. We fight and we stand up all together and we make it a better place regardless.

**WCT: It was brought to our attention some Facebook posts from, I think it was 2014, mocking overweight people on your profile—have you gotten any negative reactions about those posts?**

OC: Negative reactions about overweight people?

**WCT: It would appear to be Xavier Rivera Rivera who was tagged in some memes with images of overweight people—**

OC: Like I was saying a few minutes ago, overweight people are people; regardless of their physical appearance, they're people. There's no difference between overweight people or a skinny person—what's inside the person is what matters. What makes the person.

And as I said before, you're going to find haters, and even, you know, you see an actress with and without makeup on the web and then people start commenting right away. ... It's an actress, but she's also a human being, and she has the right—whoever she is, or he is, to post whatever they want. Haters will be haters—congratulations, live your life; we're living ours.



Orlando Cruz.

Photo courtesy of Rich Pfeiffer

**WCT: I mention that because I looked at your Facebook profile and that was the first thing that came up—they're older posts from four years ago, and they're tagged to a person called Xavier.**

OC: I don't remember exactly how, but it could be an inside joke.

**WCT: How did you get your nickname, "El Fenomeno?"**

OC: My manager—he named me "the Phenomenon" because of my ability to punch people *[laughs]* and win battles. I started when I was seven, so I've been boxing for the past 30 years.

**WCT: What drew you to boxing at such a young age?**

OC: I was always fighting at school, and my mom was called by the teachers a lot of times, so she had me try boxing and see how it went *(laughs)* and I liked it so much that when I didn't want to do my homework or something, my mom used to tell me, 'if you don't do your homework, I won't take you to the gym today, and you won't box.' Just because of that, my grades improved tremendously, my behavior changed totally, and that's how I became a boxer.

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- Cough
- Flatulence (gas)
- Increased bilirubin (a waste product when red blood cells break down)

For a full list of side effects, please talk to your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

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# Wintrust Bank holds first Pride Month celebration

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Wintrust Bank held its first Pride month reception and panel discussion. June 12 at the Wintrust Grand Banking Hall in downtown Chicago.

Vice President/Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Melissa Donaldson welcomed the more than 200 people in attendance and said it was an honor to celebrate the LGBTQ community. She noted that this event was a celebration of diversity, connections, intersections and equality.

Wintrust President, CEO and Founder Edward J. Wehmer spoke about the origins of the bank, which he started in 1991 with the goal of bringing community banking back to Chicago. He said now Wintrust is the second biggest bank headquartered in Chicago.

Wehmer explained that these events have given him an opportunity to learn more about the diverse communities the bank serves. He said they want to do this Pride month event every year and get more involved with the LGBTQ community in other ways.

Flower Show Productions, Inc. CEO and President, Get Growing Foundation President, Chicago Gateway Green Executive Director and Chicago

Flower and Garden Show Director Tony Abruscato moderated the panel discussion.

Panelists included Skolnik Industries President W. Dean Ricker, Heels & Hardhats (Byron, Illinois) Co-Founder and President Jackie Richter (alongside her wife, Cyndi Richter), AbbVie Intellectual Property Section Head Nabeela Rasheed and Center on Halsted Anti-Violence Project Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator Joanna Thompson.

Abruscato noted that he was closeted in the early parts of his career but now he can talk about his partner freely due to increased acceptance of LGBTQ people.

Richter, who is transgender, expressed how grateful she was for this opportunity. She recognized her wife Cyndi and said they work in the energy field.

Rasheed, a lesbian, is a patent attorney and activist. She said if one has a voice and platform they have an obligation to speak out.

Ricker has two manufacturing plants on the Southwest Side of Chicago. His company participates in the Illinois Manufacturing and Internship Program and because of this they have been able to mentor LGBTQ youth, many of whom come



At the Wintrust event, from left: Wintrust President Edward J. Wehmer; Skolnik Industries President W. Dean Ricker; Chicago Flower and Garden Show Director Tony Abruscato; Heels & Hardhats President Jackie Richter; AbbVie attorney Nabeela Rasheed; Center on Halsted Outreach and Engagement Coordinator Joanna Thompson; and Wintrust Vice President and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Melissa Donaldson.

Photo by Tracy Baim

from underserved parts of Chicago.

Thompson said she is a proud queer woman. She said due to the nature of her work activism is a part of her everyday life. She said coming to Chicago as an adult and meeting different people from across the city expanded her worldview since she was raised in a wealthy suburb in Maryland.

Richter said she and her wife have volunteered at Howard Brown Health's Brown Elephant resale shop as a way to give back due to the excellent healthcare she and Cyndi received there when they did not have insurance. She said it is important to take care of others in the LGBTQ community and pass that advocacy along to the youth.

As for the challenges the LGBTQ community faces now versus 20-30 years ago, Abruscato said in the past people were concerned about not being discriminated against in housing and employment and now the challenge is to keep the protections that have been enacted, given the push-back against civil rights under the current presidential administration.

Rasheed said the Masterpiece Cakeshop Supreme Court (SCOTUS) decision is dangerous because of the way certain people will interpret it. She noted the increasing hatred toward the LGBTQ community could drag the movement back decades.

Ricker said he is worried his marriage to Dan Novak could be taken away if certain Supreme Court justices die or retire.

Thompson said the biggest difference is now younger people, especially Gen Z'ers, are increasingly visible and more diverse, especially in how they identify themselves within the LGBTQ community.

Richter said the Masterpiece decision could lead to the eroding of LGBTQ rights in every corner of the country. She said certain people "are searching for solutions to problems we did not have before" and education is the only way to combat hatred toward all minority communities.

Both Thompson and Rasheed spoke about how they have embraced their intersectional identities over time. Thompson said it is easier for her to tell people she is a Black and Latinx queer woman now that she is living in Chicago.

Rasheed's family is from Pakistan. She said her girlfriend, writer and actor Fawzia Mirza, helped her emerge from her cloistered life. She said that as an out Pakistani-Muslim lesbian couple they have found acceptance of their relationship in Chicago.

"Events like tonight's Pride celebration and our previous events focused on the African-American and Asian communities and women's history month are all in lock-step with us being able to say come visit with us and hear from members of your community," said Donaldson. "We are an inclusive banking institution that wants to do the right things for the right reasons and this Pride celebration was one of the ways we demonstrated that inclusivity."

"As an ally to the LGBTQ community, this event was one we were honored to host," said Wehmer. "Being Chicago's Bank means supporting the many diverse groups and unique areas that make this city what it is."

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# MB Financial Bank hosts Pride event

Pictured are representatives from MB Financial Bank at the company's 7th annual Pride reception.

This year's event was held at the Center on Hal-

sted, where dozens of LGBTQs and allies gathered for food, beverages and conversation.

Photo by Tracy Baim



## 'P.O.W.E.R. Project' running in June

The Art Leaders of Color Network (ALCN) and the Comfort Station join forces to present the P.O.W.E.R. Project during June.

In lieu of traditional arts programming, the Logan Square multidisciplinary art space known as Comfort Station (2579 N. Milwaukee Ave.) will be transformed into an "empowerment hub" with a series of lectures, discussions, happenings, self-care exercises and more led by artists and members from the community.

The P.O.W.E.R. Project's programmers include darien r wendell & Bonita Africana, Jose Luis Benavides, Lakshmi Ramgopal, Mev Luna and Mike Strode. Programs include, but are not limited to, the "Which Ancestors Do We Run Towards?" workshop series; "Empathic Economies: A Black Lives Matter Listening Session;" a screening of Female Gaze, Death & Queerness; "I'ma Read, I'ma Read, I'ma Read": collecting a hip hop archive; an "Underground: Black QT Freedom Spaces" panel and more.

Visit [ComfortStationLoganSquare.org/the-pow-er-project/](http://ComfortStationLoganSquare.org/the-pow-er-project/).

## 'LGBTQ Pride Jazzin' at Shedd June 27

As Shedd Aquarium's Wednesday evening event series "Jazzin' at the Shedd" enters its 22nd year, the aquarium is introducing new, themed nights and programming throughout the summer schedule.

Among those is "LGBTQ Pride Jazzin'" on June 27. While the aquarium has supported the Chicago Pride Parade for years, this will be the first pride-focused event that the aquarium will host on-site.

Guests can enjoy cocktails and pride-themed treats available for purchase and explore the aquarium throughout the evening, including the new exhibit "Underwater Beauty" or out on the terrace overlooking the city skyline. Also, a special Science Pub chat that night, titled "Celebrating Diversity: The Living Rainbow," will explore the beauty and importance of diversity in the aquatic world.

Admission is \$25 each; visit <https://www.shedd-aquarium.org/jazzin>.



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# Class act: Skinner North celebrates Pride Month

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Skinner North Classical School values diversity and, this month, efforts go toward highlighting the LGBTQ community.

Skinner North is a selective enrollment school that draws families from all over the city and educates children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

The school's Diversity Committee has been around for some time and is tightly integrated with the school, focusing on things that happen during school as much as events outside of school. Danit Schleman, a parent of a Skinner North student and member of the Diversity Committee, explained the committee works to diversify the faculty, review some projects within the

curriculum for a few of the grades, ensuring there is inclusive language and inclusive examples, such as representation of diverse races and orientations and different historical figures.

Schleman also credited the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's Welcoming Schools as a resource used in helping to make the school's curriculum more inclusive and supportive.

Schleman added that this year another one of the committee's goals was to create more celebrations aligned to the months, observing different heritages and groups.

"We're trying to create an atmosphere where people do talk about it and do feel comfortable being their whole selves," Schleman said.

Schleman said the mission has always about building community and creating an inclusive



Pride books at Skinner North Classical School.

Photo by Danit Schleman



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environment. Before this year, she described, the committee and its efforts were more about including everybody, having events that welcome everybody and making everybody feel included. This year the committee strives to make an actively, visible inclusive environment.

"I think that the difference this year was that we were more focused on specific differences and highlighting specific differences," Schleman said. "I also think that a lot of the focus had been on race before, especially African American, like highlighting Black History Month and I think we've expanded more broadly to races and also started doing other differences beyond race, but it's definitely building on the foundation that was built there. I think the difference now is that like 'let's make it visible for specific kinds of differences, so people feel more like it's about them.'"

One of the Diversity Committee's efforts this year is the Library Diversity Project. The committee created an Amazon Wishlist asking for books by diverse authors or featuring diverse protagonists.

For Pride Month, attention was brought to the LGBTQ community through daily Facebook postings on the Friends of Skinner North page, "Pride, Not Prejudice" banners hanging in the cafeteria as well as in the front of the school building, a bulletin board featuring the history of the LGBTQ movement in the United States and kids' books in the lobby for people to look through, which will then be donated to the library.

I think people are noticing and appreciating the intentional effort," said Schleman of the responses to these efforts. "Some people have this visceral reaction of like 'that has nothing to do with the kids, we don't want them exposed to those subjects, those are very advanced subjects for kids,' but they're not. They're about families, they're about friends, it's about social/emotional curriculum. So, I think it's really just baby steps around that it's ok to talk about these things at school and that it's valuable to do that. Next year we can build on that."

To learn more about Skinner North and its projects visit, <https://m.facebook.com/FriendsofSkinnerNorth/>.



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# 'Queer the Pier' to take guests on aural journey

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Kristen Kaza is a queer event producer extraordinaire, whose "party-with a purpose" productions have been part of the city's entertainment landscape since 2012.

The co-director of Reunion Chicago and co-founder of Slo 'Mo Party, Kaza's latest venture is Queer the Pier, part of Navy Pier's pride programming. At 5-12 p.m. on Saturday, June 23, DJs and music artists like Audio Jack, Adam Ness, MICHA and Cece Peniston will delight the crowd at the Pier's Miller Beer Garden, and a vintage fashion show will highlight queer club looks of bygone decades.

Windy City Times spoke with Kaza over email about what drives her to create such unique space for Chicago's LGBTQ community.

**Windy City Times: What was the impetus for Queer the Pier?**

Kristen Kaza: As queer people we have very few of our own dedicated spaces, and so it's been common for many years to "take over" and occupy a space and make it ours for the time we have, hence the title, "Queer the Pier."

With Navy Pier being the number-one tourism destination in the Midwest and with [more than] 10,000 people alone attending the fireworks, I wanted to think about how we could claim our culture & stories, while also educating visitors who will be there as well about where cultural movements and trends they are familiar with derive from.

During the fashion show sourced by Kokorokoko Vintage, the amazing Queen Lucy Stoolie will be our emcee, reading about what was happening culturally & politically during various eras, such as disco. That research is being done by Miss Meadows, so that we can help those in attendance understand LGBTQ+ people's contributions to the cultures we've come to love. It's also a beautiful showcase of many talented LGBTQ+ artists & allies; with the exception of CeCe Peniston, the entire lineup is Chicago-based!

**WCT: What will be special about having an event so tied to queer culture in that space?**

KK: This time of year, a lot of brands aim to align themselves with the LGBTQ+ community and it can borderline on "pinkwashing," or exploitation of cultural capital. What is so awesome about Pride at Navy Pier is the whole day features almost entirely Chicago LGBTQ+ artists, small businesses and organizations. It's a beautiful reflection of and investment in the Chicago LGBTQ+ community, and that leadership is important. It gives these artists & organizations a big platform, and that exposure can be so helpful in their growth. It's also a reflection of diversity of experience: Drag Queen Storytime, for example, will be fab for families, and Queer the Pier is a

love letter to the LGBTQ+ nightlife communities of the past and present. So I think what's special is that there is truly something for everyone to enjoy.

**WCT: Tell us the most exciting parts of brainstorming or putting this event together.**

KK: I loved picking the songs with Adam Ness for him and his band to cover—that was so fun because I love music and history! You're going to experience a full band, with a horn section, and multiple notable guests like Ric Wilson, Alexa Grae, Tasha and more (some surprises we can't reveal too!) cover songs from the '70s to today, from Diana Ross, Sylvester, Robyn and others. Putting the fashion show together has been wild; at this point, [more than] 30 people are involved between makeup, hair (by queer-owned salon Logan Parlor!), music, all the clothes and the models, most of whom are LGBTQ+ nightlife personalities, like the legendary Jojo Baby. It's



Adam Ness, one of the entertainers at "Queer the Pier."

just exciting to get SO many LGBTQ+ community members involved in one program with such a big audience.

**WCT: What attracted you to the field of party planning in the first place?**

KK: I have always loved bringing people together and witnessing them experience joy and connection; it makes it all worth it. I believe so strongly in the power of people coming together; in our digital age and politically rife culture when hostility is so on the rise, the nuance of in person connection is vital. And while it probably seems like a glamorous job but it's incredibly emotionally, mentally and often physically demanding. But I really can't imagine doing anything else; I've tried—and I can't. I'll be "partying with a



Kristen Kaza.

All photos by Miss Meadows

purpose" to my grave!

**WCT: You've been doing Slo'Mo, an LGBTQ dance party for a while, and you also did the Dyke Bar exhibit last fall: what have been some of your favorite aspects of designing events like those?**

KK: I'm really interested in paying homage to our past, and in particular those people who paved the way for us to enjoy the culture we have today. With Dyke Bar, the MCA's 50th anniversary and now with Queer the Pier weaving history has been a way of not only paying respect, but resisting erasure: Queer and trans people, particularly queer & trans people of color, are often the instigators of many of our greatest cultures & trends; lifting up those people and their stories—is essential so that we don't set ourselves backward. I also think it's a signal to the audience members that they matter; seeing ourselves reflected is essential to our humanity and sense of self.

**WCT: As an LGBTQ person, what can you**

**bring to event creation that others can't?**

KK: My focus is on two things, always: equity and experience.

As a white, cisgender lesbian, I think it's my responsibility to advocate for LGBTQ+ people and people of color, and I have an opportunity to do that frequently as someone who books bands, DJs, vendors and so on. I try to think about who's getting the platform and frankly also who is getting paid. I also bring try to bring a thoughtfulness about experience, considering how both the artists and audiences members will engage with the environment, the promotions, and so on.

Straight, cis, white folks—especially men—are booked time and time again for events, especially when it comes to performance. I will always center women, LGBTQ+ & POC artists and entrepreneurs because this how we grow and get ahead.

**For more information about Queer the Pier and Navy Pier's other Pride programming, check out <https://navypier.org/event/pier-pride/>.**



Sky Cotton, one of the entertainers at "Queer the Pier."

## NMAC: Mixed results for youth with HIV, other STDs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summary on the 2017 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) shows mixed results for youth—especially for youth of color—when it comes to HIV and other STDs, a press release from NMAC (formerly the National Minority AIDS Council) stated.

"While there were encouraging signs across all races and ethnicities in terms of decreased sexual activity, it is alarming that condom use dropped so significantly" said Linda H. Scruggs, director of NMAC's Leadership Pipeline and Youth Initiative. "This report indicates that youth, particularly youth of color, are engaging in riskier behavior and are at greater chance of contracting HIV or other STDs. It also shows that, with a decreased use of condoms, we will need to look at biomedical prevention meth-

ods, like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).

Results from the 2017 national YRBS indicated that many high school students are engaged in health-risk behaviors associated with the leading causes of death among persons aged 10–24 years in the United States. For example, among currently sexually active students, 53.8 percent reported that either they or their partner had used a condom during their last sexual intercourse.

Other survey results showed that, during the 12 months before the survey, 19 percent had been bullied on school property and 7.4 percent had attempted suicide. During the 30 days before the survey, 39.2 percent of high school students nationwide (among the 62.8 percent who drove a car or other vehicle during the 30 days before the survey) had texted or emailed while driving.

See <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm> and [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/ss/ss6708a1.htm?s\\_cid=hy-yrbs2017-mmwr](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/ss/ss6708a1.htm?s_cid=hy-yrbs2017-mmwr).



# West Side event to take aim at stigma

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A upcoming gathering on the West Side will confront issues surrounding stigma against persons reentering the community from prison as well as persons with HIV/AIDS, among other demographics.

The event—to be held Wed., June 27, at 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Sankofa Cultural Arts Center, 5820 W. Chicago Ave.—will launch the “Stigma Stops with Me” campaign that Men & Women in Prison Ministries (MWIPM) as well as other community organizations are sponsoring.

Rev. Doris Green, who heads MWIPM, said the event has been in the planning stages for about eight months. Persons with HIV as well as formerly incarcerated individuals will speak at the event, discussing barriers that societal stigmas have placed before them in the community.

“Stigma is so common in so many areas, around reentry, HIV, transgender persons—even the opioid [issue] has stigma attached to it,” Green explained. “What we decided to do is launch this campaign ... because we want our community to be aware of how stigma is impacting us and making sure that our people know how to engage

with one another. It affects everyone in our community, from African American MSM [men who have sex with men] to transgender people to opioid users—everyone is here, and the community belongs to all of us.”

Green said that becoming what she called a “stigma-buster” has been a passion of hers for years, further explaining that, “For me, that means that wherever I’m at, even at the kitchen table with my family, if I see something, I should be able to speak to it, and have it become a teachable moment for some people. ... At the event, the backs of our T-shirts will say ‘I am a stigma-buster.’”

Local politicians—among them state Reps. LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago) and Julianna Stratton (D-Chicago), the latter of whom is currently running for the state lieutenant governor’s post—will also attend a press conference at 9:30 a.m. that morning, Green added.

For more information, visit MWIPM.com.



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## Trump nominates first LGBT federal judge

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicagoan Mary W. Rowland, who has served as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Northern District of Illinois since 2012, has been nominated by President Donald Trump to be a District Judge in that district.

The White House announced the nomination June 7.

Rowland, a 1988 graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, is Trump’s first openly LGBT judicial nominee. Prior to her time on the bench, she was a partner in the Chicago firm of Hughes, Socol, Piers, Resnick & Dym, Ltd. There she handled a number of high-profile discrimination cases, including one wherein African American firefighters alleged discriminatory hiring practices by the City of Chicago.

“I have been involved in what some would call controversial cases,” said Rowland in 2012, when she was sworn in as a magistrate.

Rowland also worked in the Chicago office of the Federal Defender and is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago.

## Pro-LGBT policies adopted at AMA meeting

In Chicago, two pro-LGBT policies were recently adopted at the American Medical Association’s (AMA) Annual Meeting.

One new policy calls for inclusive family and medical leave policies to support LGBTQ workers who shoulder the care of relatives, spouses, partners and others.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires employers with 50 or more employees to grant up to 12 weeks of unpaid annual leave to allow workers to care for a spouse, child, or parent (except in-laws) with a serious health condition, to take leave for personal health conditions, or to care for newly born or adopted children.

This newest policy asks the AMA to advocate for FMLA policies to include any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

Another policy challenges the status quo of prisons and jails in the United States that house transgender prisoners according to their birth or biological sex. The AMA urges that housing policies be changed to allow transgender prisoners to be placed in correctional facilities that reflect their affirmed gender status.

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**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

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- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

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- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.

- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

**The most common side effects** of BIKTARVY in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%). Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

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- ▶ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- ▶ **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements. BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all of your other medicines.
- ▶ **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
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Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the following page.



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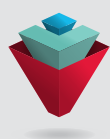
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BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- dofetilide
- rifampin
- any other medicines to treat HIV-1

## BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

**Tell your healthcare provider all your medical conditions, including if you:**

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:**

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

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## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY can cause serious side effects, including:**

- Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

**Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.**

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- Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
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Version date: February 2018

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# Dyke March to focus on pro-Palestinian agenda

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Last year's Chicago Dyke March and Rally was marred by an incident between three Jewish women carrying a rainbow flag featuring the Jewish Star of David and pro-Palestinian march organizers and attendees.

While the Dyke March itself went off without incident, during the post-march rally there was a confrontation between Dyke March collective members and the three women, who were ultimately asked to leave the event because they were reportedly upsetting some attendees by displaying their flag.

The incident sparked weeks of debate on social media, in letters to Windy City Times and in articles around the world, especially in Jewish media and right-wing websites. It caused a schism in the community, and it's unclear what impact that might have on attendance at this year's event.

The Dyke March, which has rotated to different neighborhoods around the city, will return to Little Village this year, starting 2 p.m., June 23, at Little Village Elementary, 2620 S. Lawndale Ave., and ending at Piotrowski Park, 4247 W. 31st St.

Started as an alternative to the Chicago Pride Parade, the Dyke March and Rally began in 1996 and since then it has grown to specifically include queer, bisexual and transgender people. The march has expanded its focus to oppressed people everywhere across the world.

According to the collective's press release, this year they are "marching in solidarity with the queer and trans communities of Palestine and to demand public outcry against Israeli pinkwashing tactics, efforts to appropriate queer liberation and weaponize it against Palestinians in the form of occupation and ethnic cleansing. Our communities, from Little Village to Palestine, are facing police militarization, occupation, surveillance and border police."

Chicago Dyke March Collective representative

Melisa Stephen responded to Windy City Times' questions about this year's event, what the group would have done differently last year and their wishes for the future.

**Windy City Times: What is the plan for this year's Dyke March and Rally: the time, starting point and ending point, as well as the date?**

Melisa Stephen: We will be marching in La Villita again. Starting at 2620 S. Lawndale. Please visit our Facebook page for updates. A celebratory rally at Piotrowski Park will take place after the march.

**WCT: Who is on the committee this year, and is there a big overlap with people who were on the committee of the 2017 Dyke March and Rally?**

MS: Our collective is comprised of queer and trans Black, Brown and Indigenous people of color living in Chicago. Some of our organizers have been with us for many years and we also have some amazing new collective members that have joined this year.

**WCT: Which groups/organizations are supporting the march this year?**

MS: We are so lucky to be in community with so many radical grassroots organizations in Chicago. This year we are excited to be building with Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO); Jewish Voice for Peace; and Queer, Ill + Okay, to name a few.

**WCT: What is your official policy on flags or any other displays brought by participants or spectators?**

MS: Chicago Dyke March is an anti-racist, anti-violent organization that supports the global anti-colonial struggle. We ask that folks who attend the march respect and uphold these values during the event, as well.

**WCT: Are there any other rules people should be aware of?**

Turn to page 26



Chicago Dyke March in 2017.

Photo by Hal Baim

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## DYKE MARCH from page 25

MS: We would like people to know we are a body- and fat-positive organization. In Chicago and much of the world, people who are categorized as woman are not allowed to show their chest without risk of violence and arrest. We encourage everyone to cover their nipples as a gesture of solidarity with those whose bodies are unfairly policed and controlled.

**WCT: Is there any special theme for this year's event?**

MS: This is our second year in La Villita, and we will continue to build on what it means for Chicago to be a sanctuary city, especially for queer and trans people of color. Thanks to various community-led efforts and the work of Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD), the idea of a true sanctuary city is constantly being re-imagined and practiced.

We also intend to uplift the struggles of Palestinians, abroad and locally. This year, it has become more imperative than ever for our collective to raise awareness of the atrocities being continually committed by the state of Israel against the Palestinian people and build cross movement coalitions to ensure that our oppressions are not siloed and are in fact intersectional. We do not consider this to be a one-time "special theme" but rather an iteration of our longstanding core values.

**WCT: Are there announced speakers, performers or anything else yet for the march and rally?**

MS: As always, we have a fantastic lineup that includes a variety of performance styles, ranging from hip hop, Mexican and Palestinian folk music, burlesque and more. We are so ecstatic to be partnering with Queer, Ill + Okay and showcasing the outstanding talents of McKenzie Chinn and Kia LaBeija, who along with partner Taina Larot will be performing a never-before-seen original

work.

**WCT: Do you have a city permit for this year's event, for both the march and the rally?**

MS: Dyke March has all required city permits each and every year.

**WCT: Based on what you know now, is there anything you would have done differently at the 2017 Dyke March and Rally?**

MS: We are a small, all-volunteer collective with limited, completely grassroots funding, and together we put on a march and rally that draw thousands of people every year. We are striving to grow our capacity to support our communities as best we can. After last year, it is clear that we all need to engage in more intentional conversations around global anti-colonial solidarity and how all anti-racist work must inherently be anti-Zionist. Last year, there were a few folks in attendance whose politics and consequent behavior were clearly at odds with our values and culminated in an unfortunate incident that distracted from and tragically overshadowed what also happened last year: a powerful gathering of queer and trans people of color within and alongside a Latinx community that has a deep culture and history of resistance in Chicago. We hope to prevent this sort of thing from happening in the future by making our politics very clear to the public and training more volunteers in de-escalation.

**WCT: Do you have a message for the Jewish community? The LGBTQ+ community?**

MS: Our goal every year is to hold a liberation and celebration space that centers the lives of queer and trans people of color, and we are grateful to all our community members who uplift and co-create that space with us. We hope you will join us June 23.

**WCT: What do you hope this year's participants and spectators take away from the event?**

MS: We hope that folks leave with a stronger sense of solidarity and understanding of the con-

nections between oppressed people in Chicago and around the world. Our communities, from Little Village to Palestine, are facing militarized policing, occupation and surveillance.

Dyke March is a gift we want to give to Chicago, and we especially hope that people who are fighting marginalization at multiple intersections are able to enjoy a celebration of their lives in a community of color.

**WCT: What are your wishes for the future of**

**the event going forward?**

MS: We look forward to continuing to build coalitions across our multiple struggles and develop caring ways of supporting and celebrating each other's resistance and resilience.

See <https://chicagodykemarchcollective.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/DykeMarchChicago/> for more information.

## Precious Minds project seeks to mentor youth

Precious Minds Mentoring Program is a program for young women, founded by a youth who has experienced her own struggles and who now seeks to help others.

Keonza Phillips is a young entrepreneur adult who grew up on the North and South sides of Chicago. Her main passion was finding a way to give back to the youth in her communities, creating positive reaction decisions, safe spaces and safe circles.

This is she decided to found a start-up program called Precious Minds. Precious Minds is a mentoring program targeting youth who identify as women, ages 10 years to 18 years old, to build confidence, academics and compassion.

According to Phillips, Precious Minds aims to educate youth who identify as women on vital assets of personal development; implementing the value of self-confidence and empathy; gaining communication and leadership skills; and building a solid foundation of trust and support in personal, professional and academic events and/or advice.

Contact Executive Director Keonza Phillips at 773-272-5463 or [phillipskeonza22@gmail.com](mailto:phillipskeonza22@gmail.com).

## Report: Only 559 LGBTQ elected officials in U.S.

LGBTQ Victory Institute's 2018 "Out for America" report says that there are 559 known openly LGBTQ elected officials in the United States—and the country needs to elect more than 22,000 LGBTQ individuals to achieve equitable representation.

Among the report's key findings:

—559 known LGBTQ elected officials are currently serving in the United States, which equals 0.1 percent of all elected officials nationwide;

—22,837 more LGBTQ elected officials must be elected to achieve equitable representation;

—Just 21.2 percent of LGBTQ elected officials are people of color; and

Only 2.7 percent of LGBTQ elected officials are bisexual and 2.3 percent are transgender.

The report also found that transgender representation more than doubled since the last "Out for America" report in 2017 (from six to 13 elected officials), and that fewer LGBTQ Republicans are in office (16 instead of 19) since the last report, despite overall known LGBTQ elected officials rising by 24.8 percent.

Download the full 2018 "Out for America" report at [victoryinstitute.org/OFA2018](http://victoryinstitute.org/OFA2018).

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**Orlando Cruz.**  
Photos by Vern Hester

## Gay boxer reigns over Puerto Rican parade

BY VERN HESTER

On June 16, Orlando “*El Fenomeno*” Cruz, the first openly gay active professional boxer, served as “king” of the annual Puerto Rican People’s Parade in Chicago.

This year’s event not only honored the parade’s founders but sought to bring attention to recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Other honorees at the event included Angel Arroyo, City Councilman of Lorain Ohio, Puerto Rican author/historian Angel Collado Schwarz, boxing legend Wilfredo Benitez and activist Oscar Lopez Rivera. The grand marshal of the parade was Josain Santiago, the mayor of Comerio, Puerto Rico.

Cruz, who will also serve as grand marshal of Chicago’s Annual Pride Parade on June 24, rode

the El Rescate float. El Rescate is a social-services agency aimed at helping youth experiencing homelessness, aiding with transitional housing, outreach, wellness and education.

This year, the parade’s focus was titled “Rescue, Relief, Rebuild Puerto Rico,” and was presented as part of The Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago.

With more than 75 floats and contingents, the parade attracts an audience that numbers in the tens of thousands. This year’s parade kicked off at the intersection of Western Avenue and Division Street, and headed west along Division into Humboldt Park.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center presented the parade.

More photos of the parade are available online at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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# Gay commissioner candidate holds Pride fundraiser

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Kevin B. Morrison, the gay democratic Cook County Commissioner candidate for the 15th district, held a Pride month fundraiser June 13 at Side-track. Morrison is running against incumbent and Illinois Republican Party Chair Timothy Schneider.

Illinois state Rep. Greg Harris said this night will be remembered because Morrison "is going places" politically. Harris noted that the 15th county commissioner race is important because he is running against one of the most prominent Republicans in Illinois.

"Kevin has a record of successfully running campaigns, including a number of Chicago alderman and state representative races, state Sen. Omar Aquino's race and Iowa caucuses for Hillary Clinton," said Harris. "He is also a door knocking machine with more than 10,000 doors visited during the primary. This is also an LGBT event and it is important to note that Kevin has a deep and strong commitment to our community."

Harris explained that Morrison has been on the forefront of fighting for transgender students to have access to school bathrooms and locker

rooms that match their gender identity in District 211 as well as working to elect school board members who will support LGBT rights in that school district.

Morrison lauded Harris' leadership in the fight for marriage equality in Illinois.

"I am so excited to be standing in front of all of you tonight," said Morrison. "When I decided to take on this race, I was unaware that we had never had an openly LGBT person on the Cook County board. I am looking forward to being a voice for our community at the county level. My opponent is the person who gave Illinois delegates to Donald J. Trump during the Republican convention in 2016. His policies are incredibly harmful for residents throughout the county and I look forward to changing that moving forward."

Morrison noted that Hillary Clinton won this district by 20 points, and that during the March 2018 primary twice as many Democratic votes were cast than Republican ones. He said these statistics means he can win, adding his belief that Schneider is Gov. Bruce Rauner's right-hand man.

Speaking about what he will do if elected, Mor-



Illinois state Rep. Greg Harris and 15th District Cook County Commissioner candidate Kevin B. Morrison.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

risson said he will ensure that every country service is inclusive of all communities. He said he will also stand up for small businesses.

The event's honorary chair was Rep. Jan Schakowsky who hosted alongside many LGBT and allied elected officials and community leaders. Those in attendance included Illinois state Sen. Omar Aquino, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Debra Shore, Ald. Tom Tunney, Ald. Deb Mell, Ald. James Cappleman, Illinois Democratic County Chairmen Associa-

tion President and Rock Island County Democrats Chairman Doug House, 8th District Democratic Central Committeeman Mike Cudzik, East Aurora School District Board Vice President Alex Arroyo, 40th Ward aldermanic candidate Maggie O'Keefe, 49th Ward aldermanic candidate Maria Hadden and Illinois state Rep. candidate Maggie Trevor.

**For more information and/or to donate to Morrison's campaign, visit [KevinBMorrison.com](http://KevinBMorrison.com).**



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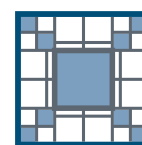


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# CHICAGO QUEER HERE

## Chicago-based LGBTQIA Portraits

BY LYNDSEY LESH

"I'm genuinely enthusiastic about people! I enjoy capturing what makes people who they are. After living in all different parts of the U.S. and after coming out in the queer community, I'm very mindful of LGBTQIA+ living in the Midwest. With this ongoing series of Chicago-focused portraits, I've aimed to proudly highlight these individuals living and becoming in Chicago. I have previously drawn a collection of portraits of LGBTQIA+ living in Kansas City, Missouri."

—Artist's statement

Kelly Sellers (she/her)



From my first summer in Chicago. That year, I signed up to volunteer at the rock n roll camp for girls in LA during peak pride month times. I didn't know when Chicago pride took place until after I already made that commitment; I remember several coworkers being shocked I was "missing" pride. I ended up having such a uniquely beautiful experience volunteering at rock camp, surrounded by so many queers and so many femmes, and getting to spend a full week with one of my best friends. It was everything I want pride and my day-to-day life to be like! Building community, centering femmes and creative expression all continue to be important values in my life and extend beyond any one day, month, parade, or party.

## FAVORITE PRIDE MOMENTS

Carly Connelly (They/Them)



Probably when someone came up from a float and held my face and said I was beautiful.

Kevin Holliday (He/Him)



I would say my first time going I was amazed at the openness.

Lyndsey Lesh is an avid doodler, artist and illustrator (sometimes writer) based out of Chicago. She was born and raised in the Midwest with time spent in Kansas City, Minneapolis and a brief stint in Los Angeles. She enjoys weird humor, sentimental exploring, cats and reading—as well as taking photos, often in Chicago. You can see more of her work at: [www.flippynapkins.com](http://www.flippynapkins.com) and on instagram: @lyndsey.lesh.

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# Remembering Anita Bryant and 'Orange Tuesday'

BY ERIC HOLEMAN

On June 7, 1977, voters in Dade County, Florida overwhelmingly voted to repeal the county's recently passed gay-rights ordinance, concluding a campaign that put gay rights—and gay people—on the evening news and daily newspapers across the country.

Chicago photographer Jerry Pritikin lived in San Francisco at the time, and remembered how the Florida election was a wake-up call for gay-rights activists across the country.

He'd moved there for the relative freedom it offered, but even San Francisco wasn't always tolerant.

"It was a very conservative city then," Pritikin said. "Most people think of it as a liberal city, but it wasn't. It had corrupt police, corrupt government, corrupt officials. Not liberal at all. It was more open than Chicago, but still conservative." Before gay neighborhoods blossomed, bars were discreetly hidden among docks and warehouses. "Not out in the open like they are now."

As closet doors were opened, activists lobbied for legal protections across the country. Dade

County adapted its anti-discrimination ordinance in December, 1976.

The backlash was immediate and fierce. Petitions were circulated, and a special election to repeal the ordinance was scheduled for the following June. The anti-gay forces found a champion in Anita Bryant, a former Miss Oklahoma who was known for her TV commercials for Florida Orange Juice.

Bryant's celebrity brought national attention to the fight for gay rights. "It was a big deal," recalled Pritikin. "We'd heard about the Miami fight. Anita Bryant was famous. Everybody knew her TV ads for orange juice, and then she became famous as the face of the anti-gay movement. I remember hearing her on the radio, singing on the radio, sometimes. And her face was all over the TV from the juice commercials."

Even though Bryant campaigned against gay rights, her celebrity helped grow gay activism, Pritikin said. "Anita made the gay-rights movement a national story. She put the movement in the gay-rights movement. All segments of the movement came together because of her. She was the best thing that happened to the gay com-



Anita Bryant's photo among anti-gays being protested in San Francisco Pride, 1977.

Photo (c) Jerry Pritikin

munity."

On the day of the vote, Pritikin recalled the mood in San Francisco. The repeal vote was scheduled for June 7, 1977. The election was 3,000 miles and three time zones away.

"When the polls closed in Florida, it was only 4 or 5 p.m. in San Francisco. People were still getting off of work. A lot of gay guys were in the habit of stopping at a local bar for a drink on their way home."

To quench their thirst? "They were hoping to

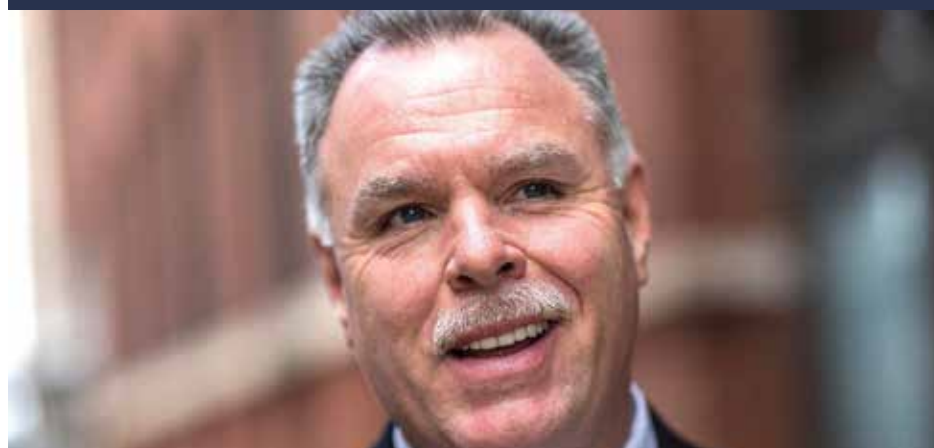
get lucky, maybe."

But this time was different. "The TV said the early ballots were in, and it didn't look good for the repeal." Pritikin grabbed his camera and headed for the Castro.

"I didn't live far away, but there were already a lot of people coming down to the Castro. ... They didn't quite know what to make of this, yet. They were a little angry and a little nervous. The mood was confused."

Harvey Milk, a camera store owner who had run

"I congratulate Chicago's entire LGBTQ community for everything they do to make Chicago the greatest and most diverse city in the country. With your help, I will make our city safer, more open, more honest, and more equal."

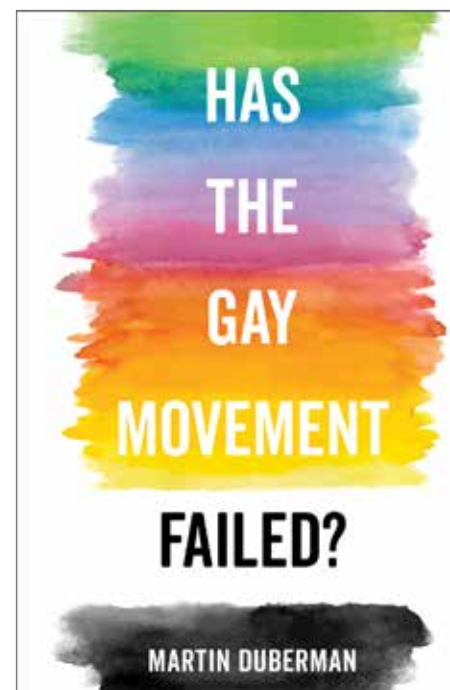


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Harvey Milk in San Francisco on "Orange Tuesday," when the Dade County, Florida gay-rights bill was struck down by voters.

Photo (c) Jerry Pritikin

for city council, addressed the crowd.

When the crowd moved to the subway station at Castro and Market streets, Pritikin spotted television cameras. "There was one TV crew I saw along the way, from Channel 2 in San Francisco.

Pritikin asked the reporter if he had a name for the lead-in. He said no; Pritikin offered a suggestion: "Call it Orange Tuesday," I shouted. He pointed at me and smiled. The evening news at 11 ran with it."

As the crowd grew, Milk urged the crowd to

march along Market Street to downtown San Francisco. Pritikin followed with his camera. "We went by City Hall and continued over past Nob Hill and ended up in Union Square. When they arrived at the square, Harvey was the only one with a bullhorn, but he let others use it to make their speeches too."

As he spoke, Pritikin snapped a photo of Milk with the bullhorn.

"I only got two photos of Harvey that night. I only had one roll of film to work with. It ended before midnight. I took the film to a contact at AP, I told him it had some pictures he could use. The bureau chief said it was only a local story,

and there wouldn't be any national interest. I said it was a response to a local story 3,000 miles away, but with a march of 5,000 people, that made it a national story."

Papers across the country ran the photo. The San Francisco Examiner put it on the front page, but with no credit to the photographer. "Back then you didn't get your name on a wire service story unless you shot an aeroplane falling from the sky," Pritikin explained.

Anger over the ordinance battle continued into San Francisco's pride march later that month. One group carried five poster-sized photos that symbolized bigots throughout history. The photos

showed Hitler, a burning cross, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, Josef Stalin, and in the center, the smiling face of Anita Bryant.

Harvey Milk would go on to win election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors later that year. Pritikin continued to photograph him until Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated in November 1978.

Anita Bryant continued to campaign against gay rights for several years, attracting admirers and detractors. Pritikin honored her with a T-shirt that cheekily declared "Anita Bryant's husband is a HOMO SAPIEN."

## Berwyn hosting Pride event June 23

The west suburban city of Berwyn is celebrating pride again this year. Openly gay Berwyn Ald. Scott Lennon said the city will be repeating a march his own brother, Gary, started last year, when a Pride Walk happened in the Depot District with about 25 friends, neighbors and relatives.

"It was last minute and this year he wants to keep the movement going," Scott said. "This year we created an event on facebook. My brother is also openly gay and we both together take pride in seeing how the elected officials, the mayor and our residents are welcoming to all of us here in the city."

The Pride Walk will be Saturday, June 23,

starting at 1 p.m. at 7138 Windsor Ave.

During the June 12 Berwyn City Council meeting, Mayor Robert J. Lovero presented a proclamation declaring June 2018 as Pride Month in Berwyn.

"As a gay alderman, I stand proud with City Clerk Marge Paul, 2nd Ward Ald. Jose Ramirez and 3rd ward Ald. Jeannie Reardon along with 4th Ward Ald. Bob Fejt, 5th Ward Ald. Cesar Santoy, 6th Ward Ald. Alicia Ruiz, 7th Ward Ald. Ralph Avila and 8th Ward Ald. Edgar Garcia who have always been advocates for diversity within our city," Lennon said. "We currently have four elected City Council members who are openly gay or lesbian.

"The City of Berwyn is committed to being a safe, welcoming and equitable community for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, gen-

der identification, country of origin or any other identity."

After gathering outside the James Joyce on Windsor and Harlem, the group will walk to Karasek Park where there will be a few guest speakers and then travel down to Laverne's on East and Windsor. Laverne's is a family-friendly bar and restaurant with an outside patio. "Bring your family, friends, neighbors and dogs," Scott said. "All are welcome! We hope you can join us and celebrate Pride and Diversity here in the City of Berwyn."

See [WhyBerwyn.com/living/lgbtq-pride](http://WhyBerwyn.com/living/lgbtq-pride) and [Facebook.com/events/212397712893338/](https://www.facebook.com/events/212397712893338/).

The city proclamation is at <https://www.whyberwyn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pride-Month-Proclamation-June-2018.pdf>.

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# 'Bewildered' author Ron Weaver remembered

BY MATT SIMONETTE

In his program notes for the 2017 *Hell in a Handbag* production *Bewildered*—a musical parody of *Bewitched* told from the vantage point of nosy neighbor Gladys Kravitz—playwright Ron Weaver wrote of his two things he loved most beyond his friends and family: musical theater and classic sitcoms.

Weaver explained, "I've always been especially drawn to the shows where one person lives in the eye of a hurricane of insane or bizarre behavior."

Weaver, who was also the longtime box office manager at North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, passed away unexpectedly at age 52 on June 4. The cause of death was acute Guillain Barre Syndrome—a rare disorder in which the body's immune system attacks the nerves.

Jessica Hester, Weaver's best friend, said she'll always remember Weaver's sense of humor and his willingness to help her out without question.

"We obviously went out to see a lot of plays and musicals together," she recalled. "I would not have taken as much advantage of the Chicago theater scene as much if I wasn't friends with him. He was a huge comic book nerd, so we would go see a lot of superhero movies together. He was always my go-to person to help me figure out

the plot-points and figure out the 'Easter eggs' in those movies."

Weaver had an extensive knowledge of "kitschy pop culture, so it was always educational to have him around," said Hester.

She said that she moved frequently in the mid-'00s, and Weaver "would always be there to take me where I was going until I settled in and then bring me back to Chicago when it didn't work out."

Although Weaver frequently left Hester in stitches with his impressions and parody lyrics—she recalled him, for example, singing "Der Kom-misar" as Tyler Perry as Madea—she said her best friend generally played it safe in many realms of his life, until he came up with the idea for *Bewildered*.

A longtime fan of *Hell in a Handbag*, cast members and staff knew, thanks to his distinctive laugh, when Weaver was in the audience, said company Artistic Director David Cerda.

"He came to all of our shows, multiple times," said Cerda. "We got to know him and talk to him. We developed a friendship that way."

Cerda explained that he is often skeptical when acquaintances pitch their ideas for *Hell in a Handbag* shows, but Weaver's was different.

"When he presented the idea for *Bewildered*—



Ron Weaver.

Photo from Jessica Hester

the 'elevator pitch' where he told me that it was *Bewitched*, but from the perspective of Gladys Kravitz—it sounded interesting to me right away," he recalled. "Most of the ideas I hear are either ones we already have thought of or are just not interested in. But this really piqued my interest. Once I realized he was really serious about it, and I heard some of his songs, and once he gave me his first draft, we decided we should do a workshop of it."

*Bewildered*, for which Weaver wrote the book and co-wrote music and lyrics with Aaron Benham, had its first workshop in 2014.

"That was the first time *Hell in a Handbag* has done a workshop from an outside person who pitched to us," Cerda said. "That's how the journey started. ... It was a dream of his."

Weaver brought with him specific ideas for casting, including ensemble member Caitlin Jackson as Gladys Kravitz and Cerda as Endora.

"I told him, 'You know, I'm not the strongest singer or dancer,'" Cerda recalled. "He said, 'I don't care. I think you can play her.'"

*Bewildered* finally ran in late 2017.

"We really liked the show because Ron perfectly fit our mission statement," Cerda said. "We normally feature shows about misfits, people who aren't the leads in shows, and Gladys Kravitz was not your normal idea of a leading lady. [Ron] had some beautiful songs. One of them was called 'The Leading Lady.' When I first read that song, I said, 'This is you, isn't it?'"

Hester saw *Bewildered* twice.

"Oh, my God—I was so proud of him," she said. "He did struggle with depression for most of his life, and he would have crippling bouts of anxiety and self-doubt. But he pushed through it, and wrote something so beautiful. ... He had an amazing cast, artists who 'got it' and really appreciated the material."

Funeral services for Weaver took place June 13 in Catlin, Illinois. A celebration of his life is scheduled for Monday, July 30, at North Shore Center for the Performing Arts. Hester suggested donations in his memory to either About Face Youth Theatre or the Critical Animal Relief Foundation, through which Weaver adopted one of his cats.

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# A brief history of LGBTQ students and proms

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In recent years, many LGBTQ students have attended their high school proms across the country without any “controversy” but that was not always the case due to school officials denying them entry into the annual dance.

“Ever since its creation in the 1920s, prom has been a powerful ritual that shapes the gendered and sexual culture of American youth in ways that typically enforce heteronormativity, or the belief that the only ‘good’ and ‘normal’ way to be is a masculine boy who is attracted to feminine girls and vice versa,” said Northern Illinois University (NIU) Professor Dr. Amanda Littauer.

This left many LGBTQ students without the ability to express themselves in a school-sponsored dance setting, however, a small number of students fought back against these gendered rules as early as the 1950s.

One such case took place in 1980 when Aaron Fricke wanted to take his friend Paul Guilbert to his Cumberland High School (Rhode Island) prom. His principal denied the request so Fricke filed a

lawsuit. The case, *Fricke v. Lynch*, went to the U.S. District Court and the court sided with Fricke and also ordered that the school provide security for the couple so they would remain safe while in attendance. Fricke also wrote a book and play about the case, “Reflections of a Rock Lobster.”

The case was one of the first legal victories for LGBTQ youth and set a precedent for future disputes. It has been used to counter school officials at public schools who continue to deny students the ability to bring any date or dates of their choosing to the prom.

“The Fricke story reveals the persistence, creativity and resourcefulness of youth who refused to follow the rules imposing heterosexuality and heterosexual rituals upon high school culture,” said Littauer.

In recent years, there have been a number of LGBTQ students crowned prom king or queen or been named to the prom court across the country, and not just in the liberal areas.

For the past seven years, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has hosted a queer prom, with the location changing each year. This year’s event was held on



Ronan Kaiser and Gabriel Sonntag.

Photo courtesy of Sonntag

the South Side, for the first time. According to Chicago GSA Prom co-founder Noa Padowitz, the event has grown in popularity every year.

“CPS allows students to bring any high school-aged partner to prom, however, due to social pressure, some students do not feel comfortable bringing same sex or gender non-conforming partners to their home school’s prom,” said Padowitz. “The Chicago GSA Prom started to provide CPS students with a safe space to dance with and meet other LGBTQ+ students from around the city.”

Now colleges like NIU have gotten into the Queer Prom game. This year’s NIU Queer Prom was sponsored by the LGBTQ student support group Prism and took place on March 31 on the college’s campus.

NIU senior Margaret Hitchcock had the idea of holding a Queer Prom on campus her freshman year, however, it took until this past school year for it to take place.

“I was so excited to see Queer Prom finally happen,” said Hitchcock. “Prism did a phenomenal job at orchestrating a night to remember for all that attended. Queer Prom offered students an opportunity to be themselves and dance the night away.”

“Prism’s 2018 Queer Prom was the organization’s first large event in recent years,” said NIU senior and Prism President Ronan Kaiser. “It was a chance for LGBTQIA+ folks from NIU and the Dekalb community to have a safe space to dance and enjoy the evening with their significant others and friends. Prism also crowned Prom Royalty which was voted upon by attendants of the dance. We are hoping to continue to host dances

like Queer Prom at NIU.

“One of the main thoughts behind Queer Prom was that many queer students did not get to have a prom experience that they wanted to in high school,” said NIU senior and Prism Vice President Gabriel Sonntag. “For example, I went to a Catholic school on the South Side of Chicago. We had to have an opposite-gender date and there was a strict dress code. Since I could not go stag or wear what I wanted, I did not go.

“We had a great turnout at the Queer Prom. We sold around 60 tickets despite it being Pass-over and Easter weekend. LGBTQ+ students as well as our allies attended. I think Queer Prom was more than just a dance for college students. It was a non-judgmental space for many attendees. They could bring whomever they wanted and wear whatever they wanted. Some people came dressed in formal wear while others were more casual attire. I liked Queer Prom because there was no pressure to conform or wear certain clothes.”

“I attended my high school prom with a guy,” said recent NIU graduate Sam Lanigan. “It was not a bad experience, but I did not have the opportunity to be my authentic self. So I was thrilled that NIU held a Queer Prom this year where I was able to attend with my fiancée Danielle. She was able to wear masculine clothes for the first time at an event and finally feel comfortable. This made me so happy for her. The best part about the event on the whole was being able to look around the room and know this was a safe space for all of us. It made graduating from NIU this spring even better because I know that I am leaving a place that creates safe spaces for many marginalized individuals.”

“We at Prism were so honored to be able to hold Queer Prom at NIU this Spring,” said NIU Assistant Professor and Prism Faculty Advisor Katy Jaekel. “While events that center queer individuals are becoming more common, that night, many people shared that this was the first time they had ever been able to attend an event that not only centered queerness, it celebrated it. We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to celebrate and experience this event together.”

A number of other entities across the country have held Queer Proms over the years. This year the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago celebrated its 13th annual Queer Prom while the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective (Connecticut) held its 24th annual Queer Prom. BuzzFeed has also hosted two Queer Proms—last year in Los Angeles and this year in New York City.

Lambda Legal, the ACLU and GLAAD have released information for LGBTQ students so they know their rights and will be able to challenge their school or school district on their discriminatory policies around prom attendance.

See <https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/youth-dances>, [https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/Prom\\_Rights.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/Prom_Rights.pdf) and <http://www.glaad.org/publications/promkit> for more information.



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# City hosts LGBTQ veterans salute

The City of Chicago hosted its annual LGBTQ Veterans Salute June 13, 2018 inside Daley Center.

The keynote speaker for the event was Vanessa Sheridan, USAF, a transgender veteran who is Center on Halsted's director of transgender re-

lations and community engagement. She spoke passionately about the need to vote and to honor those who serve and have served in the U.S. military. Sheridan also sang the national anthem.

Mona Noriega, commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, read a proclamation from Mayor Rahm Emanuel honoring LGBTQ veterans.

Jim Darby of the U.S. Navy—founder and president emeritus of the Chicago chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER)—

spoke about AVER's mission. Also playing roles in the ceremony were Ed Wosylus, USAF, posting the colors, and Larry Simpson, Army National Guard, calling the program to order.

Singer Dean Ogren performed "America the Beautiful."

After the ceremony, there was a flag procession outside where an AVER wreath was placed at the Eternal Flame in Daley Plaza. Lakeside Pride Marching Band members Susan Jones and Melissa Terrell performed.



Left: Keynote speaker Vanessa Sheridan. Right: The LGBTQ wreath at the Eternal Flame in Daley Plaza.

Photos by Tracy Baim

The LGBTQ community has shown us all what **inclusion, equality, and LOVE** truly look like. I'm proud to stand with you and celebrate how far we've come."

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# Jan Dee looks back on more than 45 years as custom jeweler

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

For as far back as Jan Dee can remember she has always been interested in arts and crafts and has parlayed that into her own business, Jan Dee Custom Jewelry, now located at 1425 W. Diversey Parkway in Lincoln Park.

"When I was a child, I loved creating things with my hands," said Dee. "My art teachers told me I was the best, fastest and most creative student they had."

Dee grew up in Boston and graduated from Roxbury Memorial High School in 1958. After a stint at a community college in Boston, Dee worked for a psychiatric agency but her dreams of doing something creative never went away.

"I quit my job at the agency and went to Italy to learn how to be a goldsmith," said Dee. "There was a man named Gian Carlo who owned a gold factory where everything was made by hand. His friend referred me to him and he invited me to become his student so I went over there from 1967-'68. He taught me everything I know about making jewelry. I studied hard and worked 10 hours a day, six days a week on my craft. It was a wonderful experience."

Dee said she was unsure about how to begin this new career so she got a waitressing job to pay her bills but that did not last long. She told her parents that she wanted to quit her job and start making silver jewelry full-time.

"My mom said 'you should have a shop in our basement'," said Dee. "At the time, silver was a dollar an ounce. I had \$600 to my name so I bought 600 ounces of silver in all sizes. I set up my equipment and silver in the basement and put a little sign outside my parents' house advertising that I was in business. I had one showcase to display my wares and would get a few people coming in now and then to look at my jewelry. That lasted for six months and then I decided I needed a little store."

Dee explained that she was one of a few silversmiths in her neighborhood at the time.

"I opened my store but most people did not understand silversmithing because they were used to buying costume jewelry," said Dee. "I ended up closing my store at that location and the following summer, I opened a silversmithing shop at Rocky Neck Art Colony in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The shop I rented was a converted boat house on the water. I called it The Silvershop. This lasted for a couple of years. Business got better but not well enough because people had not caught onto silver jewelry. It took awhile to educate people."

"While at Rocky Neck, Woodstock was happening [1969] and all my friends said we should go. I told them I had to stay back and mind my store and that day I made four dollars. I was so mad because they came back and said, 'You do not know what you missed.' This made me realize I

need to seize the moment when it comes and I have done that ever since."

One way Dee seized the moment was by doing wholesaling to other stores in New England. She was able to support herself on those sales alone. At the same time, Dee met a woman who was visiting Provincetown from Chicago. They started dating and she invited Dee to visit Chicago. Dee said seeing Lake Michigan made her fall in love with the city because it felt familiar enough to the East Coast. When her then-girlfriend invited her to come live with her she said yes. She opened a workshop in their home and continued her wholesaling business.

Dee decided to create a catalog of her wares in 1971 and it was so popular she was working 18 hours a day, seven days a week to fill her orders. She explained that due to her jewelry's popularity she had an opportunity to sell to a large corporation that had 300 stores across the country. Dee turned them down even though she would have received \$900,000 from the initial deal because she did not want the responsibility of opening a large factory. After Dee turned down the corporate offer she ceased selling her jewelry wholesale.



The Jan Dee store, 1425 W. Diversey.  
Photo by Carrie Maxwell



Jan Dee (left) and partner Janet Gutrich.  
Photo by Hal Baim

"While I was selling my jewelry out of our home, I realized a little storefront would be a better option so I opened a summer store in Provincetown, Massachusetts," said Dee. "I met a younger woman in Provincetown whom I took under my wing to teach her silversmithing. I gave her my extra bench and she worked for me for quite awhile. She later moved to Chicago to con-

tinue as my apprentice."

At the Provincetown store, gay and lesbian couples felt comfortable buying commitment rings since the town had many LGBTQ residents and vacationers. Dee felt that a summer store was not as opportune or convenient as a year-round store so she rented a storefront in 1973 at Belden and Clark Street in Chicago. She stayed at that location for more than 15 years.

Dee wanted more autonomy over her store so she bought a building on Diversey Parkway in 1990. It had been vacant for 14 years and had to be completely renovated. The building used to be the location of CK's Lounge, one of the largest gay bars at the time. She said people were surprised that she would open a store in a remote area where there was no retail. Dee explained that her other stores had many window shoppers and numerous complaints about parking availability and this new location offered more amenities. She noted that most people who visited the Diversey location came to purchase items or come in for design services.

"Our philosophy is to make a person feel as comfortable as they can when they come into the store, ask as many questions as they want, educate them and take their time in making a purchase," said Dee. "We have always been a service store and pride ourselves on the quality of our repairs including sentimental pieces and other jewelry. Caring for our customers from the time of purchase is very important to us."

Over the course of her 45-plus years in business, Dee has had many customers come through her door. Dee noted that during the 1980s, there would be many times when a straight and a gay couple would come in simultaneously to buy engagement or wedding rings. She said the couples would spend time getting to know each other and that "would make my heart sing."

"The fact that people accepted each other for who they were and shared their stories about their upcoming celebrations was great to witness



back then," said Dee. "Everyone felt comfortable shopping at my store because we have a welcoming business."

Dee said she came to Chicago at the right time to be an out lesbian business owner because it was after the height of the gay bars being raided by the police. She said her store's location was also a factor since the neighborhood was LGBTQ-friendly even in the 1970s. Dee explained that LGBTQ bankers, high school principals and doctors were among her friends and that she never had one person or group try to boycott her store.

umn and I was credited as a Chicago jeweler," said Dee. "They never mentioned our name and I always felt sad about this."

Among the other notable people who bought wedding rings from Dee's store was Walter Jacobson.

Dee explained that a gay violinist from Russia, Artem Kolesov, wanted to buy wedding rings for him and his fiancée Lalo.

"A friend of mine called me and asked if we could take care of Artem," said Dee. "I said it would be a pleasure. When they came in to pick

ding rings from my store," said Dee. "They came here to buy them and had a beautiful wedding in New Zealand. I also designed wedding rings for many other wonderful gay and lesbian couples from all over the United States."

Dee decided to go back to school to further pursue her interest in art. She went to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) from 1979-'81 with a focus on photography. In addition to her own photographic endeavors, Dee also did the photos for the construction benefit to finance Horizons (now the Center on Halsted) location

through her membership in the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois and the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce. She has also attended many benefits and donated gift cards and items from the store to non-profit group's silent auctions. Dee said this gives her a chance to give back and introduce herself and the store to new people.

"When Horizons first opened I started a fund for them," said Dee. "They wanted 10 people to donate \$300. In return, they would have their name on a plaque on one of the office doors. I raised \$3,000 and they were very happy with

## The Happy Couples:

Just a few couples who have been helped by custom jeweler Jan Dee.

1) Artem Kolesov (right) and husband Lalo.

Courtesy of Kolesov

2) Above: Susie Fredman and Terri Hawley being blessed at their wedding. Below: Their wedding rings.

Photos by Amanda Sudimack  
3) Mitchell Channon and Bruce Koff.

Courtesy of Koff

4) Main: Marianna Murphy Kohl and Sarah Shillington. Inset: Their wedding rings.

Main photo by Doug McGoldrick; inset by Marianna Murphy Kohl



"Chicago has always had a stronger LGBTQ activist base than many other places," said Dee. "I did not come out until I was 28. One of the catalysts for me moving to Chicago was Boston got too small and it was not a friendly place for LGBTQ people who were out and proud back then."

Dee said that when she had the Clark Street location Stedman Graham, Oprah Winfrey's longtime partner, came in and bought an elongated pearl with a diamond accent ring for Oprah.

"Stedman's gift was mentioned in the INC col-

up their rings, Artem showed his appreciation by bringing his violin and playing a solo for us in the store."

"We love the rings and get a lot of compliments on how beautiful they look," said Kolesov. "We are extremely grateful to Jan for her amazing mastery and precision. I do not have to take off the ring when I perform since I cannot even feel it on my finger."

"A lesbian couple who are friends of mine from Auckland, New Zealand would only buy their wed-

ding rings from my store," said Dee. "They came here to buy them and had a beautiful wedding in New Zealand. I also designed wedding rings for many other wonderful gay and lesbian couples from all over the United States."

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Now Dee has gotten into the Airbnb business. She recently renovated the upper floors of her building to accommodate up to 12 people. Dee previously lived in the space with her partner Janet Gutrich whom she has been with since Dec. 17, 1994. The couple now live in the South Loop.

See <https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/25139005> to book Dee's Airbnb.

For more information about Jan Dee's store, visit <http://www.jandee.com/>.

# HAPPY PRIDE, CHICAGO!



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**ANN M. WILLIAMS**  
State Representative  
11th District



# LGBTQ-owned car repair service aims to expand nationwide

BY BRONSON PETTITT

Chicago-area resident Brian Moak is working to change the perception that the car-service industry and LGBTQ individuals do not mix.

A year ago, he rebranded Duxler Complete Auto Care, the company he bought from his father, and renamed it HEART Certified Auto Care, with the aims of promoting tolerance, respect and diversity as well as creating a comfortable, accepting environment for both his employees and customers.

"The real message is that everyone is celebrated here," Moak told Windy City Times. "When we named the company 'HEART,' it's because we are a heart-led company," he said, adding that HEART is an acronym for 'Helping Everyone Achieve Reliable Transportation.'"

In addition to the company's values, HEART's business model is also transparency-driven, Moak said: Mechanics take photos of what they're working on and provide easy-to-understand explanations to customers. HEART also has a fleet of 23 loaner vehicles, a shuttle service for pick-ups and drop-offs within 10 miles, and a two-year warranty on repairs.

"Most people don't understand what's wrong with their car; most people are not mechanics. They are buying your word, your reputation, they're buying your level of service. But really, they're buying you. That's a huge level of vulnerability," Moak said.

With three locations in Evanston, Wilmette and Northbrook, Moak said he wants to take his vision nationwide and expand to 100 or more franchise



**Brian Moak.**  
Photo courtesy of Matt Siegler



**HEART Certified Auto Care team.**  
Photo courtesy of Matt Siegler

locations in 10 years.

"The biggest challenge is getting the brand going," he said. "The good news is our foundation is exceptional and we're stronger than we've ever been, so we're primed and ready to do this."

Moak said his company is in a unique position to do this: HEART has over 15,000 active customers, a "99 percent approval rating and 94 percent customer retention rate," along with an average employee tenure of 13 years.

"There are other brands that have been out there for a long time—and I'm not using hyperbole, but none of which have individual store performance at the level we have," Moak said,

adding the typical customer retention rate in the car care industry is only 40 percent.

With these numbers in mind, Moak has high standards for franchisees.

"I'm looking for someone who's very driven, who has an incredible sense of empathy, high values, a strong work ethic, creativity."

Despite his ambitious plans and unique values, this is nothing new for the family; Moak bought the company from his father in 2009, and those values were present even before he took over.

"I'm grateful for the foundation [my father] taught me and the things I learned from him, and that plays a huge role in taking what I wanted to

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create to the next level," Moak said.

For Moak, the next level meant being one of the few LGBT-owned car care shops around.

"My friends' impressions is that if you're gay, it's just as hard or it could be even harder [than for women], because if you're a more effeminate man ...you have someone who's talking down to you, with a little bit of disrespect, sarcasm, passive aggressiveness and maybe even patronizing you—that happens all the time."

He added: "If you feel intimidated to get your car repaired, imagine what it would feel like to go to work every day in that environment."

Brian came out at 21, while he was a junior in college.

"My dad had a company meeting while I wasn't there and flat out said, 'My son came out of the closet—he's gay. The gay jokes have to stop while he's around,'" Moak said.

A year later, Moak graduated and returned to Duxler as a salesperson.

"The environment hadn't changed that much. That made me work harder and smarter, it made me work more hours than anyone else, it made me work to prove that I was as capable or better than anyone, regardless of the fact that I was gay," Moak said.

He purposefully won people over, one at a time, on both a personal and professional level.

"When you grow up closeted, you learn to be a chameleon. You learn how to pull different di-

mensions of your personality out in different situations to excel in that environment," Moak said.

By the time he was 27, he was general manager of one of the stores and bought the company

from his father—something that wasn't supposed to happen until he was 40.

"I personally have two customers: the one who comes in the front door as my consumer, and the

one who checks in through the back door, at the time clock," Moak said. "They both have to buy what I'm selling, and I have to give both of them the best possible experience anywhere."

## PrideIndex.com's Esteem Awards June 30

PrideIndex.com announced the seven organizations and 12 individuals that have been selected to be honored at the 11th Annual Esteem Awards. This year's cocktail reception will take place Saturday, June 30, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., 1-4 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

A committee of past honorees selected this year's award recipients.

Local honorees will include Illinois state rep candidate Lamont Robinson, Our City Our Voice Executive Director (and 2019 aldermanic candidate) Maria Hadden, Center on Halsted Director of Transgender Relations and Community Engagement Vanessa Sheridan, journalist/consultant Derrick Clifton, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, eta Creative Arts Foundation, Reeling: The Chicago LGBT Film Fest and the podcast The Sip.

National awardees will include author/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign English



Illinois state rep candidate Lamont Robinson. Photo by Matt Simonette

professor Dr. Eric Prichard, activist Dr. Wilhemina Perry, writer/activist Christina Kahr, activist/philanthropist D'Ontace Keyes, The National LGBTQ Task Force, ONE Archive Foundation and the National Gay & Lesbian Archives, My True Colours Festival, activist/orator Jessica Holter, web series Brown Girls and journalist Gerren Keith Gaynor.

See PrideIndex.com.

## EI urges Rauner to extend protections

In a press release, Equality Illinois (EI) urged Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner to sign legislation that would extend Illinois' workplace non-discrimination protections to businesses of all sizes in the state and ensure all Illinoisans can rely on the justice system when they experience employment discrimination.

Under current law, workers in businesses of 14 and fewer employees outside Cook County can still be fired for being LGBTQ, race, gender, faith and for other reasons based on their personal identities, according to EI.

The Illinois General Assembly passed the important civil rights measure, House Bill 4572, ending that exclusion and extending protections to thousands more workers, with bipartisan support during the spring session. The bill was delivered to Rauner on June 14.

People who want to urge Rauner to sign the bill can send a message to the him at [tinyurl.com/SignHB4572](http://tinyurl.com/SignHB4572).



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## viewpoints


**Rev. Irene  
MONROE**

## What's happening to Pride?

I like to say there was something in the air that made Pride 2017—here and abroad—one of the most contentious events in its history. Many, however, in our LGBTQ communities say the tension was always present.

Pride parades will be taking place across the country this month. And, as we all rev up for this year's festivities so, too, will the fault lines of race, gender identity and class emerge. In addition to the main Pride events taking place in many major cities and towns, there will be segments of our communities—from women to trans people to people of color—holding their own.

Pride is about the varied expressions of the life, gifts and talents of the entire community. But the divisions in our communities during Pride also show us something troubling and broken within ourselves. And, last year a Black queer resistance rose up (nationally and globally) denouncing the glib notion that "gay is the new black."

### Philly's flag

For example, last year Philadelphia memorably had a controversy over its new Pride flag. Black and brown stripes were added to the rainbow flag as part of the city's campaign "More Color More Pride"—a way to visibly include people of color. in the celebrations.

"It's a push for people to start listening to people of color in our community, start hearing what they're saying, and really to believe them and to step up and say, 'What can I do to help eradicate these issues in our community?'" said Amber Hikes, the new executive director of Philadelphia's Office of LGBT Affairs told NBC OUT.

### D.C.'s segregation

The nation's capital is always a big draw for LGBTQIA communities across the country come Pride, but D.C.'s white communities aren't always inviting and welcoming, and last year many people of African descent spoke out about it.

"We don't socialize together. There are very few places where Black and white socialize together, which is the basis of relationships and friendships, the basis of understanding," Earl Fowlkes told the Washington Blade. Fowlkes is executive director of the Center for Black Equity, a D.C.-based group that advocates for African-American LGBT people and helps organize Black Pride events in the U.S. and abroad.

"And until we start doing that and creating those spaces to do that we're going to have misunderstandings and a lack of sensitivity toward issues of race."

### Boston being Boston

Boston Black Pride 2017 took place in February,

offering hip-hop yoga, commemorating Black History Month and National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness, and a mix-and-mingle drag paint party, to name a few. Sadly, the growing distance between our larger white LGBTQ community and LGBTQ communities of color is shown by how, for example, a health issue like HIV/AIDS—which was once an entire LGBTQ community problem—is now predominately impacting communities of color. LGBTQ people of African descent have focused not only on HIV/AIDS and same-sex marriage but also unemployment, housing, gang violence, and LGBTQ youth homelessness, to name a few.

### Montreal's protest

Then there was Montreal—my go-to place when I want to flee both my home in Massachusetts and the entire United States—which had their troubles last year at Pride, too.

Organizers of Black Queer Lives Matter (BQLM) disrupted the minute of silence during the parade because of Pride's whitewashing and complicity in the erasure of its Black and racialized origins during the Stonewall uprising of 1969.

This is part of BQLM's statement at Montreal Pride:

*"Pride Montréal will have to answer for its decisions, its actions or its lack of actions before the LGBTQ Montreal racialized communities. Recognize that we have created Pride and give it back to us!"*

Marsha P Johnson

Stormé DeLarverie

Sylvia Rivera

*Let the names of these trans and queer women resonate in your heads and be visible in all editions of Pride! They are trans and from POC communities and are at the origin of the Pride movement!"*

The growing distance between our larger and white LGBTQ community and LGBTQ communities of color has a historical antecedent, as BQLM showed. Many LGBTQ people of African descent and Latinos argue that the gulf between whites and themselves is also about how the dominant queer community rewrote and continued to control the history of Stonewall.

The Stonewall Riot of June 27-29, 1969 in Greenwich Village, New York City, started on the backs of working-class African-American and Latinx queers who patronized that bar. Those brown and Black LGBTQ people are not only absent from the photos of that night, but they are also bleached from its written history. Because of said bleaching, the beginnings of the LGBTQ movement post-Stonewall is an appropriation of a Black, brown, trans and queer liberation narrative. And it is the deliberate visible absence of these African-American, Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander LGBTQ people that makes it harder, if not near impossible, for LGBTQ communities to build trusted coalitions with white LGBTQ communities.

With the passings of hate-crime laws, the legalization of same-sex marriage across the country and other advancements, the LGBTQ movement has come a long way since the first Pride March in 1969. Many laud the distance the LGBTQ community has traveled in such a short time from a disenfranchised group on the fringe of the country's mainstream to a community now embraced. But not all members of our community have crossed the finish line. Some are waving the cautionary finger that within our com-

munity not all are equal. And Pride events can be public displays of those disparities.

Cultural acceptance is just one of a few things LGBTQ people of color do not experience from larger Pride events. Many Pride celebrations are predominately white, and many LGBTQ of color revelers experience social exclusion and invisibility within these spaces. After decades of Pride events where many LGBTQ people of color tried to be included and weren't, Black, Asian and Latino Pride events were born.

### Fighting among ourselves

As we feud with one another, this is what is at stake: erosion of our protections.

For example, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments for the case *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. The case, which has many of us on pins and needles, will be decided this Pride season, and a baker's right to refuse to make a wedding cake for same-sex couples on the grounds of religious freedom could be enshrined by the high court.

Since Donald Trump has taken office, there has been an erosion of LGBTQ civil rights under the guise of religious liberty. There are bills are called Religious Freedom Restoration Acts that are a backlash to the Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage. Lawmakers want to use them to codify LGBTQ discrimination to justify denying us services on state and local levels, and Trump is in lockstep with these discriminatory practices.

Meanwhile, transgender Americans being denied access to public lavatories is eerily reminiscent of the country's Jim Crow era, denying African-Americans access to lunch counters, water fountains, libraries, gas stations, theaters and even restrooms.

Then there are the laws passed in Kansas and Oklahoma that allow adoption agencies to refuse to place children in the homes of families they find morally reprehensible (a.k.a. us).

### Where do we go from here?

Where we go from here now, in my opinion, is in recognizing the need to network and build coalitions beyond one's immediate communities—thus, creating an intersectional social-justice activism throughout our cities and towns to foster healthy and wholesome communities.

While Pride events are still fraught with divisions, at their core, they are invitations for communities to connect their political activism with their celebratory acts of song and dance in its continued fight for justice. They should highlight the multicultural aspect of joy and celebration that symbolizes not only our uniqueness as individuals and communities but also affirms our varied expressions of LGBTQIA life in this country.



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## 'Delta' work

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WCT reviews From the Mississippi Delta.

Photo by Basil Clunie

### THEATER

# Disability storytelling aims to focus on intersectionality

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

"I didn't come out as a little person until I was 26."

So begins a story written and performed by Tekki Lomnicki, artistic director of Tellin' Tales Theatre and director of Divercity, Tellin' Tales fifth annual solo performance showcase whose cast members all have disabilities. This year's Divercity opens June 22 at Prop Thtr, and performers' disabilities include blindness, brain injury, Holt-Oram Syndrome, muscular degeneration and dwarfism.

However, Lomnicki didn't always feel at home in the disabled community.

"I always had this feeling that I was very alone," she said via phone. "I didn't bond with other people with disabilities because I was in a regular classroom." As an adult, she began teaching storytelling workshops to kids with disabilities and found a whole new world. "Once I started meeting these children, I realized they were just like me: fighting to make a difference in the world and be accepted, and I just had an instant bond with them."

Since then, she's become an advocate for people with disabilities. Lomnicki said, "[Before] I wanted to blend in and 'pass' as a person without a disability when it was, like, hello?"

Divercity's title, Lomnicki said, originated "be-

cause Chicago is such a diverse city and we are a diverse people." She added, "it has become a big hit for [Tellin' Tales] ... because there are not enough solo performers with disabilities out there that the general public sees."

Divercity performers develop their stories through a six-week workshop that Lomnicki leads. No acting experience is required and thanks to funding from the Chicago Community Trust, the workshop is free. Because space is limited, when choosing applicants Lomnicki "just did first come, first serve. Everybody's interesting, you know?"

During the six weeks, "[w]e worked on setting, characters, point of view ... and we also talked about conflict. Every story has to have a conflict and to me, that's key." Lomnicki also stressed the idea of "show, not tell" to workshop participants: "Doing a performance is not about narrative; it's about actually talking to someone and being natural." From there, performers adapted their stories for the stage. "[Our stories] are theater, not just where we stand up and tell them," Lomnicki explained. "It's music and lighting and blocking, and people moving around the stage."

Regarding intersectionality, Lomnicki said, "We as people are not only disabled." This year Divercity has its first-ever deaf performer, who attended workshop sessions with interpreters. "He's doing this fabulous piece about labels and

how [not to] put a label on him because he's so many different things!" Lomnicki enthused. "He doesn't like [to be called] hearing-impaired, he can't stand that. And he's gay and he doesn't like being labeled as a bear or a cub!"

Performer Derrick Dawson, a gay Black veteran who lost a leg from diabetes, will present a story on a life-changing job experience. "He was giving this anti-racism workshop and he realized by sharing how many different personas he had, how many different intersections of identity his life took, that he was reaching so many other people that he would have if he'd kept to himself," Lomnicki said. "This one woman came to him and said that just by being here and taking this class, she was able to tell her father she was bisexual."

According to Lomnicki, Dawson's story and several others inspired the intersectionality theme. "There are going to be people in that audience...

that are going to be touched by Derek's story and say 'hey yeah, I'm some of those things and it's okay: I may not be disabled, someone might say, but I am LGBTQ or I am a veteran or I am Black.'" Overall, Lomnicki said, intersectionality fits in well with Divercity's mission: to break down barriers between those with disabilities and those without. "We feel that once people hear the personal stories of someone with a disability, you see that we really have more than common than we don't," she said. "We are more alike than different."

**Tellin' Tales Theatre Presents: Divercity runs June 22-24 at Prop Thtr, 3502 N. Elston Ave. There will be an additional performance July 8 at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 5700 W. Midway Park. For more information, visit TellinTales.org.**



## THEATER REVIEW

## Don't Smoke in Bed

Playwright: Aurin Squire

At: Flat Iron Arts Building,  
1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: \$15-23; ChimeraEnsemble.com

Runs through: July 8

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Even in the most liberal of environments, interracial couples still face an uphill battle.

Not just with society and older generations, but within themselves: How do you navigate different upbringings, cultures and beliefs and forge a meaningful relationship of which many still don't approve? Aurin Squire, a Brooklyn-based playwright who's also written for the television shows *This is Us* and *The Good Fight*, deftly explores such a marriage in *Don't Smoke in Bed*. Chimera Ensemble hosts the U.S. premiere, which features a strong performance by Kai A. Ealy and

an intelligent portrait of an interracial marriage in modern-day New York.

*Don't Smoke in Bed* is a series of webcam interviews with Richard (Ealy), who was born and raised in Jamaica, and Sheryl (Nicole Fabbri), a woman of Irish heritage originally from Ohio. Now academics with a shared love of Victorian nursery rhymes, the two met at a party, married and are expecting their first child. They've also been chosen for a story series in *The New York Times*, which could possibly lead to a book deal. Over several interviews with an unseen journalist, Richard and Sheryl reveal the obstacles that continue to exist in their marriage. Neither set of parents fully approve, and both husband and wife have their own private worries and fears. Can they make it work?

Over a fast-paced one hour and 40 minutes, Squire's script dives deep into Richard and Sheryl's minds, their past experiences and their present challenges that love may or may not be able to overcome. Director Chika Ike gives each character equal respect and care, acknowledging



Kai A. Ealy and Nicole Fabbri in *Don't Smoke in Bed*.

Photo by Eric Kirkes

their places in the world as well as their blind spots. Intimacy designer Gaby Labotka (assisted by Courtney Abbott) creates a gorgeous and fully

believable marital relationship, from the insatiable early days to the utter exhaustion of being parents coupled with desire. It's during the more intimate moments that we feel completely drawn into Richard and Sheryl's world, the ups that keep them together and the downs that may drive them apart. Milo Blue's set design beautifully recreates a New York City bedroom, pretty and compact, and the production's open captioning makes the production accessible to more audience members.

Ealy is a wonderfully flawed Richard, bringing life to every word, and though Fabbri tries her best, she can't quite keep up with Ealy and her Sheryl occasionally comes off as whiny. It doesn't help that both actors noticeably dropped several lines on opening night and seemed less than fully comfortable with the challenging script. Hopefully this will improve as the run progresses, because *Don't Smoke in Bed* is an important play, showcasing the complexities of a marriage with the added pressure of "performing" for a national audience.

## THEATER REVIEW

## From the Mississippi Delta

Playwright: Endesha Ida Mae Holland, Ph.D.

At: Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre at the  
Noyes Cultural Arts Ctr, 927 Noyes St.,  
EvanstonTickets: \$15; Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre;  
847-866-5915

Runs through: July 1

BY KAREN TOPHAM

There is something marvelous about any story of overcoming a difficult life and finding your joy. There is something even more marvelous when the protagonist is a Black woman in the United

States. Endesha Ida Mae Holland, Ph.D., tells one such story in the autobiographical play *From the Mississippi Delta*. This inspirational story follows Holland from childhood through her successful playwright career, and it also allows us to meet some of the people who influenced her along the way.

From the *Mississippi Delta* is told by three actresses—Asia Jackson, Jazzma Pryor and Elana Elyce—accompanied by harmonica played by Nukwi Nu. Stories from Holland's past and her mother's life (and death) are told and dramatized by the three women taking on multiple roles as well as occasional singing. The key characters of Holland and her mother, Ida Mae (better known as Aunt Baby or The Second Doctor Lady for her midwiving skills), are generally handled by Jackson and Elyce, respectively, though there are times within the play that Pryor also plays Hol-

land and even one where she is played chorally by all three women.

If that sounds potentially confusing, don't worry: It isn't. The structure works very well in conveying both the emotional atmosphere and the stories themselves. (As far as actual atmosphere is concerned, the Noyes Cultural Arts Center air conditioning was down on opening weekend, simulating an accidental transportation to the humid delta itself. The AC will be working by the second weekend.)

Director Tim Rhoze handles the material deftly, and the performances and multiple characterizations he gets from his cast are remarkable. All three are excellent at physicalizing different characters, many of whom can be instantly identified, once we have met them, through facial and vocal contortions. This is a real actors' play. Rhoze's simple set allows them free rein to in-

vent, letting us get to know these people and their struggles intimately.

It is also a powerful historical document. This is a story that begins in the mid-20th century and takes us through to the present. During the playwright's lifetime, she has dealt with the Klan and other racist groups, Jim Crow, and other mechanisms designed to hold Black Americans down, and she was part of the dawn of the civil rights movement.

Despite the heat and humidity inside the theatre, this production fascinated me from start to finish. I'm certain that it will be even stronger in a cooler room when the performers don't have to contend with loud fans running.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**The Opportunities of Extinction**, Broken Nose Theatre at the Den, through June 30, A smart low-key trio of actors lend a glimmer of hope to Sam Chanse's discussion of climate change and the coming apocalypse on a cozy campsite in the Mojave desert. MSB

**Southern Gothic**, Windy City Playhouse, extended through July 29. A summer birthday party deep in magnolia country wouldn't be complete without a few flies buzzing around the room—and that's where WE come in. MSB

**The Displaced**, Haven Theatre at the Den, through July 1. A new home in Pilsen proves hell a problematic for a young couple looking to mend their relationship and start afresh. Insightful, funny and scream-out-loud scary, Isaac Gomez's thriller is demonically good. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge  
and Sullivan

## THEATER REVIEW

## The Wild Women of Planet Wongo

Playwright: Dave Ogrin (producer/music/  
lyrics), Ben Budick (lyrics) and Steve Mackes  
(book/lyrics)At: the Basement Chopin Theatre,  
1543 W. Division St.

Tickets: \$20-40; PlanetWongo.com

Runs through: July 14

BY REGINA VICTOR

The *Wild Women of Planet Wongo* is an immersive experience, best enjoyed with a group of enthusiastic friends and a couple of Wongotinis (vodka, tequila, midori and lime juice). If you get a little tipsy and accept that this is kind of a crazy *Jetsons-meets-Rocky-Horror* musical extravaganza right down to its antiquated gender norms, you'll have fun.

*Wild Women* comes from a successful run at Brooklyn's Fireproof and Parkside Lounge. Com-

poser Dave Ogrin has hired an all-Chicago cast and crew for the run here.

You'll be standing for the performance (although if you want to sit, they'll accommodate you) in the Chopin Theatre's basement, where the lobby is blacklit and filled with fun science toys and tiny astronaut and army figurines. Directly in front of you is a bar serving the aforementioned Wongotinis. If you drink and are not driving, go ahead and partake. The best moments of this show come when you're loose enough to put yourself in the midst of the action. This is not hard to do as the play moves through and around the crowd, with stage hands and cast members shuffling us around the area.

Upon arriving, you may be asked if you want to participate in a game show. I figured I was here for the experience and decided to take part. This slipped my mind as the play got underway, the audience following the goofy and dramatic male astronauts who broke into song and dance after crashing on Planet Wongo. There are varying vocal talents among the cast for sure, but standouts include Freya Falkenstein (Croquette), and Michael Hayden Sprenger

(Ric).

At first, the *Wild Women* seem to live up to their sex-crazed reputation. Eventually, you'll realize their motives are not what they seem. What these wild women really want? Man-slaves. During one of the breaks they called my name as a *Wongette-in-training* and invited me to come up and learn how to beat a man-slave. He was clearly out of it, and the Gameshow *Wongette* (Sissy Anne Quaranta) said that was not her preference because consent is what gets her going. Cool of them to say, but it made me feel a little weird, since he never awakened.

The game-show bit is fun. I won a man-slave (a very nice and enthusiastic audience member who even joined a dance number at one point). Audience engagement really makes this show. That said, I had issues with the messaging: *Wild Women's Book of Wongo* suggests consummating with rather than consuming your mate, and that men might be equal to women.

Still, the performers are working working their Wongs off to give you a good time. I'd recommend going at the start of a night out with a big group of friends.





Omar Metwally  
(Humayun) and  
Arian Moayed in  
*Guards of the Taj*.  
Photo by  
Michael Brosilow

## THEATER REVIEW

### Guards of the Taj

Playwright: Rajiv Joseph

At: Steppenwolf, 1650 N. Halsted St.

Tickets: 312-335-1650;

Steppenwolf.org; \$20-\$94

Runs through: July 22

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Legend has it that after India's Taj Mahal was completed in 1648, Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan ordered the hands cut off from the 20,000 laborers who constructed the world wonder. The tale is apocryphal but enduring, a brutal addenda to an epic monument dedicated to love and beauty.

With *Guards at the Taj*, playwright Rajiv Joseph explores the lore through the eyes of two low-level imperial guards, the unlucky pair assigned to enact the Emperor's barbarous orders. The shock value inherent to their duties is unavoidable, but in director Amy Morton's staging, atrocity is—amazingly—not what you'll remember most. There's no question that the violence onstage is graphic and profoundly disturbing. But equally strong is the 80-minute drama's exploration of beauty, friendship and the plight of decent, common folkx snared in a nightmare they have no chance of escaping or combatting.

For guards and lifelong friends Humayun (Omar Metwally) and Babur (Arian Moayed), the avoidance of evil is an unaffordable luxury. Their lives are defined by intractable systems of caste, economics and the dictums of an immeasurably cruel ruler. Unbearable guilt is not worst thing they grapple with in the wake of their ruthless obligations. Babur is tortured by the certainty that in carrying out orders, he has killed beauty itself.

The questions Joseph juxtaposes are enthrall-

ing, even if you'd rather not confront them. Can beauty truly exist when it is inextricably woven into unforgivable savagery? As Joseph depicts with exquisite effectiveness, the Taj's beauty was literally blinding when sunrise hit its façade (gorgeous work by lighting designer David Weiner.) It stuns Babur and Humayun into wonderstruck silence. For a moment, they exist in perfection.

But the moment fades. After that glorious dawn, Babur and Humayun are left to struggle with beauty's cost.

The first thing that hits you is the foreboding, monolithic wall Babur and Humayun stand before. Set designer Tim Mackabee's structure is a sea of battered, implacable gray, a barrier as forbidding and opaque any border wall in the contemporary United States. When it hinges up to reveal what lies behind, the audience is hurled into beauty's opposite: Irrevocable, wanton destruction.

Beyond the wall, Macakbee's set is ankle deep in blood, the wreckage of countless human lives strewn like garbage in the syrupy crimson sludge. Humayun and Babur are soaked, their clothes sticky with blood, their hair matted in damp clumps, their skin defaced by crimson smears.

Both men are unforgettable. You will come to care for both of them, and when they face soul-crushing loss, the pain is acute. Moayed's Babur is a gentle spirit, prone to intelligent flights of fancy and irreverent jokes. As Humayun, Metwally is the sterner, more cautious and more pragmatic of the two, a man able to compartmentalize monstrosity if that's the price of keeping mind and body whole.

Morton's direction relentlessly illustrates just what that price entails, mentally, physically and spiritually. The final moments of *Guards* are suffused with light and love. Beauty—in forms physical or ephemeral—survives. But so does cruelty. In Joseph's words, their intersection is an unforgettable merger of joy and despair.

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## SPOTLIGHT

A splatter anthology with a queer point of view? Bring on the blood. In El Bear Productions' **Mr. Moral's Guide to Surviving Dark Times Without Losing It**, audiences are treated to a quintet of playlets hosted by a Mr. Rodgers-adjacent master of ceremonies. Set in a time when bigotry is seen as downright presidential, the stories by Becca C. Browne and John Fisher are equal parts horror and humor. It runs through June 24 at the Flat Iron Arts Building, 1579 N. Milwaukee Ave.; \$15; <https://www.facebook.com/elbearwasthere>.



Caption: Photo by Becca C. Browne



## THEATER

# Sullivan, Illinois: A theater and a thruple thrive

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

If a theater survives five years, a theater has reached a major milestone. A decade? That's a relative rarity. Endure for 60 years and it's not so much of a stretch to say you've defied astronomical odds and all common sense. Especially if you are located in the heart of Amish country more than two hours away from a major city (in this case, Chicago).

Put Sullivan, Illinois' Little Theatre on the Square squarely in odds-defying category. Since its inaugural production of *Brigadoon* in 1957, the 418-seat Equity theater in tiny Sullivan, Illinois (population just over 6,000 at the last census) has endured.

## The man behind the curtain

It's tough to imagine the Little Theatre without the round-the-clock ministrations of John Stephens, 40, who this year celebrates a decade as the venue's executive director and producer.

"I feel like we do sometimes have to work a little harder than big-city theaters, both to get audiences and draw talent. People who had started here have gone on to Broadway, and the major regional theaters," Stephens said. "I love spotting talented people early, and giving them a chance to shine."

This year's six-show season started with *Million Dollar Quartet* (ended June 17), and continues with *Hello Dolly* (June 20–July 1), *Annie* (July 18–29), *Young Frankenstein* (Aug. 1–12) and finally *Noises Off* (Aug. 15–26). The annual holiday show follows in December.

## Of thruples and Astoria Weed

Stephens' affection for Sullivan extends beyond the theater's walls. The Millikin University music education major lives in a Victorian mansion (about the same price as a one-bedroom in Boystown if local real-estate listings are to be believed) with his husband of 15 years, Timmy Valentine. For six years, Valentine and Stephens have been in a thruple that includes Tyler Moser.

While Stephens tends to the theater, Moser and Valentine run the thruple's Astoria Soap Company, a line of luxury bath items they make in their home. The all-vegan Astoria products range from whimsical soaps ("Clown Repellent" and "Werewolf Moon" are popular, as is the hemp oil-infused "Astoria Weed") to more traditionally scented/infused lip balms, moisturizers and lotions.

"Our house always smells wonderful," said Stephens.

## Defying demographics

Sullivan doesn't initially seem like the typical town where non-traditional relationships, Equity theater and high-end, weed-themed toiletries line would flourish. The town is the county seat of Moultrie County, where Donald Trump garnered 77.1 percent of the vote in 2016. Demographics, however, don't always live up to assumptions about them.

"It's not an issue, being in a thruple. We're not a secret. People just accept us," said Stephens. "I don't go around talking about who's in what bed, but I think people kind of know. It's honestly not a big deal."

## The offstage influence of Betty Grable and friends

Since its inception, the theater itself has been an integral part of shaping attitudes in Sullivan, according to Dr. Beth Shreve's *The Little Theatre on the Square: Four Decades of a Small-Town Equity Theatre*. The 2000 hardcover talks about the



**Tyler Moser, John Stephens and Timmy Valentine with products from their Astoria Company Store line.**

Courtesy of Timmy Valentine

theater's origins as a for-profit "star" venue—a place where touring celebrities were featured starring in short runs of classic plays. Shreve writes that the influx of actors and other stage folks interacted with the townies, leading Sullivan to deal with issues such as homophobia and racism a lot more regularly and sooner than many other small Midwestern towns.

Started in 1957 by John Little, the 16 Street Harrison Street theater was a commercial venture through 1978. Close to 200 stars performed there—Mickey Rooney, Alan Alda, Ann Miller, Don Ameche, Betty Grable, John Carradine, Leonard Nimoy and Forrest Tucker among them. The theater went non-profit in 1981. During Stephens' tenure, it expanded to its six-show season.



**The Little Theatre on the Square, after a 2004 renovation.**

Photo from the Sullivan Chamber & Economic Development

## Damn the tornadoes

Stephens takes the old "show-must-go-on" credo to extremes. "We're in tornado alley," he noted. "Unexpected things can happen." When a storm cut the theater's power mid-show several years ago, the cast finished the production with flashlights and no microphones. Stephens recalls huddling with the cast and crew in the building's basement during a tornado—and finishing rehearsal after it had passed over.

The Little Theatre is a lean enterprise—the entire season comes in every year at around \$1 million. That might sound like a lot but it isn't, not for Equity theater. According to an NPR report, it took roughly \$87 million to stage *Harry Potter*. At Chicago's larger Equity houses, expenses for a single musical such as the Goodman's lavish *Brigadoon* can hover close to the \$1 million mark.

## Naughty, not dirty

Ticket sales account for less than half the theater's revenue, something Stephens became keenly aware of during the three years he spent in the theater's marketing department.

"Programming a season can be tricky," he said. "We try to do a mix of family-friendly shows, and then at least one that's a little bit edgier. I always say our audiences like naughty, but not dirty. So this year, for instance, we've got *Young Frankenstein*, definitely not a family show. I mean, there's a whole song about 'don't dare touch our tits', (*Don't Touch*)." One year we did *Hair*," he added. "We did a matinee for seniors where, after a lot of debate and an abundance of caution, we decided not to do the nude scene. People complained that the scene had been cut."

## Extrovert in action

For Stephens, ensuring the theater thrives financially isn't just about programming. It's about cultivating relationships with the people of Sullivan, and those that travel from as far as Indianapolis and St. Louis to see Little Theatre shows.

"It sounds trite, but it really is all about reaching out and meeting people," Stephens said. "And I love to make people smile. Good theater can

do that. So can just being friendly." A veteran of countless Chamber of Commerce luncheons and tourism programs, Stephens says he enjoys promotional duties. It's tough to imagine the theater surviving if he didn't: Every year, he raises roughly \$450,000 of that \$1 million budget. Combined with ticket sales and the theater's educational programs, he keeps things in the black.

## The secret value of (fake) hairdryers

In 2016, Stephens launched an additional \$1.2 capital campaign to pay for refurbishments to the theater. He wants to build a scene and costume shop, and install a state-of-the-art movie screen. "Then we can program classic movies too. We'll truly be a 52-a-week operation," he said. He's about \$700,000 toward his goal.

He also wants additional storage space, which would help expand the Little Theatre's capacity to rent out costumes and scenery. "We have literally thousands of set pieces and costumes we could rent out. It doesn't make sense, for example, for a local community theater to build a whole beauty salon from scratch for *Steel Magnolias*. We have all the chairs, all the dryers."

## S.T.A.R. power

The educational wing of the theater draws interest as well. Stephens estimates that some 275 students are involved in the theater arts and dance-classes. There's also a touring program—Students' Theatre Arts Reach, or S.T.A.R.—that takes kids' shows on the roads. Little Theatre records estimate that some 130,000 people have taken advantage of the S.T.A.R. shows.

For Stephens, it all comes down to making people happy. "There is no greater high than hearing an audience laugh or applaud," he said. "For me, it's always been about making the audience feel good, and giving them an escape. People want that. They need it. And I hope we can give that to them."

For more information about the Little Theatre on the Square, go to [TheLittleTheatre.org](http://TheLittleTheatre.org) or call 217-728-7375. For more information about Amish Country and other attractions in and around Sullivan, visit [SullivanIL.us](http://SullivanIL.us) or call 217-728-4223.





Pumpkins and buggy in Sullivan, Illinois.

Photo from the Sullivan Chamber & Economic Development

## SIDEBAR

### Activities in Sullivan: Boutiques, antiques, beaches and more

From theatergoers to campers to shoppers, Sullivan caters to tourists.

The Little Theatre on the Square is the marquee attraction, but there area is burgeoning with additional options. Read on for things to do and places to go. (For more info, go to [sullivan-chamber.com](http://sullivan-chamber.com).)

—The Great Pumpkin Patch and the Homestead Bakery: 1749A CR 1900 North, Arthur Illinois (See website for directions. FYI: Your GPS will not work here. Don't use it. You will get lost.)

[The200acres.com](http://The200acres.com)  
217-543-2394

Pumpkins from the family-owned farm have festooned the White House and the Martha Stewart Show, but there is far more than pie and jack-o'-lantern supplies here. Bluegrass and folk bands perform regularly; come fall, there are corn mazes and a "haunted" barn. Year-round, people can visit the restored schoolhouse museum; get artisanal seeds among a selection of more than 100 varieties of squash, gourds and pumpkins; and visit with (live) llamas, pot-bellied pigs and sheep. And who wouldn't want to check out the massive Wall O'Squash and the (arguably) World's Tallest Corn Shock? For fuel, stop at the property's Homestead Bakery (217/543-3700) and stock up on a mouthwatering array of cookies, pies and 18 varieties of angel food cake.

—Lake Shelbyville  
[LakeShelbyville.com](http://LakeShelbyville.com)  
217-774-2244

There are 172 miles of shoreline to explore, as well as 50 miles of hiking/biking trails surrounding the deep blue lake that spans Moultrie and Shelbyville counties. Boating, fishing and camping are all popular here—or, people can just bake on the beach. For lakeside dining, check out the North End Grill, just across from Sullivan Beach. Nearby Wolf Creek State Park offers equestrian trails. Not into camping? There are cabins and luxe B&Bs dotting the area.

—Shopping, history and Amish goods  
<https://www.amishcountryofillinois.com/see-do>

[Sullivan-chamber.com](http://Sullivan-chamber.com)  
217-728-4223

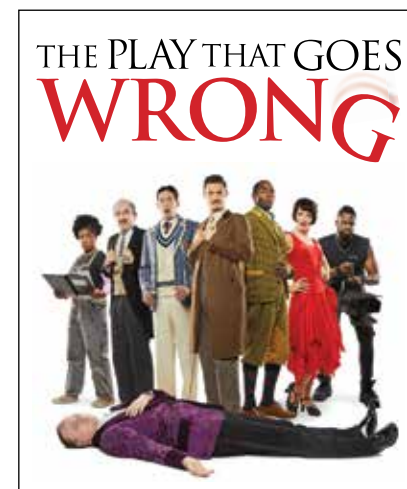
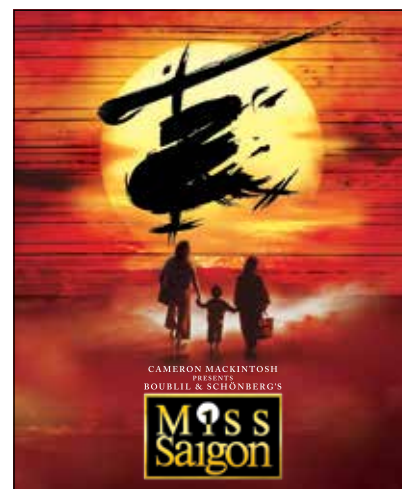
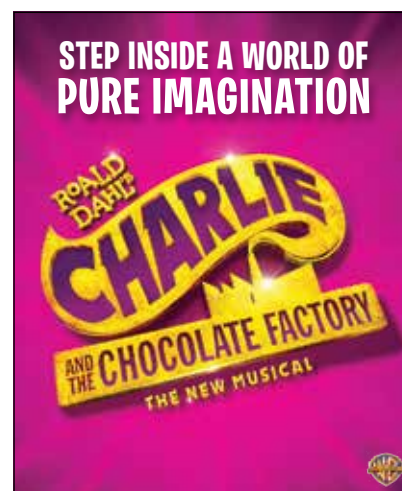
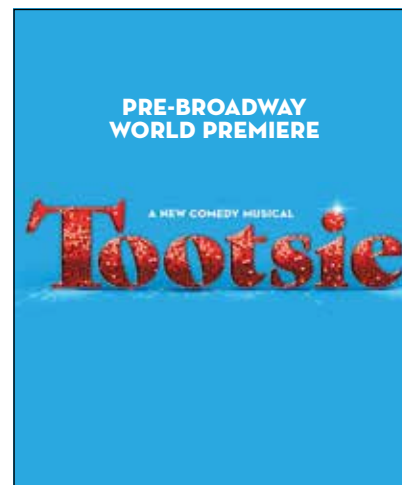
Downtown Sullivan and the surrounding towns of Arthur and Arcola are home to vintage shops, antique emporiums and Amish cottage businesses where you can buy locally made soap, furniture and foodstuffs. History lovers can visit the Moultrie County Courthouse and Moultrie County Historical and Genealogical Society (117 E. Harrison St., Sullivan, 217-728-4085) The neo-classical courthouse is listed on the National Historic Registry and has some amazing murals inside the rotunda. Abraham Lincoln worked this court circuit when he was an attorney, spending much time in Moultrie County.

—Catey Sullivan

**NOTE:** More about Sullivan, Illinois, is on page 52.

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# Steppenwolf gala raises more than \$1.3M

Almost 700 civic, cultural and business leaders joined Steppenwolf Theatre Company's ensemble for the 2018 Gala recently at 1340 N. Cherry Ave., raising more than \$1.3 million for Steppenwolf's artistic, educational and community programming.

Rainn Wilson, known for playing Dwight Schrute on the U.S. version of TV's *The Office*, emceed the event. Comedian, actor, director and producer Chris Rock—who starred in the world premiere Broadway production of *The Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat*, which Steppenwolf Artistic Director Anna D. Shapiro directed—joined as the guest auctioneer alongside Christie's Robbie Gordy.

A moving tribute to ensemble member John Mahoney, who passed away earlier this year, was given by longtime friend and actor Kelsey Grammer, who played the title character in the NBC series *Frasier*, opposite Mahoney. Shapiro continued the tribute by sharing memories of John and his deep love for Steppenwolf, followed by a video montage.

In addition, a video was shared that documented Steppenwolf for Young Adults' community partnerships, specifically with BUILD, Inc. a non-profit that works to prevent at-risk youth from joining gangs as well as working with gang-involved youth.

Visit [Steppenwolf.org](http://Steppenwolf.org).

## Applications wanted for women's comedy fest

Stage 773 Executive Producer Jill Valentine and co-producer Liz McArthur are accepting applications for the 7th Annual Chicago Women's Funny Festival, taking place Aug. 23-26 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

The Chicago Women's Funny Festival features all comedic art forms, including stand-up, sketch, solo, vaudeville, improvisational, music and more. The event has more than 80 shows, featuring more than 500 performers.

Applications for participation may be sent in through July 1 by visiting [ChicagoWomensFunnyFestival.com](http://ChicagoWomensFunnyFestival.com).

Tickets for the 7th Annual Women's Funny Festival are \$15 each and will go on sale July 23; visit [Stage773.com](http://Stage773.com), call 773-327-5252 or visit the Stage 773 box office.



From left: Kelsey Grammer, Executive Director David Schmitz, Chris Rock and Anna D. Shapiro at the Steppenwolf gala.

Photo by Jaclyn Simpson

## Joffrey's Paris debut June 25-27

For the first time as a company, Chicago's Joffrey Ballet will make its Paris debut at the invitation of *Les Etes de la Danse* ("The Summer of Dance"), an annual festival that welcomes dance companies, artists and choreographers from around the world to Europe each summer for a month of performances.

This year, the festival will present *Hommage a Jerome Robbins* ("Tribute to Jerome Robbins"), a program honoring the 100th anniversary of Robbins' birth.

Performances for the Joffrey engagement take place June 25-27, when the company will present two works Robbins choreographed ("Interplay" and "Glass Pieces") as part of a shared bill with the New York City Ballet.

See [Joffrey.org](http://Joffrey.org).

## Artistic director to depart Greenhouse

The Greenhouse Theater Center (GTC) announced that Artistic Director Jacob Harvey will depart the Lincoln Park institution at the end of June.

Harvey joined GTC in January 2016. In 2016-17, he curated and produced the Solo Celebration! Series, a festival featuring 16 new plays and events by and for solo artists from all over the Chicago theater community and the world. In 2017-18, Harvey programmed GTC's first full subscription season, featuring three full productions, including the hit *Machinal*, a remount of the award-winning solo show *Rose* and the current Chicago premiere of *Birds of a Feather*.

Among other things, Harvey cultivated educational partnerships with Chicago-area high schools and colleges to mentor the next generation of theater artists and audiences.

## ABYT's 'Scary Stories' July 14-22

The About Face Theatre Youth Theatre Ensemble is presenting the world premiere of *Scary Stories to Save Your Life*—horror-inspired tales informed by the social and political anxieties facing today's LGBTQ+ youth, and devised and performed by members of the About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble.

*Scary Stories* will play July 14-22 at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Tickets (for \$20 or pay-what-you-can) are at [AboutFaceTheatre.com](http://AboutFaceTheatre.com) or 773-784-8565.

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July 1 - August 25

### Hurricane Damage

By Kevin Brofsky. Directed by Paul J Cook  
August 1 - August 26

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Bob Mackie's sketches of outfits in The Cher Show.

## THEATER

# 'The Cher Show' takes center stage

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

File this in the dreary catalogue of sentences most of us mere muggles will never be able to say: "The best conversations with Cher are the ones that happen after you've been hanging out at her house for four or five hours and she just starts meandering. Her stories are so amazing. Of course, so is her house."

Director Jason Moore, 46, continues with just the faintest glimmer of wonder. "My life right now is something 12-year-old me never could have imagined."

At present, the life of the two-time Tony nominee (Avenue Q; Shrek the Musical) is all but wholly consumed by shepherding The Cher Show to the stage. Opening June 28 in Chicago (previews have started June 12), The Cher Show is slated to move to Broadway in November. Alongside book writer Rick Elice (Jersey Boys, The Addams Family) and choreographer Christopher Gattelli (Newsies) Moore is tackling the epic endeavor with a mix of awe, giddy enthusiasm, and theatrical savvy.

The Cher Show features 30 songs, all covered or debuted by Cher over the course of a six-decade career that includes an Oscar (Moonstruck), numerous Grammys and an Emmy. From 1965 pop ("The Beat Goes On") to disco and beyond ("Take

Me Home") to an eye-popping residency in Las Vegas, Cher's powers of self-reinvention make Madonna look like a rank amateur.

Despite a score packed with the likes of "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves," "Cherokee Nation," "Dark Lady" and "Believe," The Cher Show is a marked departure from the tried-and-true jukebox-musical format. Elice has crafted a book that turns Cher's life into a variety show. The songs are contextual rather than chronological.

The Cher Show leaves traditional jukes behind in other substantial ways. For example: There is no "Cher" character in the Cher Show. Instead Three women (Stephanie J. Block, Teal Wicks and Micaela Diamond) play Star, Lady and Babe—representations of the iconic singer and actress at various times in her life and career.

"There's no character named Cher because no one can ever be Cher," Moore said. "If you have only one name, you are a person nobody else should even try to be. There are so many sides to Cher that we know, this format helps explore them. We all have different versions of ourselves. They make up the internal monologue of all of our lives," he said.

Moore is an unlikely star in the musical theater firmament. "I'm from Fayetteville, Arkansas," he said. "Growing up, there was no musical theater there. 'Variety shows—Carol Burnett, Donny and Marie, and Sonny and Cher—they were my access

to musicals and sketch comedy and big, fun, outrageous costumes," Moore said.

"Donny and Marie were very wholesome, but Cher was always sarcastic and biting. I loved that. This was back when we only had three channels, so everybody was watching the same things. I always kind of felt like Cher was something everybody had in common.

"As a gay boy in the South, I was instinctively drawn to anybody who was able to be themselves fully, wholly and unapologetically. She inspired me with her authenticity. Even in the middle of a million sequins, Cher's true self shines through. That, to me, is her biggest superpower," Moore said.

"She didn't look like a lot of other stars," he added. "She had dark hair, darker skin, didn't grow up with money. She had dyslexia. Her ability to be true to herself made her someone people—especially outsiders—felt like they could connect with. And to me, connection is the heart of entertaining."

Moore has travelled to Los Angeles four times over the past year to interview Cher. She's a natural raconteur, Moore said, and deeply inquisitive about tackling yet another musical genre. Cher attended two readings and a workshop of The Cher Show, and while she's decidedly not micro-managing the production, she's deeply involved.

"She's formidable and opinionated and smart and curious and generous," Moore said. "She's totally this larger than life diva warrior, but she's also very candid and casual. She's open. She's

lived basically her entire life on camera. She is who she is, all the time, off-stage or on."

Those looking for to The Cher Show for Cher's iconic looks won't be disappointed, Moore said, including anyone who wants a replay of the unforgettable Bob Mackie ensembles Cher wore to the 1984 and 1986 Oscars. Mackie is the show's costume designer.

There are some costumes and elements within the life of Cherilyn Sarkisian, 72, that didn't make it into The Cher Show. The "war bonnet" made famous in the "Half Breed" and "Cherokee Nation" era will be seen but not worn. "We've all grown more sensitive to cultural appropriation" since the 1970s, Moore noted. "Half Breed," however, shows up in the program's song listings.

Cher herself will be in town for the opening of The Cher Show—and perhaps on her way to collecting the final letter to complete the EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) status. Whether she'll show up in a custom Bob Mackie creation is anybody's guess.

For Moore, the musical has been a gift.

"For whatever reason, Cher deemed me a worthy tennis partner. And she likes playing artistic tennis. That gave me confidence," he said. "Working with her has been rewarding in a way you hope all collaborations will be. Whether you're 12 or 40."

**The Cher Show runs through Thursday, July 12, at the Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St. Tickets start at \$33; visit [CherOnBroadway.com](http://CherOnBroadway.com) or [BroadwayInChicago.com](http://BroadwayInChicago.com).**

## MORE ON SULLIVAN Reminiscing about Sullivan's theater

VIEWPOINT BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

When I was 19 years old I was an Equity Apprentice at the Little Theatre-on-the-Square.

At that time, being an apprentice was how you became a member of Actors Equity Association, the actors' and stage managers' union. The Little Theatre was the only Equity theater between Greater Chicago and St. Louis.

Guy Little Jr., the producer, was in his late 20s and a young husband/father. Some years later, he came out and had many happy years with a partner in Sullivan. His parents still were alive and active in the theater's office. Mr. Little was a prosperous farmer and our opening night parties were at the farm house, a short distance outside town. After Mr. and Mrs. Little passed away, Guy added an indoor swimming pool and converted the house to a luxury B&B ... called The Little House on the Prairie, of course!

The Little Theatre season offered plays that ran one week each, and musicals that ran two weeks—all with stars from film and TV. As an apprentice I built sets, worked as a stage hand and sometimes distributed posters to shops in all the nearby towns. I also was in the chorus of the musicals and sometimes had a bit part.

Our musicals that season were 110 in the Shade, Here's Love and Camelot. I was paid \$20/week and took home \$18.27 after the So-

cial Security deduction. For \$5/week I shared a large, cool, dry basement room with two other male apprentices. Our landlord, Ruby, was in the church choir and I loved to listen to her and other choir members rehearse upstairs. I didn't eat well, but an uncle from nearby Decatur came twice to see shows, and took me out for a buffet feast at the local golf club. Also, the post-show hang-out—a bar/restaurant called Jibby's—thought I was 21, so I could buy a beer for 15 cents a glass and usually someone ordered a pizza to share.

Stars that summer included old film great Pat O'Brien and his wife, Eloise, the legendary John Carradine (father of Keith and David), Betty Ann Grove, strapping singer Peter Palmer, Julia Meade, soap heroine Rosemary Prinz, TV star Edd Byrnes and Tab Hunter (in the title role in Mr. Roberts). I was several years from coming out, but I remember that Hunter was the most beautiful man I'd ever seen! He was an avid horseman, so Guy arranged for him to ride daily at a local farm. He worked capably and professionally as Mr. Roberts.

John Carradine performed the title role in Dracula (the original play) which ends with Dracula in his coffin as a stake is driven through his heart. Carradine stood 6'2," so the coffin was large. Carradine took his bows from the coffin, sitting up in it and then lying down again. For his second curtain call he would hush the audience and say, in a deep, serious voice, "Now what is this? If I'm alive, what am I doing here? And if I'm dead, why do I have to wee-wee?" It always got him a third curtain call!





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# Black lesbian exhibit opens with filmmaker Yvonne Welbon

Curator Kru and 10FOLD Productions are now presenting the Black Lesbian Archives Exhibit, which opened June 14 at Affinity Community Services in Bronzeville.

The special guest was filmmaker and author Yvonne Welbon, who held a conversation with Kru about Welbon's new book, *Sisters in the Life*, which is about Black lesbian filmmakers.

Kru is an archivist, DJ and CEO of 10FOLD Productions. "The importance of exploring and preserving our history is more crucial than ever," she said.

The conversation ranged from Welbon's own filmmaking work to the groundbreaking influential work of African-American lesbians in cinema.

The exhibit that night included special memo-

rabilia from Gerber/Hart Library & Archives, plus extra copies of *BLACKlines*, sister publication to *Outlines*, which is now part of Windy City Times. *BLACKlines* was a monthly LGBTQ publication for African Americans in Chicago, and ran from the mid 1990s to early 2000s.

Also in attendance was openly lesbian mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot.

Upcoming events at Affinity, as part of the exhibit, include W.O.M.B. monthly poetry night on Thursday, June 21, 7-9 p.m.; a panel discussion on Tuesday, July 3, 6-8 p.m.; and a closing exhibit Friday, July 13, 6-8 p.m. It is located at 2850 S. Wabash Ave., behind the back of the building, with free parking.

**Below: Images from the exhibit.**

Photo by Tracy Baim



From left: Imani Rupert-Gordon, executive director of Affinity, with Kru (middle) and Yvonne Welbon.

Photo by Tracy Baim

## Virgin Hotels holds 'Artist Pride' event

Virgin Hotels tasted the rainbow by presenting an Artist Pride event June 15. The night was filled with colorful layered liquor shots, burlesque dancing, heartfelt singing and creative drag. Proceeds benefitted the It Gets Better Project that empowers LGBTQ youth.

Out singer Michael Blume performed several songs with a full band and back-up singers. The New Yorker had just returned from playing the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival. The last time he was in Chicago at Lincoln Hall was May 26 for a primarily straight audience as opener for the band Lawrence.

He told Windy City Times, "I was very aware that the audiences on that tour were mixed. I am a queer artist prancing around in over-

described the record title cynicism & sincerity as the world living in a dark time with Donald Trump as president and himself being cynical and judgmental. He went on to say that he also believes in unity and coming together for a better world.

When questioned about the new song "Maybe Love Is True," he said, "It is a critique of the love industrial complex. I am so over this traditional narrative of love and romance, but at the same time sometimes I want it. I roll my eyes at it, then I go home and want a boyfriend."

Blume said Pride Month has involved a lot of activity around his work this year: "It is exciting for queer artists to have space to be seen and heard. Pride month is a time to celebrate who we are and reflect on how far we have to go. Trans women are being murdered and the community is not safe, sometimes. We have a



**Left: Michael Blume. Right: Shea Coulee.**  
Photos by Jerry Nunn



alls asking with my lyrics 'Are you mad that I'm gay?' I talk about sucking dick and justice. I see their jaws on the floor. Do they like me or is it because I am bearded lady? It feels like a circus act sometimes."

Blume discussed new music: "We had an EP release show at Stonewall a few weeks ago. I have been working on the music for over a year and there are more songs coming." He

long way to go."

The night's festivities concluded with RuPaul Drag Race alumna Shea Coulee lip-synching to "I'm Every Woman." Coulee is featured on Blume's track "R U Mad" on the just released album cynicism & sincerity. The two headed to Roscoe's Tavern to perform together later the same night.

Visit [ItGetsBetter.org](http://ItGetsBetter.org).

WINDY CITY TIMES'

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GRAYSON ALEXANDER



MYAH BROWN



DELWYN CAMP

## GRAYSON ALEXANDER

Grayson, 19, is a rising sophomore at Loyola University Chicago studying political science and sociology-anthropology. In 2017, he became the first transgender page in the Illinois state Senate's history and was a key advocate for the Vital Records Modernization Act.

Currently a member of Equality Illinois's Community Advisory Group, an intern for Illinois state Rep. Ann Williams and friend of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Grayson continues his involvement with LGBT activism and passion for youth-inclusive advocacy.

**Did you know?** Grayson first wrote his personal platform at 8 years old on his grandmother's coffee table, after watching an Obama campaign speech.

## MYAH BROWN

Myah, 27, was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago in the Englewood area, where being Black and Trans continues to be a struggle. No stranger to homelessness and having to drop out of high school in the ninth grade to help raise her little sisters and brothers, Myah proved to be able to overcome hardships. Since then, Myah has become a health outreach specialist at the University of Chicago Medicine Chicago

Center for HIV Elimination (CCHE) and program director for Brave Space Alliance (BSA), the first Black trans-ed organization on the South Side of Chicago; through these roles, she has helped others like herself overcome similar obstacles.

**Did you know?** Being family-oriented and having a passion for life, people, and the performing arts and attaining many leadership qualities developed early on, Myah became not only mother of the Chicago Chapter of the House of Mizrahi but also, in 2017, was deemed Legendary for the Femme Queen Vogue Performance category.

## DELWYN CAMP

Devlyn, 25, is the creator and host of the podcast *Mattachine: A Serialized Story in Gay History*, available on iTunes and recently featured in the Chicago Tribune. They are also the producer and co-host of *They & Them*, a queer talk show on Que4 1680 AM, and a writer of middle-grade historical fantasy. They studied writing & producing television at Columbia College Chicago.

**Did you know?** Devlyn has been looking for their aunt Maris Crane since 2004. If anyone has seen Seattle socialite Maris Crane, please contact Devlyn. (This name is a reference to the TV show *Frasier*.)



TONANTZIN CARMONA



SARAH DAQUD



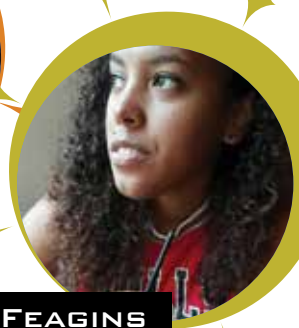
KA'RIEL GAITER



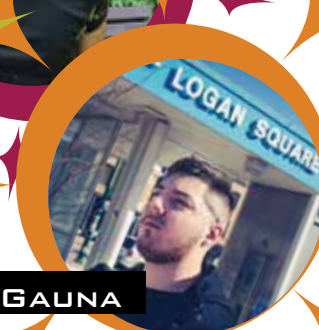
SKY CUBACUB



RAVEN FEAGINS



DAVID GAUNA



### TONANTZIN CARMONA

Tonantzin, 28, is the chief of policy for the Office of the City Clerk. In her current role, Tonantzin leads City Clerk Anna Valencia's citywide policy priorities, most notably in launching the Chicago Municipal ID program, known as the CityKey. The CityKey has been championed by advocates from the immigrant and LGBTQ communities and well as those experiencing homelessness. Because of Tonantzin's leadership, the CityKey program allows Chicago residents to self-designate their own gender, including a third-option, nonbinary; making Chicago the first municipality in Illinois to recognize a third-gender option.

Tonantzin previously served as U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren's deputy press secretary in Washington, D.C., as well as deputy policy director and director of the Office of New Americans at the Chicago mayor's office. In 2015, Tonantzin was recognized for her work in Crain's Chicago Business "20 in Their 20's." Tonantzin was raised in Chicago's Little Village and currently resides in Pilsen.

**Did you know?** Tonantzin is buying a couch for the first time in her life, at age 28.

### SKY CUBACUB

Sky, 26, is a non-binary Filipinx mermex from Chicago (with a certificate from Weeki Wachee Springs State Park to prove it!) and the creator of Rebirth Garments—a line of wearables for the full spectrum of gender, size and ability.

They are spearheading the QueerCrip dress reform movement that is based on claiming one's body through the use of bright colors, exuberant fabrics, and innovative design. They refuse to assimilate. Sky is also editor of The Radical Visibilty Zine, a magazine for QueerCrip Teens based off their manifesto, as well as a leader in anti-oppression accessibility workshops with Alison Kopit. For more information, visit RebirthGarments.com.

**Did you know?** Earlier this year, Sky took part in the Chicago's History Museum's Out at CHM event "Celebrating and Contextualizing Queer Fashion."

### SARAH DAQUD

Sarah is a 27-year-old Palestinian-Lebanese therapist, educator, social worker, and Chicago Dyke March Collective organizer. Since transitioning from investigative journalism to direct service, Sarah has dived into social work through several different avenues: per-

former in participatory educational theater, sexual assault crisis counselor, teaching artist in Chicago Public Schools, organizer and facilitator with the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, resource advocate at the Broadway Youth Center, and most recently, therapist at the Chicago Women's Health Center.

Sarah recently graduated from the University of Chicago with a masters in clinical social work, and has been awarded a grant from the Elton John AIDS Foundation to offer support and care to Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Paris this summer. Upon their return, Sarah will continue to provide affirming care and education to QT-BIPOC (queer, trans\*, Black, indigenous, people of color) from a harm-reduction lens. In our increasingly harmful world, Sarah is dedicated to supporting their community as they learn to love themselves, radically and unapologetically, reach their goals, live authentically and gain a deeper understanding of their histories, resilience and power.

**Did you know?** Sarah is a prison abolitionist, which means they work toward a world without prisons or police. #NoCopAcademy

### RAVEN FEAGINS

Raven, 25, is a storyteller with an interest in capturing the narratives of people of color, folks within LGBTQ+ communities, women and non-binary folks, young people and people living within the intersections of all these identities.

In 2015, Raven graduated from Columbia College Chicago, with a major in cultural studies and minor in women and gender studies, where they completed a capstone project focused on media representations of people living with HIV and the lack of representation of the epidemic among Black women.

This led Raven to eventually serve as an AmeriCorps member with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) where she realized a passion for advocating for comprehensive sex education as well as a draw towards capturing the stories of people within the HIV community in Chicago. Through that year and on, Raven has lead a sex-positive digital awareness campaign, Sexperts Slay, that promotes real and honest conversations about sexual health and has raised the voices of over two dozen individuals in her work.

Now, Raven works as the communications coordinator at AFC, where they hope to continue connecting with folks and provide a platform for underrepresented communities whose stories are often not heard.

**Did you know?** Raven loves any reason to dress up in costume.

One of her favorite outfits is that of Tina Belcher from Bob's Burgers!

### KA'RIEL GAITER

Ka'Riel, 28, currently works as the youth development specialist at the Broadway Youth Center (BYC), but has previously worked with YEPP (Youth Empowerment Performance Project), and with the Chicago youth storage initiative. At the BYC, Ka'Riel also does crisis intervention and creative program development that meet specific needs emerging in the space.

They always make sure the conversation is centering on young people from trauma-informed and transformative-justice lenses. They have no doubt they made this city safer for young people experiencing homelessness, and helped to expand their service lines and improve the quality of care and compassion they do receive at institutions.

**Did you know?** Ka'Riel's nickname is "Indigo Child."

### DAVID GAUNA

David, 25, is an artist, community advocate and mentor born in Chicago.

Co-founder of Creative Action, an after-school program that mentors high school youth in areas of self-resilience, community organizing and social awareness through the arts. Much of David's leadership growth comes from the Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action (ALMA) board, for whom David serves as the liaison for its associate board.

Although the job titles and the style of how David mentors young people has grown and shifted in different environments over the years, one tradition David has held onto with his youth is gifting them their first sketch artist journal and a pen. Inside the front cover of their journal is written David's mantra: "If it matters to you, write it down."

David currently spends his time as a case manager for El Rescate, serving LGBTQ and/or HIV-positive youth experiencing homelessness, while leading his art program across the city making sure his youth have the tools necessary to become successful. David feels grateful to have the opportunity to work with incredible youth.

**Did you know?** At 15, David's career goal was to become a famous actor.



**RYAN GARRISON**

Ryan, 29, is a non-profit leader who has lent his energy and enthusiasm to multiple LGBTQ organizations/LGBTQ aligned politicians throughout the midwest. As the current vice chair of the board of trustees for Chicago House and Social Service Agency, Ryan champions the mission of the organization to eradicate homelessness, poverty and marginalization of individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS.

Ryan works as a senior strategist for financial service clients at Imagination Publishing in Chicago.

Born in southwest Michigan, Ryan obtained a bachelor's degree in economics and Spanish from Michigan State University. While in Michigan, Ryan served as a board member of the OutCenter of southwest Michigan and chaired its largest fundraiser to date—The "OutOuting"—ensuring the center's financial viability for several years to come.

Ryan previously served on the board of directors of Howard Brown Health and remains active in myriad political campaigns throughout the city.

**Did you know?** Ryan's not-so-secret guilty pleasure is Summer Heights High. He has seen every episode at least 15 times.

**ISAAC GOMEZ**

Isaac, 27, is a Chicago-based playwright from El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

His play La Ruta will receive its world premiere at Steppenwolf Theater Company this fall. Other produced works include The Way She Spoke (Greenhouse Theatre Center, and others), Ofrenda (Albany Park Theater Project), The Soul of the World (Actors Theatre of Louisville) and The Displaced (Haven Theatre.) Current commissions include South Coast Repertory, Goodman Theatre, The Theatre School at DePaul University, Steep Theatre, and StepUp Chicago Playwrights. His plays have been developed at Steppenwolf, Primary Stages, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens, Northlight, and others.

He is a member of the Goodman Theatre's Playwrights Unit, resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists and an artistic associate with Victory Gardens. He is represented by The Gersh Agency & Circle of Confusion.

**Did you know?** Isaac had lunch with Snooki (from The Jersey Shore) in Florence, Italy? Yeah. It was crazy.

**ESTEPHANY GUZMAN**

A stand-up comedian and writer in Chicago, Estephany, 28, puts together showcases and open mics for performers and audiences alike to share space and empower each others' vision. They also write and create zines for Marimacha Monarca Press, a creative collective of queer and trans people of color who publish zines and who hold a monthly film series centering around queer folks of color.

Currently, in collaboration with the non-profit Cultura in Pilsen, they produce "FUSE Open Mic & Show," a mixed-arts open mic and show in Pilsen that features POC, women and non-gender conforming performers in Chicago. They are also the co-producer of Jaden Smith Open Mic at La Parada Cafe in Pilsen and "Orange Sosa" in Back of the Yards. Estephany intentionally produces suggested donation-based events in the South Side as an incentive to create accessible entertainment and performance space for POC women and LGBTQ folks. In addition, they are the co-producer of Mi Gente Showcase for the Chicago Public Library YouMedia programming.

They have been featured in BAPS: A Comedy Variety Showcase., Las Locas Comedy, The Corner Series.

**Did you know?** Estephany tells people she's an Olympic swimmer—but can barely do a lap.

**DANIEL R. HERNANDEZ**

Daniel, 28, is an owner and founder of The Attorneys at Walczak Hernandez, P.C. Upon graduating law school in 2016, Daniel set out on a mission to become a social entrepreneur. He and his law-firm partner, TJ Walczak, deliberately decided to create a cost-friendly flat-fee law firm.

Daniel practices in the areas of family law, real estate and LGBT rights. Daniel serves as the LGBT Committee Chair for the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois, is the vice-chair of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee of the Young Lawyers Division at the American Bar Association, and is the Hispanic National Bar Association's communications chair for the LGBT Division. He also serves on the board of directors at Between Friends, a non-profit organization that provides free educational and social services to victims of domestic violence.

Daniel previously worked for the civil rights firm of Loevy & Loevy, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, American Bar Association and the Hon. Pamela Meyerson. During his spare time, Daniel also volunteers for Gigi's Playhouse Chicago, an organization that provides free services to children with Down Syndrome.

**Did you know?** Daniel enjoys spending time with family, kickbox-

ing and participating in Stonewall Chicago's kickball league.

**AUGUST "GUS" HUPP**

August Hupp, 20, is an intersex+nonbinary trans person creating a safer, equitable and radically compassionate world through their work with young people.

On any given week, you might find Gus providing childcare through the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, or for families with LGBTQ children. They might be facilitating a panel of transgender students for an educational institute day, or presenting one of the workshops they co-created, Beyond The Binary. Gus might be working to support an event for Youth Outlook, Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, or various PFLAG chapters. They might be planning activities for LGBTQ campers at ISSA's Action Camp. They might be supporting a queer student of color through a meeting with an ombudsperson, or speaking at a school board meeting in support of a trans high schooler, or helping edit and revise a student's Title IX complaint.

Or they might just be trying to actively dismantle the system of aduldism and the massive power imbalances between adults and young humans by talking with a 6 year old at Target about glitter.

**Did you know?** August was the 2017 recipient of Youth Outlook's "Michael Fairbank's Youth Leadership Award," and is an alumnus of 360 Youth Service's LGBTQ Transitional Housing Program. They received a mountain of love and support while being a homeless queer youth—which is why they spend 90 percent of their time working to provide that same love and care for youth who need it now.

**VAN HUYNH**

Vân (she/her), 29, is a Vietnamese American and an immigration attorney whose legal and advocacy work strives to build movements with organizers, in order to effectively address root causes of criminalization.

She has been involved with Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Chicago, PASO – West Suburban Action Project, Dope AAPI, the Resist, Reimagine, Rebuild (R3) Coalition, working to build relationships among Asian-American and immigrant communities with Black-led organizing.

**Did you know?** After her first year of law school, Vân interned with the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia—which apparently no one knows what a big deal that is.

**RYAN GARRISON****ESTEPHANY GUZMAN****ISAAC GOMEZ****DANIEL R. HERNANDEZ****AUGUST "GUS" HUPP****VAN HUYNH**



PETER JOHNSON



DANIEL KYRI



GRANT LADNIAK



GNAT ROSA MADRID

Photo by Andie Mackenzie Meadows



JAZMIN MARTINEZ



BEYZA OZER

**PETER JOHNSON**

Peter—a 2013 Brown University graduate who is 27 and originally from Hockessin, Delaware—is a development officer at Center on Halsted, Chicagoland's LGBTQ community center. Prior to his appointment this appointment, he served as the Center's director of communications and public relations, having worked for the organization for approximately five years.

In his role as director of communications and public relations, he represented Center on Halsted through multiple milestones and historically significant events, including the opening of Town Hall Apartments, passage of marriage equality, the 2016 Pulse massacre and the organization's expansion to the south side through its Youth Housing Initiative. Since January 2017, he has leveraged his community and coalition building skills to bolster Center on Halsted's corporate portfolio, fostering workplace diversity and inclusion as well as strengthening corporate engagement and support of the programs, services and mission of Center on Halsted. Outside of work, he has had an active role in Chicago's cultural scene.

**Did you know?** Peter concentrated in Egyptology and Assyriology at Brown. Upon graduation, he received a fellowship from the Archaeological Institute of America to work in Erbil, Iraq.

**DANIEL KYRI**

Daniel is a Jeff Award-nominated actor, filmmaker, and writer. He is featured on this season of Chicago Med and in Stephen Cone's award-winning film Henry Gamble's Birthday Party, now streaming on Netflix.

He has starred in productions at Lookingglass Theatre (Moby Dick), Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Monster), Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (Tug of War pt. I & II) and Goodman Theatre (Objects in the Mirror), and was most recently seen in Robert O'Hara's production of Macbeth at The Denver Center for the Performing Arts. He is represented by Stewart Talent and is currently working on his writing/directing/producing debut, the T, for which he was named Chicago's 2018 Filmmakers-in-Residence and is starring as the titular character in The Gift Theatre's summer production of Hamlet.

**Did you know?** One of the first novels he read was one he wrote himself as a child.

**GRANT LADNIAK**

Grant, 30, is a Chicago native who has a bachelor's degrees in psychology, gender and social justice, as well as a master's in organization development.

He is passionate about issues of social justice, racial inequality and, especially, homeless youth initiatives. Someone who loves to volunteer, Grant is a former volunteer director at Center on Halsted. He is currently an associate board member of AIDS Foundation Chicago and Leadership Council member of Out & Equal Chicagoland.

A self-described "huge nerd trapped in a jock's body," Grant reading, travel and movies, and is a huge Marvel fan (Black Panther and Thor all the way!). He also indulges in biking, swimming hiking, playing sports, weight training and cooking (having a very special relationship with food). He also has certifications in automotive performance machining and engineering, and loves rebuilding

and performance modifying engines

**Did you know?** Grant has an affinity for plants and gardening, and has hundreds of bizarre, edible and unique plants that he's very attached to.

**GNAT ROSA MADRID**

Gnat, 27, is an artist, designer, and party producer working in Chicago. Her brand, GNAT, provides the babes of the world with glittering femme-centric fetish and bondage gear. Made for queer femmes by a queer femme, GNAT gear will decorate your gorgeous, bodacious body so that you can harness your sexuality. GNAT gear promotes safe, exciting, and consensual sex, BDSM, body positivity, gender fluidity, trans liberation, and femme4femme love.

Madrid is also the assistant producer for DURO: Chicago's Queer Latinx twice-monthly dance party. DURO strives to uplift all people of color and gender minorities, showcases the talent of artists across the city, and provides free HIV testing. You can also find her installation art at Femme's Room. In March, she showed her new fashion collection at the Chicago History Museum sponsored by OUT at CHM.

**Did you know?** Gnat is also a Point Scholar alumnus and member of the CFDA: Council of Fashion Designers of America.

**JAZMIN MARTINEZ**

Jazmin is a 28-year-old, queer, gender non-conforming immigrant living in La Villita, Chicago, who comes from a lineage of Mexican campesinos. They are currently working on establishing a worker cooperative called Catatumbo Cooperative Farm. Their background includes organizing with Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD), working with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, providing support to folks living with HIV and working with previously incarcerated folks.

They have participated in multiple direct actions throughout the years to fight against the deportations and criminalization of communities of color and immigrant communities throughout Chicago. They are rooted in community work and healing, centering collective work to envision a world without borders and police. All together, their current and past work in organizing, working with communities who are systematically marginalized created a commitment to envision and create other possible worlds.

**Did you know?** Jazmin is a Capricorn sun, Libra rising and Scorpio moon—and likes to booty-shake while farming.

**BEYZA OZER**

beyza, 23, is a queer/trans Muslim writer living in Chicago. beyza's work has appeared in and is forthcoming from The Offing, Pinwheel, Vinyl, Nightblock, Witchcraft Magazine, Shabby Doll House, & the anthology Subject to Change: Trans Poetry & Conversation (Sibling Rivalry Press 2017). beyza is the author of Fail Better (fog machine 2017) & I DON'T MEAN TO REDSHIFT (Maudlin House 2016). They are deputy director of social media at YesYes Books, and work at The Poetry Foundation.

**Did you know?** Beyza got the highest score in their college astronomy class and won a Marie Curie bobblehead doll that glows in the dark.



### DEIVID STEVEN ROJAS JIMENEZ PACHECO

David, 29, was born in Colombia and raised in Miami; he has called Chicago home for the last five-years.

Deivid has worked for the Fight For 15 campaign in different positions, including organizer, communicator and digital wizard. As the communications director for the Fight For 15 in Chicago, he has worked with renowned local and national outlets to place countless stories that highlight the struggles of low-wage workers and the LGBTQ community. For example, he worked with INTO magazine to place a story by a McDonald's workers titled "Trans Rights = Workers Rights." He's produced various digital viral content and helped organize many protests, press conferences, actions, and rallies to mobilize workers.

As a poet and filmmaker, Deivid explores the intersections of queerness with immigration, globalization, politics, mental health, masculinity and love. His poems have been shared by Gozamos and The Gran Varones, and he's performed in venues across the city. He was also a production assistant for Signature Move, an award-winning LGBTQ and Chicago-based film.

Deivid is also part of the organizing committee of Vives Q, which was recently recognized by ALMA with the Community Service Award for "elevating the Latinx and LGBTQ community."

**Did you know?** Deivid is a momma to more than 50+ plants. He's also so proud to be from Miami, that you can still catch him dialing you with that 305 area code.

### NIKK SELIK

Nikk, 29, is a transgender man and activist for the trans community. He serves as the group leader for T-MAC: Transmasculine Alliance Chicago, a community support group for transmasculine adults at the Center on Halsted. For the past eight years, Nikk has spoken publicly to educate people on trans identity at a variety of schools, organizations and conferences. Nikk also mentors trans youth and works with parents to help them be supportive.

**Did you know?** Nikk has been reading tarot cards for more than a decade.

### DENISE YVETTE SERNA

Denise, 29, is a theater practitioner and arts activist whose credits include HIR (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), Earthquakes in London (Steep Theatre Company), The View Upstairs (Circle Theatre Chicago), For the Love of... (Pride Films & Plays), La Chingada, (the)forget\_me\knot (inappropriate theatre company) and Climate Change Theatre Action - Chicago. She is co-founder of Global Hive Laboratories, a collective of international practitioners working toward a global theatre. She co-curates HOMESET, a quarterly artist salon.

**Did you know?** Denise collects editions of Le Petit Prince from countries she visits. Her collection includes copies of the book in Finnish, Icelandic, Russian and Greek.

### DANIELLA SILVA

Danielle, 28, is the development & events specialist at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago(AFC). Dani plays an integral role in advancing AFC's brand, managing relationships as well as cultivating new donors and partners. Her work producing events includes AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, the largest HIV event in the Midwest that raises awareness and critical funds for more than 30 organizations in Chicago. Also, Dani serves as staff liaison to the AFC Associate Board, a group of young professionals and emerging leaders who are passionate advocates for HIV and LGBTQ services.

Originally from Miami, Dani graduated from Loyola University with an MA in global politics, specializing in the Western Hemisphere and human rights. In addition to her work with AFC, Dani is active with Mujeres Latinas en Accion, a Pilsen-based organization that provides support to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as immigration aide in the Latinx community.

**Did you know?** Dani has volunteered extensively in Latin America, including sanitation projects in Honduras, Nicaragua, Republica Dominicana and Colombia.

### IRIS SOWLAT

Iris, 24, is a theater director and producer who uses theater to create welcoming spaces, spark conversations about social issues, and to "make the invisible, visible."

Iris is a company member at Pride Films & Plays, where she recently directed The Days Are Shorter, and produced (directing portions of) History Lezons, After Orlando (with No-Passport), SheFest, and two WeFests. Other directing credits include Joan of Arc (RhinoFest at Prop Theatre), Narratives of Achromatopsia (Chicago Fringe), Jane by Paula Kamen (Chicago Women's History Center & Pride Arts Center) and work with Stage Left, Collaboraction, Chicago Theatre Marathon and Global Hive Labs, among many others.

**Did you know?** Iris is legally blind. She has a visual impairment called achromatopsia. And last year, she created a documentary theatre piece based on her own experiences and interviews with others who had this impairment.

### SUNG YIM

Yim, 28, is a writer and interdisciplinary artist from Korea who was a finalist for the 2018 Lambda Literary Award in transgender nonfiction. They are the author of What About the Rest of Your Life (Perfect Day Publishing) and Flowers Are for Pussies (Ghost City Press). Their work has appeared in Rattle, Kweli Journal, Contrary, The James Franco Review, The Wanderer, and Crab Fat Magazine.

**Did you know?** Sung can knit with their eyes closed.







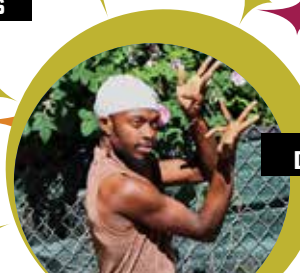
JOANNA THOMPSON



REGINA VICTOR



MIA VIVENS



AARON-RAHEIM WHITE



DERRICK WOODS-MORROW

### JOANNA THOMPSON

Dr. Joanna Thompson, 30, has been committed to the Chicagoland LGBTQ community since moving here in 2010.

As an academic, Joanna worked on A Trans\* and Queer Student Guide to the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2014. Joanna recently defended her Ph.D., facilitating lectures from Toronto to Berlin, Germany. As an activist, Joanna has been a member of the Chicago Hate Crimes Coalition since 2011. In her current position as the community outreach and engagement coordinator for the Anti-Violence Project at Center on Halsted, she filmed a TEDx on what it means to be a half Black/half Latina and queer female.

**Did you know?** Joanna recently studied criminology, law and justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

### REGINA VICTOR

Regina is a 25-year-old producer, dramaturg, director, writer, performer and critic. Hailing from Oakland, California, Victor is a member of the Victory Gardens Directors Inclusion Initiative 17/18, the SDCF Observership 17/18 Class, and recently finished serving as the Steppenwolf Artistic Apprentice and Multicultural Fellow. They are the co-founder of online theater journal Rescripted ([www.rescripted.org](http://www.rescripted.org)), and are a freelance critic for Windy City Times. Recent credits include BLKS at Steppenwolf Theatre, The Light at The New Colony, and To Catch a Fish at Timeline Theatre.

**Did you know?** Regina Victor speaks French.

### MIA VIVENS

Mia, 27, is a queer poetess/ mover/ maker originally hailing from Columbus, Ohio. She is an alumna of Valparaiso University, having studied theater and dance. She is specifically interested in exploring the intersections of the queer community amongst Black and brown folks. She works for About Face Theatre as the associate director of outreach and engagement, and she tours a show about gender and sexuality to local Chicagoland middle and high schools. She has also worked with many theaters in Chicago as both an actor and a director.

**Did you know?** You can see her the The Fly Honey Show this summer! :)

### AARON-RAHEIM WHITE

Aaron-Raheim—who is 29 and describes their preferred pronoun as “anything in love”—is a Chicago native who earned their Masters of Fine Arts degree from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and his Bachelors of Fine Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, both in dance performance and choreography.

Raheim is a Reiki master teacher, sound healer, and crystal healing adornment designer as well as the director of community programming at Lax Energy Worx, all while performing as an ensemble member with Lucky Plush Productions. Their mission is to aid individuals in their return to wholeness by providing tools and services that promote balance, personal development, self-sufficiency, posi-

tivity and growth. Aaron-Raheim desires to be a beacon of light, inspire freedom and facilitate healing through Reiki, dance, meditation, and education.

**Did you know?** Aaron-Raheim is the eldest of 13.

### DERRICK WOODS-MORROW

Derrick (age 28, and from Brown Summit, North Carolina) is a multidisciplinary Chicago-based artist working in photography, sculpture, installation and performance.

His practice navigates and negotiates sexual identity by fragmenting notions of representation, exploring personhood, memories & reimagining ways to understand power dynamics as they pertain to consent and self preservation. He is an alum of the Fire Island Artist Residency 2016, Terry Plumming Scholar & Acre Residency Alum 15’ and Latitude Chicago Artist in Residence 2017, and is currently a Chicago Artists coalition 2017-2018 bolt resident. he is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Photography and Teaching Artist at the University of Illinois Chicago.

**Did you know?** Derrick once tripped, fell and lost two teeth while hanging out with the Jersey Shore cast in Florence, Italy? He never saw them again—and he was thankful. Also, Derrick loves sniffing poppers while eating gelato.

## HONORABLE MENTION

### ERIN BAILEY

Erin just turned 18 this year. She enjoys being out in nature, creating art and advocating for others. On multiple occasions, she has protested for better gun control laws and for women’s rights at the Indiana state House. She from a small town called Columbus, Indiana—which also happens to be Vice President Mike Pence’s hometown.

**Did you know?** Erin made national news by organizing the first-ever Pride festival in Vice President Mike Pence’s hometown. It was a huge success, and more than 2,000 people attended. It helped send a message to our community that everyone is welcome!



### NOVA MADAY

Nova, 18, graduated from Palatine High School in May 2018. An artist and photographer, Nova will attend the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design following a deferred enrollment.

In November 2017, Nova filed a lawsuit against District 211 schools after her school denied full use of the locker room to dress for gym classes, simply because she is transgender. Nova spoke out publicly in announcing the lawsuit, sharing her story with media outlets and others—giving voice to all students who are transgender who simply want to be recognized and respected.

**Did you know?** This past March, three “friends of the court” briefs were filed to bolster Nova’s case—one from 12 groups that work to advance civil and human rights in Illinois, one from eight national and statewide medical organizations, and one by the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance.





LGBT CRUISES &amp; TOUR EVENTS

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# PARADE INFORMATION

courtesy of PRIDEChicago  
**49th Annual Chicago Pride Parade**

Sun., June 24

For changes or updates: [www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org) • [PrideChgo@aol.com](mailto:PrideChgo@aol.com) • 773-348-8243

**DATE:** Sunday, June 24

**TIME:** 12 Noon

**STARTING POINT:** Broadway & Montrose.

**LINE UP:** North Broadway (both the east and the west curb lanes, from Montrose to Wilson); West Montrose (both the north and south curb lanes from Broadway to Clark); Sunnyside Ave. from Broadway to North Sheridan Rd. and North Sheridan Rd., between Montrose and Wilson.

**ROUTE:** Step off from the Broadway/Montrose corner, proceeding south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

**CONTENT & DESCRIPTION:** The parade will feature 150 registered entries, including floats, decorated vehicles, performance groups, a marching band and walking contingents.

The entries represent community organizations, businesses, governmental officials and individual community members. Crowd estimates each year are in the hundreds of thousands. So the plans are to line the parade route with barricades on both sides of the street from beginning to the end of the parade route. Spectators will be required to remain behind the barricades. (Only parade registrants traveling down the middle of the street, police officers, other city officials, security staff, parade marshals and credentialed media reps will be allowed in the

street). In recent years, the City of Chicago has required that several large city parades, including the Pride Parade, line their parade routes with barricades at our own expense. Police officers and parade marshals will be stationed at various points on the street in front of the barricades along the parade route.

Police officers will also be in the area surrounding the parade. In addition, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence along and surrounding the parade route.

**\$1000 FINE FOR PUBLIC ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION:** The parade will have more security and a tighter rein on public alcohol consumption. In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence. Penalties include, but are not limited to, \$1000+ tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcohol into trash receptacles.

Public urination is also grounds to receive a ticket.

**PARADE DAY HEALTH/SAFETY:** Bring plenty of bottled water, sunscreen and a hat or other head covering, and dress lightly because parade day is usually hot and sunny.

**STREET CLOSURES: (on parade day, Sunday, June 24) include:**

—**ASSEMBLY AREA:** Tentative time: 10:30 a.m.

—**PARADE ROUTE:** Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close

as the parade travels south down the route. The parade starts at 12 noon at the Broadway/Montrose corner proceeding south on Broadway; then south on Halsted; then east on Belmont; then south on Broadway; then east on Diversey to Cannon Drive.

**NO PARKING:** Both the Assembly Area and Parade Route (listed above) will be posted with temporary signs indicating “NO PARKING ON SUNDAY JUNE 24, 2018, FROM 5:00 am TO 8:00 pm. - Both sides of the street, unless otherwise indicated.” Due to the volume of vehicles involved, the issuing of parking violation, citations, and towing will start at 5 a.m. promptly.

For updates and corrections; <http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org>

—Montrose Ave. - Greenview Ave. to Hazel St.

—Broadway - Leland Ave. to Grace St.

—Sunnyside Ave. - Broadway to North Sheridan Rd.

—Halsted St.\* - Grace St. to Belmont Ave.

—Belmont Ave. - Racine Ave. to Broadway St.

—Broadway - Melrose Ave. to Diversey Pkwy.

—Diversey Pkwy. - Broadway to Cannon Dr. (Sheridan)

—Cannon Dr. - Diversey Pkwy. to Fullerton Pkwy.

—Addison St. - 736 W. Addison St. to Sheffield Ave.

—Waveland Ave. - Halsted St. to Broadway St.

—Grace St. - Halsted St. to Fremont St.

—Clifton - Montrose Ave. to Sunnyside Ave.

—N. Sheridan Rd. - Sunnyside Ave. to Buena Ave.

—Buena Ave. - Sheridan Rd. to Broadway

—Wellington Ave. - Clark St. to Sheffield Ave.

—N. Sheridan Rd. - Montrose Ave. to Agatite St.

\* Please note that parking on Halsted and Belmont will be restricted until 4 a.m. Monday, June 25

## ADDITIONAL PARKING RESTRICTIONS:

There will be additional parking restrictions on Sunnyside Ave. between Broadway and N. Sheridan Rd. also N. Sheridan Rd. from Montrose Ave. to Agatite St.

**TOWING:** Begins at 5 am. Due to the volume of vehicles involved, the issuing of parking violation citations and towing will start at 5 am - Promptly.

**CROSS STREETS:** Rolling closing times. Cross streets will close as the parade travels south down the route. After stepping off at Noon, the parade will take approximately two and one-half hours to finish crossing the Broadway & Montrose corner. After this time, the floats will still be winding their way to the end of the parade route at Diversey & Sheridan. This year there will NOT be a Buffer Zone on Halsted Street after the parade ends. Police will work to re-open the streets to vehicular traffic as soon as cleaning crews are finished and the streets will not remain open to foot traffic.



**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:**

From the Red Line: Wilson, Sheridan, Addison or Belmont all provide access via a short walk to the parade route.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Belmont station (and the surrounding area) tends to become the most crowded, so you are encouraged to consider watching the parade from the other parts of the route, including areas toward the start of the route—such as Broadway, south of Montrose—which are served by both the nearby Wilson and Sheridan stations on the Red Line. In addition, a number of lakefront bus routes including the 146 and 151 provide convenient access from the north, the Gold Coast/North Michigan Ave. and downtown to areas east of the parade route.

Extra service will be provided on the 'L' on parade day to accommodate the large numbers of people who attend the parade. Due to the increase of local traffic and a number of bus reroutes, potential parade spectators are advised to make use of the L or the various bus routes.

**BUS REROUTES:** 8 Halsted, 22 Clark, 36 Broadway, 76 Diversey, 77 Belmont, 78 Montrose, 151 Sheridan, 152 Addison.

Also see CTA web site or call them for updated information concerning the train and bus routes. CTA: 1-312-836-7000 [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com)

Other information on public transportation: 1-312-322-6777 [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com)

**PEDESTRIAN CROSS-OVER STREETS:**

There will be at least nine cross-over streets:

- Montrose Ave. at Broadway
- Irving Park Rd. at Broadway
- Grace St. at Halsted St.
- Addison St. at Halsted St.
- Roscoe St. at Halsted St.
- Wellington Ave. at Broadway
- Aldine St. at Halsted St.

—Cornelia Ave. at Halsted St.

—Oakdale Ave. at Broadway

At each corner of the streets listed above there will be police officers assigned to assist pedestrians to cross the parade route.

**NEEDS AND SPECIAL NEEDS:**

**1. Portable Restrooms** - are stationed along both the parade line-up street and the parade route. Included at several locations are restrooms for the physically challenged.

**2. Physically Challenged Area/ Wheel chair Accessible Area/ Seniors** - for people who need or want more space: the sidewalks of W. Diversey Pkwy. (near 600 W. Diversey). Traditionally this area of the parade route has fewer spectators than other sections of the parade route. Spectators in these areas generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

**3. Seniors (outdoor)** - The area mentioned above in #2 (600 W. Diversey sidewalks) is a designated OUTDOOR area for seniors. Spectators in this area generally arrive there early on parade morning to secure their viewing spots. Included there are restrooms for the physically challenged.

**4. Cooling Busses:** Halsted, south of Belmont; Addison, west of Halsted; Belmont, east of Broadway; Wilton, north of Belmont; Buena, west of Broadway.

**5. Chicago Fire Department First Aid Stations:** 901 W. Addison St.; 765 W. Roscoe St.; 3165 N. Halsted St.; 561 W. Surf St.; 802 W. Roscoe St.

For changes or updates: [www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org), [PrideChgo@aol.com](mailto:PrideChgo@aol.com) or 773-348-8243.

# Ten Tips for parade spectators

**1. \$1000 FINE FOR PUBLIC ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION:**

The parade will have more security and a tighter rein on public alcohol consumption. In addition to the large number of police officers who staff the event, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing a security team to supplement the police presence. Penalties include, but are not limited to, \$1000+ tickets being issued and/or the immediate disposal of open containers of alcoholic beverages into trash receptacles. (Public urination is also grounds to receive a ticket).

**2. STARTING TIME:** The parade starts at 12 Noon. So, arrive early to find a good spot.

**3. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:**

Parking in the area is limited, so walk, take public transportation (or if you must drive, then car pool). For CTA/PACE/Metra transit information, call 1-312-836-7000; Web Site: [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) or 1-312-322-6777, Web Site: [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com); potential spectators are advised to consider making use of Red Line 'L' stations including Sheridan Road, Wilson Avenue or Addison Street (The Belmont stop becomes extremely over crowded on parade day).

**4. BARRICADES:** The parade route will be lined with iron barricades. Spectators will be required to stand behind the barricades, not in the street. Besides the parade registrants traveling down the middle of the street, only police officers, other city officials, security staff, parade marshals and credentialed members of the media will be allowed in the street.

**5. PEDESTRIAN CROSS-OVER STREETS:**

The nine corners where pedestrians may cross from one side of the parade route to the other side include: Montrose Ave. at Broadway; Irving Park Rd. at Broadway; Grace St. at Halsted St.; Addison St. at Halsted St.; Roscoe St. at Halsted St.; Wellington Ave. at Broadway; Aldine St. at Halsted St.

Cornelia Ave. at Halsted St; Oakdale Ave. at Broadway. There will be police officers assigned to assist pedestrians in crossing at these locations. For updates: [www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org](http://www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org)

**6. CROWDS:** Since the number of spectators has increased dramatically in recent years on Halsted Street, spectators are being advised to try other sections of the parade route to view the parade (for example, 4000 to 4300 N. Broadway). In addition, spectators must watch the parade on the actual parade route, not in the assembly area. (The assembly area is for parade participants only).

**7. SAMPLING:** City ordinance prevents parade participants from tossing items to spectators. Likewise, spectators should not toss items back to parade participants. Spectators are not allowed to walk into the street to get items. Spectators must wait until parade participants come to the sidelines to hand out items. Parade participants are not allowed to hand out items to spectators who are standing on sidewalks in the assembly area. Spectators who want sample items must view the parade from the parade route, not the assembly area. For safety, no high powered water rifles are allowed.

**8. TRASH:** Keep the neighborhood clean by using trash barrels provided along the route.

**9. NEEDS & SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Physically challenged/wheelchair accessible and senior area is provided. See parade website for details. Portable restrooms are placed along parade route.

**10. POLICE PERSONNEL ARE ON HAND** (as well as parade marshals): In addition, PRIDEChicago (parade coordinators) are providing security officers to assist. But spectators can be a big help by obeying the above rules and city ordinances in relation to alcohol consumption and other issues.



# Dual Spirit Style helps all people find their menswear look

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Tanisha Hawkins has always taken her image—and her clothes—seriously.

"I'm really passionate about being able to express your gender. If you see my closet, you'll be, like, 'Whoa,'" said Hawkins, the proprietor of a new clothing and image-consultant service, Dual Spirit Style, that helps gender nonconforming folks find professional menswear outfits that make them look good. (The business launches Thursday, June 21.) "It's kind of hard for me to sit in an office and work towards somebody else's dream that had nothing to do with me serving my purpose in the world."

In fact, Hawkins quit her day job as a document review attorney to focus on what she calls her "passion project."

"I don't have any formal fashion degrees or tailoring experience, I'm just learning it as I go. Going through law school, the most valuable thing that I learned is that I'm able to teach myself anything," Hawkins told Windy City Times. "This business is about helping people feeling comfortable in their lives. When you're going on interviews, meeting with clients, it's already an anxiety-producing thing, so when you're not wearing clothes that are for you, it just adds something that I think is not fair. People should be able to feel comfortable and genuine with how they're presenting themselves, especially if they're trying to sell themselves or sell a product."

Hawkins, whose corporate-employed father set the pace for her, style-wise, has had long experience prioritizing the perfect outfit. "I liked men's clothes. It started out with Nike and Adidas, something I could get away with, but then when I got older and had interviews, I wanted to wear a suit, and men's dress pants and slacks," she recalled. "Once I got a job, and got my own money, I decided I would try to make it look good and find men's clothes that actually fit my body. I remember when I got my first suit, I was 26, and it was the best feeling to actually have a men's suit on. Prior to that I was wearing women's dress

suits. When I actually found a suit that fit me I was, like, 'This is great—I'm not going back.'"

Through many years of experience, Hawkins has learned to break down bodies and clothing designs by shape, a more inclusive and practical approach than sticking to gendered labels.

"When you look at the body measurements, they have different body shapes for 'male' and 'female' but it's just really measurements of what is your chest area, what is your waist area, what is your seat area, so it's not really different," Hawkins said. Since everyone has a different body, it's hard to manufacture clothes that work for all shapes. Dress shirts, always a challenge for dapper individuals with breasts, are a perfect example.

"The men's dress shirt has what I call the square body type or the inverted trapezoid body type, where people are trying to get that look from the shoulders going down," Hawkins explained.

Hips are another issue. "The waist is generally smaller than the hip, but your seat has to fit in the pants," said Hawkins. "If you have a size 34 hip but a 30 waist, then it's just not looking right, you're bunching up in the waist to accommodate the hips. With men's clothes, I find the hip and the waist ratio don't fit me, but with women's clothes, the rise is too close to the crotch area and everything's very tight and I don't really like that. It's just wanting something in between what they have. I think a lot of people need custom, even though I don't think that is affordable right now."

Hawkins always felt a connection with the Native American concept of "two-spirit" but wanted to leave the term to its cultural context.

"For me, it's more about gender identity," she said. "I'm a female biologically, but when it comes to my mind and how I think, I feel like I straddle both genders. I'm kind of used to calling myself a she, but then there's two halves of me. Dual, that's representing two things. The 'style' is not only how you express yourself with clothing, it's not only how everyone's trying to perceive you—and the first thing they see is one of the things they look to make an opinion of who you are and what you do—but also when you're able to dress and feel comfortable, that says something about you on the inside as well. It takes some inside work to be able to look how you want to on the outside if you're different."

Dual Spirit Style's ideal client is gender nonconforming, wants to wear professional menswear, and wants to put in the time and work into evolving their look. Hawkins' first priority is to figure out the clients' style, best colors and body shape. Then, it's onto measurements: Since many stores cater to people of a particular body shape, Hawkins finds knowing measurements essential.

"When I go into a store, and I'm looking for something for a small-framed individual, I'll say, do you have extra small slim-cut clothes, and



Above: Tanisha Hawkins. Lower left corner: Dual Spirit Style offerings. Photos courtesy of Hawkins

that's pretty much how I can go in and out of a store pretty quick and decide whether something's going to fit me," she said. "Sizing is so different. One thing I'll do is know my chest measurements for a men's shirt or jacket, so I'll be like, does your extra small or small fit a size 34 chest. Some of the sales associates won't have much knowledge about what they're selling: some of them will, and that's a good way to tell if a store is even worth spending 10-15 minutes in it right off the bat."

With sittings for custom-made suits, sourced from Mississippi, Hawkins starts off with fabrics and details.

"The last thing I do is actually the measuring," she explained. "It's kind of personal, you know? I'm like going around your body pretty much everywhere. I'll take about 15 measurements. So that's weird to do with someone that you haven't even talked to. It's good to know what kind of style do they like, what kind of details do they like, have some conversation with them 30-45 minutes. And then by that time, they're excited about what they picked out, so they're not worried about someone they just met knowing what their seat size is." She also considers things like posture and body movement when it comes to fit.

Hawkins uses the image consultant title to describe part of what her business offers, such as style updates.

"I'm really getting into the custom clothier retailer business, but not everyone's in that price range," Hawkins said. "Really, the overall goal of the company is for me to serve the whole LGBTQ community, and that might not be someone who can spend \$1,000 on a suit. If you're not wearing suits, or if you're not in the market to spend that much on suits, you can still work with me to find something that fits your budget and fits your style. That kind of goes into my philosophy of every customer can have a unique look. 'Professional' may not mean suits: professional is way more casual than it was 15 years ago. You might not even want to wear a suit to work, and you still need to find that balance of what's professional for your industry and clientele. That may not even be what I'm selling, but I'll still help you find that."

## LGBTQ sports movie premiering June 28

The documentary *Alone in the Game* will premiere Thursday, June 28, on the AT&T AUDIENCE Network, according to a press release.

The AT&T original feature-length documentary follows a group of athletes and sports figures from the biggest stages in American sports, including the NFL, NBA, MLS, and NCAA, among others, to explore the ongoing struggles LGBTQ athletes are facing at the professional, collegiate and Olympic levels.

Among those profiled are NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, Olympic medalists Megan Rapinoe (women's soccer) and Gus Kenworthy (men's slopestyle), former ESPN President John Skipper, former NBA center Jason Collins, ex-NFL lineman Ryan O'Callaghan and MLS Cup champion Robbie Rogers.

People can also watch via streaming services on DIRECTV NOW, DIRECTV and AT&T U-verse apps.

## 'Mamby on the Beach' June 23-24 in Chicago

Common, Russ, Spoon, Grizzly Bear, Jamila Woods, Windy City Soul Club and Snakehips are among the acts slated to perform at Mamby on the Beach June 23-24 at Chicago's Oakwood Beach in Bronzeville.

This year, Mamby will expand its footprint to include a new community village dedicated to local and national nonprofit organizations with progressive missions. The village will host a stage featuring talent from the group Young Chicago Authors and other surrounding neighborhoods.

See [Facebook.com/mambybeach](https://www.facebook.com/mambybeach).



## ART

# MCA presenting Paul Heyer in solo show

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago features artist Paul Heyer's first-ever solo show, "Chicago Works: Paul Heyer," through July 1.

Heyer is a native of Chicago's south suburbs. Growing up in an arts appreciative household, he said art was always what he was drawn to do.

"I was always one of those kids who was always drawing," said Heyer.

Heyer went on to earn a BA and MFA from Columbia University in New York. His art has been shown in galleries around the globe.

"I would say my art endeavors to reacquaint the viewer with a kind of childlike mentality where all forms are kind of flexible or negotiable," said Heyer. "It's a kind of world view that privileges imagination as the ultimate or penultimate building block of everything. So, from there it can go in any direction."

Heyer described himself as naturally and purposefully in touch with his own childlike perspective. He added he is "always questioning what is the nature of this reality we're in and how can it be renegotiated and what is it."

In his career, he said he has developed a lot of art languages from various artistic influences. The best thing, he said, is he is gradually learning to leave his comfort zone.

"I feel like for me, especially now, given the state of the planet and politics in this country and everything, if there is a mission it is to remind people that everything—we've made all of this up," Heyer said about the mission of his art. "So, all of this is negotiable, all of this can be re-fashioned or reimagined and it's a reminder that everyone has an imagination. I know it sounds so cheesy, but that is what everything is made of."

"I hope that that feeling is release or relief for the viewer," said Heyer of the effect he wants his art to have on viewers. "It's like after a night of intense partying, you're exhausted but you also feel kind of cleansed in a way and I wish that the art could do a little bit of that."

His show at MCA, "Chicago Works: Paul Heyer," features 11 new pieces. The show's work ranges from ethereal paintings on canvas and polyester to sculptures made with ordinary objects, one of which is paired with unique sound.

"I wanted the show to kind of touch on a lot of those [art] languages to give a bigger picture, but also tell a more cohesive story for viewers coming in off the street and might not have a lot of arts education," he said. "It's important to me."

Heyer said there are subtle references to LGBTQ nightlife, specifically rave culture, within this exhibit.

"I do think my experience growing up queer has made me think a lot about this idea of boundaries, permanence and negotiability of the body," said Heyer as he spoke about the queerness within his work. "I think it's queer in that sense and also queer in the sense there's a lot of influence

of nightlife and safe spaces and transcendence."

Even with a queer quality, Heyer emphasized that his work and this exhibit are not just geared toward a queer audience.

"I want everyone to be able to go in there and be like 'Oh, I get this,'" he said. "If I can't reach a larger audience outside queerness, I haven't done my job."

While Heyer was partying at later raves because he was too young in the '90s, he speaks passionately, explaining he has a displaced nostalgia for '90s rave culture.

"In the beginning of that scene, before it got super-druggy, there was this kind of community aspect, where anyone could come in there and there was also fantastic elementals of some uto-



Paul Heyer.  
Photo by  
Ratko  
Radojic

can feel it and it's transmittable, so I think it's important to use it in that way.

Along with his colorful paintings showing images and words, Heyer's sculptures include humble, everyday items that he makes transcendent. He explained, brooms become universes and a silver duvet becomes a field of infinity.

Heyer credited Ariel Zetina, a queer Chicago deejay currently at Smart Bar Chicago, with mixing the sound for one of his pieces.

"We feel like we're so ordinary everyday, but we have this ability to become these transcendent supernovas ourselves," said Heyer. "So, I use these everyday objects that are humble throwaways and turn them into these sublime [things]."

"I hope that people can dip back into a childlike mentality where binaries dissolve and boundaries are more flexible and where everything is a little more playful," Heyer said of his show's visitors.

For more information about "Chicago Works: Paul Heyer," visit <https://www.mcachicago.org/Exhibitions/2018/Paul-Heyer>.

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This year was also the first that PrideFest Milwaukee rejected tobacco sponsorship dollars, refocusing on local LGBTQ well-being through expanded Health & Wellness, Stonewall Stage, Prid-

eFit and South Ends Sports Zoneprogramming.

Journalist and politician Danica Roem was 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.

Also, the 2018 Pride Awards were 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).

In addition, PrideFest Milwaukee welcomed the B-52s, Jussie Smollett, JoJo and Daya, and more than 300 additional acts at 10 performance spaces, including the Dance Pavilion, Wom!nz Spot and Milwaukee Record stages.

GayCo Productions will run its Pride Comedy Party (or PCP, for short) Friday-Saturday, June 22-23, at The Playground Theater, 3209 N. Halsted St., at 10:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$15, and can be purchased at the door or in advance by visiting <https://gaypride.eventbrite.com>. Attendees must be at least 21 years old.

## Peach holding 'Water' June 30

The Chicago-born national LGBTQ+ women's event series Peach will host its Pride event, "Water," on Saturday, June 30, 12-4 p.m., at Whiskey Business (private rooftop), 1367 N. Milwaukee Ave.

This 21-and-older event is part of the series "The Elements (Air, Water, Earth and Fire)." Hannah Kate, Morgan Higgins and Bre Berry are host-

ing the party, which will feature DJ Gemini Jones and DJ Cut Cuz.

Tickets are \$10-\$15 each; visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/peach-presentswater-the-elements-series-2018-tickets-46134186594>.

## Mykki Blanco in Chicago June 21

A Queer Pride continues its Junipero Disco takeover at Emporium PopUps, 2357 N. Milwaukee Ave., on Thursday, June 21, at 9 p.m. with queer musician Mykki Blanco as the special guest.

Drag legend Lucy stoole will host the event. There will also be a live set by Nikki Lynette and a violin performance from Kenzie Couleé, with DJ Hijo Prodigio spinning tunes.

Proceeds from Junipero Disco will go ahead to benefit Transformative Justice Law Project, a Chicago-based organization that provides legal services to transgender people in Illinois, including a free monthly name change mobilization.

For tickets and more information, visit <http://do312.com/events/2018/6/21/junipero-disco-1527179335>.



## WCT COLORS

## Windy City Times: An LGBTQ History Coloring Book Series

This week's Windy City Times Coloring Book illustration of icons from LGBTQ history is of Marsha P. Johnson, by artist Alexis Amann. Johnson (Aug. 24, 1945–July 6, 1992) was a self-identified drag queen and activist in what used to be known as the “gay” movement. Johnson was among the key figures of the Stonewall uprising in 1969. She was a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front, and she co-founded S.T.A.R. (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) with Sylvia Rivera. Johnson modeled for Andy Warhol, and performed with drag performance group Hot Peaches. According to Wikipedia, Johnson was known as the “mayor of Christopher Street” and from 1987 until her death, Johnson was an AIDS activist with ACT UP. She died under suspicious circumstances (her body was found in the Hudson River), but her death has never been solved.





## BOOK REVIEWS

**Hiding Out: A Memoir of Drugs, Deception, and Double Lives**

By Tina Alexis Allen

\$26.99; Dey St. Books/  
Harper Collins; 275 pages**Dad #1, Dad #2: A Queerspawn View from the Closet**

By Natalie Perry

\$14.99; Red Cricket Press; 191 pages

REVIEWS BY RACHEL PEPPER

All families have secrets.

Many are toxic and can lead to shame, guilt or a lifetime of misunderstanding for everyone involved. Two recent books deal with the fallout when fathers ask their daughters to keep their own sexual orientation a secret. Both *Hiding Out: A Memoir of Drugs, Deception, and Double Lives*, by actress and scriptwriter Tina Alexis Allen, and *Dad #1, Dad #2: A Queerspawn View from the Closet*, by Natalie Perry, explore how keeping their fathers' sexual orientation a secret greatly impacts the narrator.

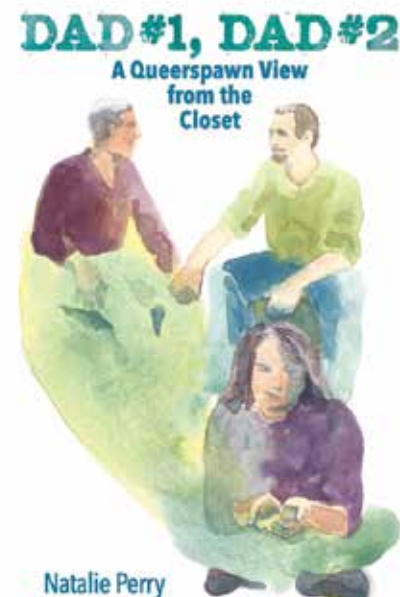
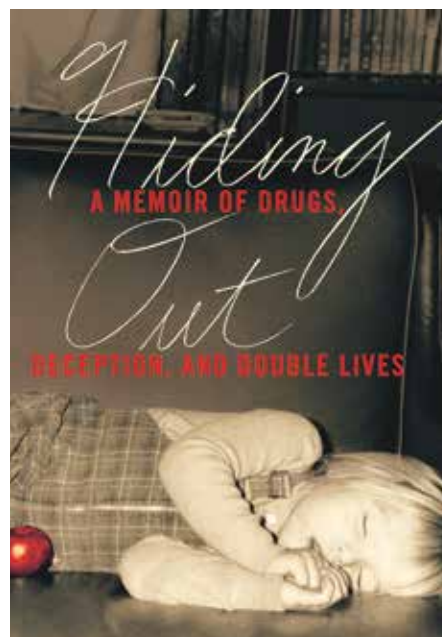
In *Hiding Out*, Allen's rocky home life (which includes sexual abuse by two older brothers and her own tumultuous affair with a much older woman) takes a turn once she discovers her father's secret. Soon, she becomes his confidante and shares several years of luxurious international travel with him, as well as drug and drinking binges. The owner of a Catholic travel agency, her moody father also has a mysterious connection to the Vatican, layering this story with another level of intrigue. Unable to prevent the inevitable backlash once his secrets are revealed, Allen ultimately makes peace with her past, and has become a successful, GLAAD-nominated actress, producer, scriptwriter and playwright. Written in a breathless style, *Hiding Out* is like a written adrenaline trip. It won't release you from its grip until its final pages, when we learn, in Allen's own words, that she was finally able to climb out "and away from the dark, musty world of secrets."

If Allen's memoir has the makings of a fast paced film, Perry's story is more akin to a PG 13, after school special. The main attribute of the (unfortunately named) *Dad #1, Dad #2* is that it is able to successfully provide a young girl's perspective of how it feels to closet your own parent. Living in a small Idaho community, Perry's father came out when she was twelve, and soon began a long-term partnership with another man (*Dad #2* of the title). Perry's parents got along well post-divorce, easily incorporating his father's new partner into the family fold. However, her father's job as a State Court judge meant she and her sister needed to help keep him closeted. Perry graciously never takes aim at her father for the numerous burdens he brought her for conscripting her into his secret keeping. Regardless,

the book's tension does lay in the pain caused when a child has to disavow and conceal identity, including fearing the risk of becoming ostracized by peers, and in never being able to have friends visit her father's home. When Perry leaves Idaho to study abroad as a teen, her world expands, and she eventually returned home to Idaho to become an advocate for other youth with gay parents.

Acknowledging the voices of our "queerspawn" is important. As someone who has written extensively about LGBT parenting, I applaud both of these writers for their honesty. However, while these two books focus on surviving life in the closet, I very much look forward to the inevitable, forthcoming wave of stories brought by the children of openly LGBT parents, raised with pride, not shame. What tales will they tell, I wonder?

Rachel Pepper is the author of the classic title, *the Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy for Lesbians*, from Cleis Press. Learn more or contact her through [Rachel-Pepper.com](http://Rachel-Pepper.com).



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Mavis Staples at the Chicago Blues Festival.  
Photo by Vern Hester

## BENT NIGHTS Mavis Staples

BY HESTER

It was both appropriate and depressing to have Mavis Staples close out the Thirty Fifth Annual Chicago Blues Festival on June 11.

As one of the few remaining straight-up African-American soul singers who emerged in the late 1950s to change the world with their voices (Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Patti Labelle, and Bettye LaVette being the others) and as the sole survivor of the fabled Staples Singers, you couldn't fault the festival for authenticity or spirit. The rub comes with the Staples' history with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and its association with Dr. Martin Luther King.

In countless performances down through the years, Staples has staunchly upheld what was at stake then. Now here we are in 2018 and all that protest isn't quite so distant or nostalgic anymore, as African-Americans, high school students, immigrants of all colors, women, the LG-BTQ community and many others, are up in arms. The attacks this time are aimed at rights and protections that have already been won and that is the real downer now as it's clear that after all that effort after all those years, those rights can be reversed with a stroke of a pen. (A protester at the Chicago women's march on President Trump's inauguration in 2017 carried a sign that read, "I can't believe I have to fight for these same rights all over again.") For trendsetters, the term "Everything old is new again" has a certain humor—but when it comes to history, well, not so much.

All of that may be true, and this may have been a blues festival, and it may have rained all weekend, and opener Kenny Neal may have ripped through a stinging set of songs of suffering and misery, but Mavis wasn't having it. After casually walking out onstage and enjoying a standing ovation, she wowed the near-capacity Pritzker Pavilion with a lilting "Come Go With Me," which felt warmly assuring.

Staples didn't mention the president by name (though it's hard to think her inclusion of Talking Heads' "Slippery People" was not meant as a backhanded slap), but her entire set list seemed to address the state of the union and the destruc-

tion caused by divisiveness. Stephan Stills "For What It's Worth" popped up as a timely chestnut while the concept of making allies, uniting, and working together permeated the show. "Build A Bridge," "Freedom Highway," "We're Gonna Make It" and "Touch A Hand, Make A Friend" gently put that theme across.

Staples still found plenty of time to cut up and "Who Told You That?" was punchy and confrontational, while "Respect Yourself" crackled with fury. The closer for the night, "I'll Take You There," was five minutes of pure unadulterated bliss with the audience literally falling out of their seats when Staples opened the song with that growl. Bassist Jeff Turmes and guitarist Rick Holmstrom followed Mavis' signal and played the song with grit and punch. From that point she went off the melody and turned this most spiritual and inspiring of '70s radio classics into pure gospel as she took the opportunity to preach. Granted, she didn't get political ("I shoulda left it alone...but when the spirit moves you, you gotta move!!!!!!"), but it had the same effect.

All of this was something of a blast of healthy encouragement. As anyone who knows me can tell you, I'm certainly not a fan of church or Bible-thumping, but what Staples did was clearly not just that. She uplifted, she soothed and, yes, she entertained. (While encouraging the audience to check out the merchandise at her table she cracked, "Why shop at Macy's when you can shop with Mavis?" Later on she got a big laugh when she accidentally called The Hideout Inn "The Out-house," which had WXRT's Terri Hemmert howling.) Granted, the show did not change any of those troubling issues but it served as a reminder that demanding something better is a right and shouldn't be taken for granted.

**Heads up:** Queer-fronted eclectic rockers Blacker Face play The Hideout Inn on June 23, queer rapper Roy Kinsey plays The Sleeping Village in support of brand-new release Blackie on June 17, and Kansas rockers SSION play the Logan Square Arts Festival on June 24.

More images from Mavis Staples' show are online at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



## BOOK REVIEW

**The Trauma Cleaner**

By Sarah Krasnostein

**\$26.99; St. Martin's Press; 291 pages**

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Wash your hands thoroughly.

That's good advice, no matter where you are. At the risk of sounding germophobic, you never know what lurked on that which you just touched. Stay healthy, keep clean, be tidy and wash your hands because, as you'll see in Sarah Krasnostein's new book *The Trauma Cleaner*, messy life, messy house.

The woman didn't seem very old, but it was really hard to tell. She wouldn't let anyone past her screen door—as if the stench wasn't enough to keep most people away.

Hoarder situations like that, suicides, undiscovered deaths, and accidents are business-as-usual for Sandra Pankhurst, sixtiesomething owner of specialized trauma cleaning (STC) in Australia. But as author Krasnostein learned when she befriended her, Pankhurst extends to those clients compassion, and nothing less.

There was ample reason for that.

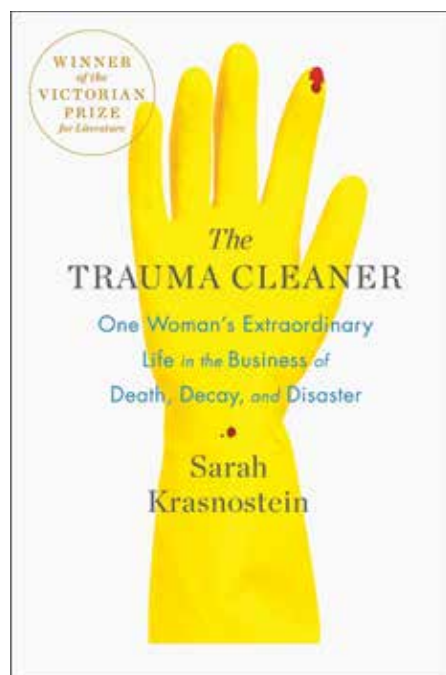
Although many of the questions Krasnostein asked Pankhurst were waved away with claims



**Sarah Krasnostein.**  
Photo by Gina Milicia

of disremembering, it's true that Pankhurst was born a boy, raised as a boy, became a man, married a woman, and fathered two sons. But "Peter," as Krasnostein pseudonymously calls Pankhurst then, was hiding a part of himself so, soon after his youngest son's birth, he left his family to live as a woman.

Though "her reality is as conflicted as it is real," Pankhurst told Krasnostein tales of being



a sex-worker and a madam. Dates and locales may've been incorrect and names forgotten, but it's also true that Pankhurst eventually fully transitioned, and continued to work in the sex industry until she was raped and almost lost her life. She fell in love, fell out of love, fell in love again, married an older man, and divorced.

It was because of her ex that Pankhurst founded STC.

"As a boss," says Krasnostein, "Sandra is, variously, mother hen... bad cop... and hanging judge." Her business cleans up sites affected by hoarding and death, and she's matter-of-fact about bugs, vermin, and smells as her staff hauls away pathogen-soaked furniture while ensuring that next-of-kin are treated with kindness.

Says Pankhurst, "None of us know what tomorrow's got in store."

As enjoyable as this unique tale is, there are a few things you'll need to know before you sweep through *The Trauma Cleaner*.

First of all, in her get-to-know-you time, author Krasnostein became close friends with her subject, which is good in most cases. Here, though, Krasnostein uses familiarity to gush about her subject in a way that could make readers wince uncomfortably. She's also exceedingly, perhaps needlessly, explicit in details of a sexual nature while largely ignoring big opportunities for enlightenment on the business side of the book.

And yet...

The goodness—and there's an industrial-sized dustpan full of it—comes between the lines. This is a biography of cringing, compassion, and somebody's-got-to-do-it resourcefulness, plus irritations, but with a breezy heft of fabrication built in. It's so singular that it's almost irresistible; indeed, if you can get past the gushing and the gruesome, "*The Trauma Cleaner*" is a book you shouldn't wait to get your hands on.

Want more? Then look for *Mop Men: Inside the World of Crime Scene Cleaners*, by Alan Emmins; or *The Hoarder in You: How to Live a Happier, Healthier, Uncluttered Life*, by Robin Zasio.



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# Lauren Heckathorn on being a genderqueer special-education teacher

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Lauren Heckathorn's (pronouns they/them/their) dream of becoming a special education teacher began at a young age when their third grade class was paired with students with special needs in another third grade class at their public elementary school in Evanston, Illinois.

"We would do a variety of activities together," said Heckathorn. "After that experience, I knew, without a doubt, that I wanted to be able to teach students with special needs."

Heckathorn was also inspired to enter this field by their mom, who is also a special education teacher. They went to Evanston Township High School and received a bachelors degree in special education from Illinois State University.

"I was born and raised in Evanston and had open-minded parents who believed that people deserve love and respect regardless of their identities and circumstances," said Heckathorn. "It was very important to my parents that my younger sister Kira and I were exposed to a wide variety of people of different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures."

Heckathorn noted that their parent's progres-

sive mindset made it easier for them to come out as transgender.

"I generally use genderqueer to express the non-binary aspect of my trans identity," said Heckathorn.

When Heckathorn finished college they started teaching at North Shore Academy in Highland Park, Illinois, for a year.

Heckathorn has taught Kindergarten through third grade special education students at Park School in Evanston, Illinois for the past three years. Their students have a variety of disabilities including Autism, chromosomal disorders and physical challenges.

"We work on a wide range of skills," said Heckathorn. "Some students are just learning how to read and write and others are learning how to be safe and appropriate around peers, willing to explore different tactile experiences and navigate a school setting. One of my biggest goals is finding a way for all of my students to express themselves and tell me their thoughts, wants and needs. Some of my students use spoken language to communicate, others use pictures to tell us what they want while the other students use communication devices to share their thoughts



**Lauren Heckathorn.**  
Photo by Katie Chalmers

and feelings. In my classroom, we also work on life skills such as toileting, feeding and washing hands. My work is extremely challenging, but I love it with my whole heart and I consider myself extremely lucky to be able to spend my days with such incredible children."

As for bringing LGBTQ content into their classroom, Heckathorn said they choose books that represent a variety of family structures including children of different gender identities and storylines that fall outside of the stereotypical gender roles and interests. Heckathorn noted that they bring this content to their students in creative ways that meet the students where they are developmentally.

Recently, Heckathorn was featured in an NPR story on transgender educators. Heckathorn explained that they filled out an online survey NPR provided to the teachers and thought the information would be used for statistic purposes only.

"I actually forgot I completed the survey when, several months later, I received a phone call from an NPR employee who read the information I shared and wanted to interview me for a national story," said Heckathorn. "I was surprised, nervous and most of all extremely honored to be a part of their story on transgender educators experiences."

The NPR story included Heckathorn's experiences of being harassed by a co-worker for most of the 2016-2017 school year. Heckathorn explained that this was the first time they have ever been harassed in a blatant way, however, they still experience daily micro aggressions due to their gender identity.

In terms of how Heckathorn's school has re-

sponded to them being genderqueer, they said it has been difficult because, as far as they know, this is the first time an openly transgender person has worked in the district.

"There were many things that the school and administration did not have in place to support and protect someone with a non-binary trans identity," said Heckathorn. "I had to fight to get a gender neutral bathroom put in. Yes, there were things that my school could have done better, but for the most part, it was the district administration that did not have proper protocols and procedures in place to protect me. I continue to work with my school community to educate my coworkers on transgender identities including pronouns and physical presentation."

"Many of my co-workers have expressed that as far as they know, I am the first transgender person they have ever met. Some of my coworkers use my pronouns, some try and struggle, and sadly others refuse. I am working hard to hold the district accountable about creating policies necessary to ensure that no other employees have to suffer the way I have due to their gender identity."

When asked what they would tell other LGBTQ teachers, Heckathorn explained that each person has to consider their physical and mental safety before coming out to administrators, fellow teachers, students and parents. If it is safe, Heckathorn said LGBTQ teachers need to declare their gender identities and sexualities so they are not ignored and/or forgotten when it comes to inclusive policies that protect LGBTQ students and educators.

"We must force them to do the work," said Heckathorn. "We must show up everyday proud of who we are and refuse to back down when it is suggested that our identities are something we should hide or keep out of the classrooms. Our students, families and communities need us. They need us in ways we may not be able to see right now but the work we do is paving the way for safer and more inclusive futures."

In terms of activist work, Heckathorn is currently the school district's Gender and Sexuality Educators Alliance co-leader. This alliance is made up of LGBTQ and ally educators who are working on creating more inclusive curriculum and teaching practices and with administrators to enact policies and procedures that protect and support LGBTQ educators.

Heckathorn has also been a speaker at various education-based diversity groups where they share their experiences and provide tools to make classrooms more LGBTQ-inclusive.

When not working or doing activist work, Heckathorn and their girlfriend can be found exploring the city with their two dogs—Elly and Otto. They also love to paint, take photos, hike and go on road trips.

"I will always choose being outside to being indoors," said Heckathorn.

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## BOOKS

# 'Fairy Town': New book examines Chicago's pre-WWII gay life

BY LIZ BAUDLER

Some might think gay history begins in New York with Stonewall, but not Jim Elledge. In his new book, *The Boys of Fairy Town*, historian Elledge documents gay male life in Chicago from Edgewater to the Black clubs of Bronzeville, and from the Civil War to just before WWII, including the 1920s "pansy craze," during which gay men became icons nationwide.

Most of Elledge's people-driven history stars local celebrities, such as crossdressing former nightclub singer, bigamist and acquitted murder defendant Frances Carrick. Famous for her drag skills, she successfully married both a man and a woman, and when a judge prohibited her husband from testifying against Carrick in court, it was technically very early legal recognition for same-sex marriage.

Occasionally, a more notable name pops into the record. Bisexual sexologist Alfred Kinsey (who was married with kids) learned firsthand how to conduct a double life from his gay Chicago research subjects. Poet Carl Sandburg got propositioned but remained straight, and artist Henry Darger escaped an institution—where his father sent him at age 12 for youthful masturbation—by walking 160 miles back to Chicago, where he'd later create a future eccentric body of work. Even Horatio Alger, he of the rags-to-riches novels that have influenced U.S. ideals since their publication, shows up: It turns out Alger was gay, and all those novels about rich men taking penniless young boys under their wings ... suddenly have quite a different context.

Elledge chatted with *Windy City Times* about his research process and some of the surprising nuggets of information he found in microfilm at the Chicago Public Library.

**Windy City Times: What got you focused on this kind of history in Chicago?**

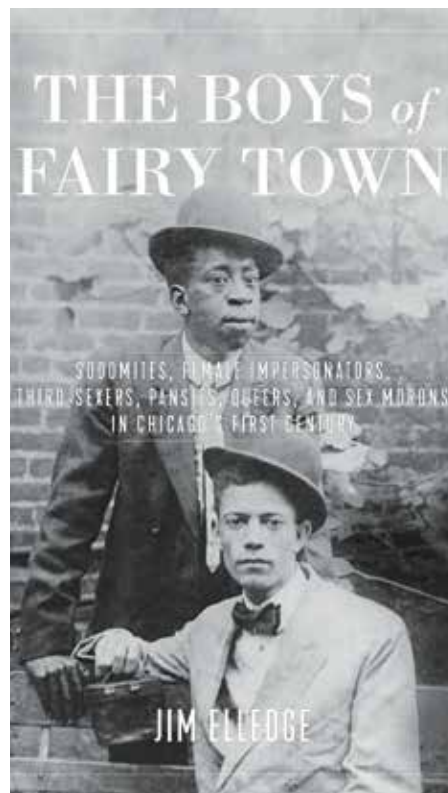
Jim Elledge: I was doing research on Henry Darger, and I kept running into these little snippets about other people, other situations in gay history in Chicago about the same time, if not a little bit earlier than Darger. I sort of kept track of those, because I thought that maybe I would find enough information to write a book about gay history in the early years.

After I got done with the Darger book, I started looking at those notes and decided that I probably had enough to write a book; I would need to do more research, but I certainly had a good start on one, so I went ahead and did it. I realized right away that I wanted to do a book that was more people-focused than date-focused. I didn't want to write a book like Chauncey's Gay

New York-- which I adore, I think it's a wonderful book, but I didn't want to write that kind of historical book.

**WCT: Was Chicago an unusual gay haven?**

JE: I think it was like other big cities. The waves of [gay] invisibility and visibility, that happened in Chicago. Some of the things of the early gay men did, like wear red ties...the same thing was going on in Boston and New York. By that time people were traveling around, and even though it took longer than it does today to get information from one city to another, the information still followed people around.



**WCT: What was your research like?**

JE: The problem was, and this is true of gay life in general in any city, is that nobody wrote about it. Most people didn't know it existed, and those who did were either a part of it, or a part of the legal system, or psychiatrists (which they used to call "alienists"). To find out anything about what was going on, you'd have to go to the newspapers. But the respectable ones like the *Tribune*, didn't publish that much. If there was a situation in which somebody gained notoriety for something he had done, then there might be a small article in the *Tribune*, but most of the



Jim Elledge.

PR photo

newspaper articles were found in what I think of as gossip rags. And there are no indexes for these, unlike the *Tribune* or other, better-known, better-written newspapers.

So I had to find a date, if possible, and then go through issue after issue after issue in Chicago Public Library on microfilm. Trying to find articles about gay men was very difficult, because they didn't use the terminology we would use today. So I would look for sex pervert, all those kinds of terms. I had to relearn how to think about the whole situation, and think of it in terms of what journalists at the time—the kinds of labels that were available to them—"sodomite," for example.

It was difficult, but it was also fun. I really do enjoy doing research. You get to have all kinds of moments when you suddenly realize something that nobody else had ever really realized for 50, 60—maybe 100 years.

**WCT: What was your most surprising research find?**

JE: There were so many. Eugen Sandow, the bodybuilder, lived openly with another man, and at the time people were suspicious, but because he was a he-man, very butch in appearance, he got away with it. And that sort of opened my eyes to all kinds of other possibilities. As long as the veneer did not crack, a lot of these men could live with other men, or go out with other men, and never have to be concerned about whatever people said, simply because they thought gay men were very woman-like—which was at the time how I thought they identified gay men: effeminacy. And if you weren't that way, and especially if you lifted weights and created this body that was very classical in musculature, as Sandow did, then he could get away with all kinds of stuff, including posing basically nude backstage for all of those people.

**WCT: This sounds like how Kinsey described Chicago gay society as being split in two, with an openly gay "friends and lovers" network and a more clandestine "married men fooling around group," who often appeared more masculine.**

JE: That was another eye-opener for me, too. I

had no idea that Kinsey had sex with men at all.

**WCT: Newspaper were such a huge source for you. In your view, were newspapers helping influence public opinion on gay life, or merely reflecting it? You focused on both a pre-1900 editorial in which a writer defended a gay man who shot his lover, and an earlier expose of a hook-up spot under Randolph Street bridge.**

JE: It was so early in our history, who knows who actually read that editorial. My guess is that it had no effect at all. It was one single person, one single editorial, and then only a line in it, but for us looking back to see that someone who had access to the public media made such a statement is amazing.

The bridge story was from one of the more scandal sheet newspapers, you could tell. There was some salaciousness in terms of the reporting going on, and maybe even some attraction, it's hard to know. What I also found out, which I hadn't understood, was that when writers and journalists wrote about the places they had visited, like the Randolph Street bridge, the gay men who read about them then had a place to go. There were these do-gooders who were trying to clean up all of the vice in the city, or write about all the vice in Chicago, and they'd pinpoint these houses of prostitution or cabarets or saloons. As soon as these books or articles were published, the gay men knew where they could find other gay men; it was in the newspaper. And so it became this kind of two-edged sword, they were trying to do away with "vice" but at the same time they were showing where that vice could be found.

**WCT: Henry Gerber, who you have a chapter about, is well-known here—we have the Gerber/Hart library, and he's widely acknowledged for starting one of the first gay publications in the country—but it seems like there's never been much exploration of him before.**

JE: In doing my research I never found anything that had as much information as I tried to give. There was no article that combined it all. Mostly when you read about him, you read about his Chicago experience, and that's about it. I found out the rest from bits and pieces that had been published here and there about him, or from letters that he wrote that had been collected and kept at the ONE archive in Los Angeles. But I think that there is a lot more that probably exists out there if anyone would take the time to actually find it.

**WCT: In all of your research, who was your favorite subject?**

JE: I like Carrick's story a lot. I thought at first that she might be transgender, but she was interviewed a lot in newspapers, and she never ever said anything about wanting to be female. I don't think she was [trans] at all, I think she simply knew what she could get away with. At the time, many gay men dressed in drag, simply to show other men that they were gay and that they were willing to play the woman's role in sexual situations. And I think that's what she was all about. She also had made a little bit of a name for herself—under a different name of course—on the vaudeville stages. So I think that she was just used to playing that role of stage. It just carried over into her real life.

That must have been a real interesting crowd



at her trial. Newspaper report after newspaper report talked about how jam-packed the courtroom was, and when she was acquitted, they broke out into cheers. So she was quite the well-known star at the time, even though it wasn't for her singing, it was just for being the person she was.

**WCT: And the judge basically acknowledged a same-sex marriage--in 1923--almost accidentally in her murder trial.**

JE: And by acknowledging it, he made it legal, he just said "you can't talk, because you're married, and married couples cannot speak against one another in a court of law" and so her husband was dismissed. That was another one of those amazing moments that I found, that not only had Frances Carrick married a man legally, then he turned around and married a woman legally, and they lived in the same apartment. It just must have been crazy.



Joseph Varisco of "Queer, Ill + Okay."  
Photo by Hal Baim

## 'Queer, Ill + Okay' June 21, 23

Program Director Joseph Varisco, of Salothron and the former Alphawood Gallery, has announced the "Queer, Ill + Okay" summer 2018 program of arts programming in partnership with multidisciplinary artist Kia LaBeija.

"Queer, Ill + Okay," now in its fifth year, returns in an attempt to explore and better understand how people are living with HIV/AIDS.

The programs are as follows:

—"Community Conversation: Kia LaBeija + Kristiana Rae Colon," Thursday, June 21, at 6:30 p.m., at Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell Ave.; tickets at <https://www.facebook.com/events/248032605777293>: This intimate discussion will investigate the tokenization of identities (Blackness, queerness, HIV+) in an age of commercial activism. HIV testing part-

On Wed., June 20, Elledge will be at a book launch at Unabridged Bookstore, 3251 N. Broadway, at 7 p.m. He will appear in conversation with local LGBT historian Owen Keehnen. A Q&A and book signing will follow the event. See <https://www.unabridgedbookstore.com/event/book-launch-boys-fairy-town>.

Also, on Friday, June 22, Elledge will participate in a reading, followed by a Q&A with June Sawyers. This will take place at City Lit Books, 2523 N. Kedzie Blvd., at 6:30 p.m. Visit <https://www.citylitbooks.com/event/author-event-boys-fairy-town-jim-elledge>.

For more on the book *The Boys of Fairy Town*, see <http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/boys-of-fairy-town--the-products-9781613739358.php>.

ners Howard Brown Health join to provide free tests.

—"Kia LaBeija at Dyke March Chicago," Saturday, June 23, at 5:30 p.m., at Little Village's Piotrowski Park, 4247 W. 31st St.; tickets and details at <https://www.facebook.com/events/257708284800365/>: "Queer, Ill + Okay" will join community partner Dyke March Chicago for the 22nd Annual Dyke March in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. The post-march festival will include QIO sponsors Modern Cannabis' (MOCA) 'Get A Card' information booth, free HIV testing with Howard Brown Health, QIO alumni Felix D. Rojas AKA Laser Slut, and opening performance by McKenzie Chinn of Growing Concerns Poetry Collective.

A full calendar of events will be released for public July 1.

## Dance for Life 2018 names companies

For its 27th annual event, Dance for Life Chicago presents a diverse group of companies and artists performing Saturday, Aug. 18, at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.

Joining the partner dance companies that perform each year—Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and The Joffrey Ballet—are Hanna Britton and Dancers, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Chicago Dance Crash and Nomi Dance Company. The concert also includes a Randy Duncan-choreographed work.

Dance for Life—which mobilizes Chicago's dance community by raising funds through dance—presents this annual benefit performance, and is preceded by a gala reception at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

Tickets—\$300–650 for both the gala reception and performance, and \$15–75 for the performance only—go on sale Friday, May 18, by phone at 312-341-2300, online at [ChicagoDancersUnited.org](http://ChicagoDancersUnited.org) or in person at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office.

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## BOOKS

# Rebecca Makkai on 'The Great Believers,' Chicago, Paris and AIDS

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

More than half of *The Great Believers* takes place in Chicago during the height of the AIDS epidemic.

As someone without first hand experience of the disease or the place, author Rebecca Makkai threw herself into research, conducting dozens of extended interviews and reading enormous amounts of reportage from the era. The effort paid off. The resulting novel does an amazing job of capturing that crucial period in Chicago LGBT history.

In the book, Makkai juxtaposes a compelling and emotional mid-1980s AIDS drama with alternating chapters set in contemporary Paris. The result is an expansive view, not only of the epidemic, but of the recurrent themes of devotion, loss, honoring the past, and carrying on.

This interviewer was fortunate enough to be one of the many folks Makkai interviewed in her research, and I was also an early reader of the book, primarily offering advice and some commentary on the era.

With *The Great Believers*, Makkai has crafted a multi-layered, smart, and gripping read that puts Chicago's gay community during those grim years front and center in the telling.

**Windy City Times: What was the seed of *The Great Believers*? What was your spark of inspiration?**

Rebecca Makkai: I originally planned to write a book about a woman who'd been an artist's model in 1920s Paris, and the art collector who was trying to figure out if the sketches she had of herself were authentic. She couldn't have lived much past the '80s, and so I decided to set it then, figuring that if I was writing about the art world in the '80s, AIDS would need to be at least a small presence in the book.

Things changed so much in the early stages of drafts, though. Soon my art collector became the development director for a museum at Northwestern University, and his storyline took over the book. That artist's model is still around, but she's only about 5 percent of the final story. Part of that shift in gravity had to do with my following the story where it wanted to go, and part of it had to do with my research. The more I read about AIDS in Chicago, the more I wanted to write about it. Realizing that Chicago's AIDS story is vastly underrepresented (in contrast to New York's or San Francisco's, for instance) made it all feel even more urgent.

**WCT: What prompted you to alternate between Chicago in the 1980s and Paris in 2015?**

RM: I'd written around 150 pages just about my main protagonist, Yale, when I realized the book

felt a little claustrophobic, and that I was limited to what he knew in the moment. His friend Fiona had been a fairly minor character up to that point, but one I liked a lot, and so I went back in and wove in her present-day perspective. That opened up so much for me. It felt right to make this novel broader, to show the long fallout of this disease and of the horrible (and occasionally wonderful) ways we handled it. It let me show not just the splash of the rock, but the ripples in the pond.

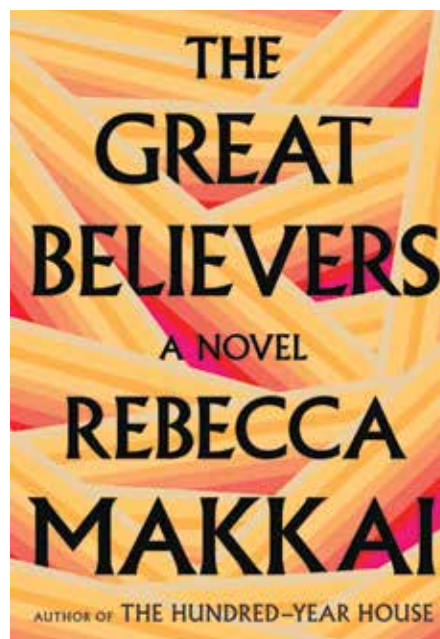
**WCT: Were you hesitant to write about AIDS and gay men from an outside perspective?**

RM: Very much. It helped me to get Fiona's perspective in there, helped me feel like I wasn't only trying to write from this point of view that I had no real right to. But still, I asked myself constantly if this was okay, if this was going to work, and ultimately it came down to two things for me. First, I wanted to know that I could do it well. It's not up to me to say whether I did, but I'll say I was enormously helped by my research, and the generosity of people (like you!) who sat down to talk to me about those years. I talked to doctors, nurses, activists, lawyers, therapists, journalists, historians and survivors—and those conversations made my work a lot stronger.

I also holed up in the Harold Washington Library and read every word of every issue of *Windy City Times* from 1985 to 1992. Second, I needed to know that writing this book wouldn't supplant any personal accounts, but could amplify them. I'm getting a lot of opportunities now, as I promote this book, to talk about direct, personal accounts, like M.K. Czerwicz's *Taking Turns*, a graphic memoir about her time as a nurse on Unit 371 at Masonic, and historical/journalistic writing, like yours, and art from the time, like Doug Ischar's *Marginal Waters* photographic series about the Belmont Rocks. Plus, publishing is not a zero-sum game. If my book is successful, it will make publishers much more likely, not less, to publish the next thing about HIV/AIDS.

**WCT: You do a great job of capturing the peak AIDS years in Chicago and putting the reader right in the middle of it all, while also making the disease part of something larger. I think that expanded view would be very tough for someone who lived through the epidemic.**

RM: I don't know if it's true that someone who'd lived through it couldn't attain enough detachment to see the broader picture, but it probably did help me that I was seeing the forest first, and then the trees. Part of what helped me contextualize those peak AIDS years was the broad historical sweep of the novel. We're there in the 80s, but we're also looking back on it from 2015—and also Nora, the artist's model who's at



the end of her life in the '80s, makes comparisons between Yale's generation and the Lost Generation of Paris artists, the generation decimated by both war and influenza.

**WCT: The art theme was very compelling for me, that notion of what art survives vs. the lost potential for art.**

RM: While it's of course not just art that's lost when someone dies young, I find art to be a good stand-in for all the beauty and good and mess and life that someone might have created if they'd lived longer. And when we're dealing with the gay population of a major city, we're often dealing with the literal art world (and the theater world, and the writing world, and dance, etc., etc.). There was amazing visual art and theater and literature that came out of, and in response to, the AIDS epidemic—one of my favorite visual pieces is Felix Gonzalez-Torres's "Untitled (Portrait of Ross in LA)" at the Art Institute, a piece in which a mound of candy starts at 175 pounds and is gradually depleted to nothing as visitors take candies away—and I think a lot of that art is still emerging. But so much of it was lost. An unimaginable amount.

**WCT: In writing the book, how important was educating the reader about AIDS history and Chicago LGBT history?**

RM: I was learning so much as I researched and wrote, and I wanted, at times to be simultaneously writing a novel and a huge book of nonfiction. I'm not particularly equipped to write nonfiction, and so I hope someone else writes the 500-page history of AIDS in Chicago, but I did try to get as much into the book as I could. On the one hand, this book is for the people who lived through it all, who might take something from seeing their own lives represented on the page, but at the same time it's for the people who knew nothing about this time. Either because they weren't born yet, or because they didn't understand it when it was happening.

One of the great, strange joys of publishing a novel is hearing about the people who stumbled unwittingly into your books in a book club—and I'd love to imagine some North Shore lady who voted for Reagan back in the day to get swept up

in the book and realize, not only what was really going on back then, but the alarming parallels to our modern health care situation, to the ways our government and our insurance companies still treat marginalized people. I'd love for her to stare into her book club wine and have a really good think.

**WCT: I like that image. I was so drawn to the characters in this book. What was your method for creating them? Did you see them first, hear their voices, give them life with a defining action? Are some based on real people?**

RM: No, aside from Harold Washington, who makes a very brief cameo, no one in the book is modeled on a real person. There are certainly some types, though; Asher Glass, my lawyer/activist character, was inspired by people like Peter Staley and Chicago's Paul Adams and Danny Sotomayor—but since those aren't/weren't people I know personally, I was able to just gather a general vibe on them from various stories I heard and read, and infuse Asher with some of their energy and tactics.

I'm not someone who thinks a lot about character before I write; I need to sort of "meet" them in action on the page. And then certain characters will interest me more than others. Fiona was like that. I don't want to make it sound like some kind of mystical process, although I suppose writing is a lot like dreaming. But I was writing the book's first scene, a memorial party, and this drunk young woman just sort of came up and enveloped Yale, and I loved her. She came to me fully formed, even if I didn't know yet how important she'd be.

**WCT: As someone who read an earlier draft of the novel and then the finished book, I was really impressed with how it went from being good to being great. How did you know it was "done?"**

RM: Well I don't necessarily know that—even now. Really, part of that finishing process is letting it out of your hands and letting other people see it. It's partly that they have suggestions, that they can hold up a mirror to what you've done—and it's partly just that letting it go helps you see it more clearly. It's kind of like how you'll find the typo the instant after you hit "send" on a really important email. Letting it go out into the world and then bringing it back in for a few more rounds of revision, you have, finally, a pretty good sense of what it looks like, and what might be off balance.

**WCT: Tell me about the title.**

RM: It's taken from my novel's epigraph, which comes, in turn, from a posthumous F. Scott Fitzgerald essay called "My Generation." He was writing about the Lost Generation, and when I first came across that quote, I was taken aback because I'd always thought of those displaced artists as being so jaded, so worldly. It was wild to me to reimagine them as chasing something quixotic, holding onto hope in the midst of chaos. I found the title when I was very, very early in the writing, and afterwards, I found myself writing toward that title. It could have been an enormously bleak book, but I had put this defiantly optimistic title on it, and so I had to keep asking myself what it meant in relation to my story—what my characters believed in, against all odds.



## CMSA's Pride Bowl XI on June 22-23

The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) announced that the football event Pride Bowl XI will take place on June 22-23 on Chicago's Montrose Lakeside Fields.

All teams must be sponsored by a dues-paying NGFFL city in order to play in Pride Bowl XI. Registration is \$52/player until May 11; \$78/player May 12-June 8, and \$104/player on June 8-21.

See <https://www.chicagomsa.org/pride-bowl/>; for more information, email [pridebowl@chicagomsa.org](mailto:pridebowl@chicagomsa.org) or call 773-505-1142.

## Rugby to return to Chicago Nov. 3

USA Rugby and TLA Worldwide (TLA), along with host city partners Chicago Sports Commission (CSC) and Soldier Field, announced that world-class international rugby will again return to Soldier Field in Chicago for the latest edition of The Rugby Weekend.

All matches will take place at Soldier Field on Saturday, Nov. 3, with USA Women's Eagles opening the match line-up against the 2017 Women's Rugby World Cup Champion Black Ferns (at 12 p.m.), followed by Ireland against Italy (at 3 p.m.) and, last, the USA Men's Eagles meeting New Zealand's Maori All Blacks (at 5:15 p.m.).

See [TheRugbyWeekend.com](http://TheRugbyWeekend.com).

## World TeamTennis returning to Chicago

World TeamTennis (WTT) will make its return to Chicago on Friday, July 27, for WTT Chicago presented by Magellan when the Philadelphia Freedoms and the Washington Kastles face off in a regular season match at the XS Tennis Village, 5336 S. State St., at 7 p.m.

The Philadelphia Freedoms, owned by Billie Jean King and coached by Grand Slam-winning coach Craig Kardon, boast a roster composed of 2017 U.S. Open singles champion Sloane Stephens, Chicago native Taylor Townsend, Fabrice Martin and Kevin King. The six-time WTT champion Washington Kastles are coached by 1993 French Open doubles champion Murphy Jensen, and will bring Madison Brengle, Nicole Melichar, Robert Lindstedt and Tennys Sandgren.

A portion of the proceeds from this match will benefit the XS Tennis and Education Foundation, which serves underserved Chicago youth with a pathway to college through sports and academics.

See [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com) and [WTTChicago.com](http://WTTChicago.com) for tickets and more information.



## 'Will & Grace' revival out on DVD

The first-season revival of Will & Grace—out 10 years after the original show ended—is now out on DVD, from Universal Pictures Home Entertainment.

Eric McCormack, Debra Messing, Sean Hayes and Megan Mullally reprise their respective roles as Will, Grace, Jack and Karen. Guest stars include Bobby Cannavale, Harry Connick Jr., Jennifer Lopez, Alec Baldwin, Minnie Driver and many more.

Bonus features include deleted scenes, a gag reel, "Back to the Beginning" (in which the cast and crew discuss the show), "Reuniting the Team" and "Classic Comedy."

## Ravinia season continues with Whoopi, Boy George

This year's Ravinia Festival's schedule has begun—in genres ranging from jazz to comedy to classical music to hip-hop will be part of the season.

According to Ravinia's website, remaining shows involve quartet Well-Strung (June 24); lesbian singer Janis Ian (June 24); out actor/musician Alan Cumming (July 13); Audra McDonald and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (July 15).

Other shows include a tribute to Leonard Bernstein (July 27); the observations of Whoopi Goldberg (Aug. 3); Steve Martin and Martin Short (Aug. 12); Culture Club, the B-52's and Thompson Twins (Aug. 31-Sept. 1); actor/hip-hop musician 50 Cent (Sept. 6); and crooner Tony Bennett (Sept. 8).

See [Ravinia.org](http://Ravinia.org).

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Business table, \$95; Nonprofit or Schools table \$75

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Contact [terri@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:terri@windycitymediagroup.com).

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PRIDE

# Pushing buttons

A retrospective of the official buttons from Chicago's Pride Parade going back to 1980, from the collection of Windy City Times assistant publisher Terri Klinsky.





# WINDY CITY TIMES' LGBTQ WEDDING & SPECIAL EVENTS GUIDE



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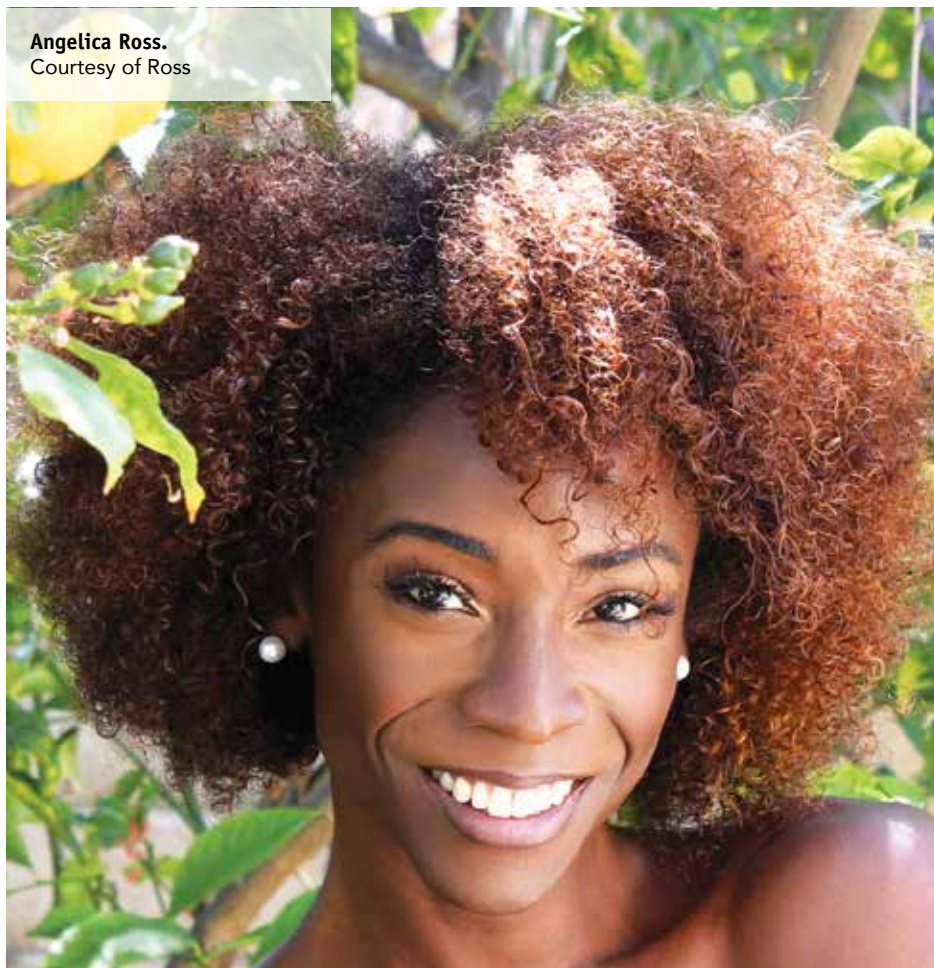
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Angelica Ross.  
Courtesy of Ross



## TELEVISION

# A fortified spirit: Talking with Angelica Ross of 'Pose'

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

Angelica Ross is busy.

She's filming a movie in the fall with Whoopi Goldberg. She's the CEO of TransTech Social Enterprises, a firm she founded in 2014 that helps employ trans people. She's curating a shorts program at Outfest. And she also plays Candy Abundance on FX's new drama *Pose*, a series that American Horror Story's Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk co-created, along with writer-producer Steven Canals. *Pose* is making history as it features the largest number of transgender actors as series regulars than any other American show and, specifically, five transgender women of color cast as series regulars.

Set in New York in the late '80s at the height of the ballroom scene, the show tackles issues of LGBTQ homelessness, the AIDS epidemic and sex

work, but its importance also lies in giving trans people of color more visibility and giving credit where credit is due by focusing on the origins and creators of the ball subculture. It's about truth, but it's also a celebration of the black and brown trans and gay community.

**Windy City Times: You've called your character Candy the "wildest character you've ever portrayed" and "shady boots." Tell us about her and the House of Abundance.**

Angelica Ross: Candy is trying to find her place and is struggling to find her category in this ballroom scene. She feels like she's a beautiful woman and that she's serving face, but she also feels like she's more than a face. She wants to experience love, she wants to be loved. Having the House of Abundance as her family is one thing—Candy and Lulu (Abundance) are thick as thieves—but Elektra's not the warmest house mother. Candy

has a lot of insecurities, so she covers that up by being defensive and shady. She feels like before they attack her, she'll get them. You'll get a lot more of a taste of her in episode four.

**WCT: I was reading that one of the upcoming episodes is based off your own real-life experience?**

AR: Well, it's not based off my own real-life experience because it's just a fact that what I've experienced is what so many other trans women of color have also experienced. It's definitely going to be a conversation-starter.

I didn't even really know where Candy the character was going. Ryan Murphy just kind of created her once he met me. They went through the audition process and I actually passed on it a couple times. I kind of gave it to other girls to audition for because I didn't really see myself as Elektra and I didn't see myself playing Blanca, either. I didn't realize they were also using that as an opportunity to find the rest of their cast.

**WCT: What was it like working with the rest of the cast and creators, like Ryan Murphy?**

AR: It's incredible because everybody has an opinion—and a strong one—which is wonderful when you're dealing with people who get it. The collaboration elevates to a higher level. It's more challenging, but you're working with people who have done great things [who] are also showing us respect, honoring what it is that we bring to the table as trans actors, as trans directors, producers, and writers.

**WCT: Did you have any fears going into the show concerning portrayals of trans women of color?**

AR: None. I had zero fears once I knew Janet Mock was on it. Zero. I knew immediately it would be done right. We've worked too hard and come too far. And she's done so much to invest in her brand, she would not allow anything to get to a point that we were used as a publicity stunt. For so long, people have been trying to project their allegiance to the trans community instead of actually proving it through their actions. It's a lot of lip service, a lot of things that don't end up as what you think they're supposed to be. The trans community was on edge and so exhausted with it because we deserve something real, we deserve something authentic. We deserve something that we want to tune in to week after week and I think *Pose* is definitely going to be that show.

**WCT: I know you've created a lot of your own content in the past to address the fact that you weren't being given what you deserve. Do you feel like there's a sense of responsibility that comes with being a representation of the trans community?**

AR: Yes and no. I think that I've gone through enough advocacy spaces to understand how to deal with this kind of respectability politics. What happens is, when telling stories of women of color, you've got one scene with Candy calling one girl a "cross-dresser," you've got girls saying things to each other that are going to end up being reads and deep cuts. It is internal talk, but this is why the community's going to continue to love it so much because it's going to be so real. The responsibility we have is to be real.

**WCT: Authenticity is key.**

AR: You get to see how Ryan Murphy can cre-

ate a show that can be advocacy within itself. As he goes on to create more content on Netflix, as we become more empowered as writers, producers and directors, we'll be creating more content. Hopefully, with more of that, we'll be able to loosen up in our shoulders and release the frustration and anxiety that has come from having to brace ourselves for every single thing. To be able to enjoy, to be able to let go. To cry tears of joy and cathartic tears because of the experiences that these characters go through. I see people on Twitter exclaiming that the experiences on *Pose* are their experiences, too.

**WCT: What else do you hope that *Pose* accomplishes?**

AR: I hope that *Pose* shines a light on what happens when we whitewash history. They'll see and realize that a lot of the things we're talking about in 1987 are still going on today. Who were we then, who are we now and how far have we come? When we talk about pride, what are we proud of? What progress can we be proud of?

**WCT: The episode with Blanca getting kicked out of a gay, but predominantly white, space was like holding up a mirror to our community.**

AR: Absolutely. I can't wait to see how the white gays are taking it.

**WCT: [Laughs] Right.**

AR: We also have so many moments to celebrate and I think we should all learn how to celebrate the wins each time. But we should not get to a point that we think the battle's over. We have to stay vigilant. I hope *Pose* shows what trans people of color have done: Janet Mock, Geena Rocero—a lot of the girls, a lot of the trans guys, non-binary people. ... What we end up doing is making something beautiful out of a story that is filled with a lot of not-so-pretty moments. *Pose* is high-glamour and glitz balanced with this pain and this reality that's our lives. Our spirits are fortified through this sort of fire, like when you're creating a sword, in the sense that if we don't crumble and give up, if we allow our experiences to make us more courageous and bold, then we get to be able to be at a place where everyone can freely express themselves.

**WCT: What has been the most mind-blowing thing about this ride for you?**

AR: Being on a show with this many trans people, like, everywhere, is just mind-blowing. My makeup artist is trans, a lot of the background people, writers, directors... We when say, "cut," and we're working with the people who are day players, there are these wonderful connections [being made].

You hear people ad-libbing. I'm like, "Okay, wait. Hold on, say it at this time so they catch it on the camera. And say it this way so it doesn't get cut." Because I want to see everybody shine, I want to see everybody win. Some of the day players would be talking about how the scenes we're doing remind them of 20 years ago. To hear that what we're talking about is reflecting real-life stories. ... I knew we were on track and it felt so authentic, so real and so good.

**To learn more about FX's *Pose*, which debuted June 3, visit <https://www.fxnetworks.com/shows/pose>. To learn more about Angelica, visit <https://missross.com/>.**



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Images from

# Northalsted Pride Fest



Pride Fest heated up Boystown on June 16 and 17 with record numbers and high temperatures. Fashion shows, a variety of vendor booths and talented performers were all part of the fun.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



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## SAVOR

### Trans ice-cream social; Furious Spoon; Taste of Chicago

On June 13, Center on Halsted held its third annual transgender ice-cream social, a free event for members of the LGBTQ community—and, specifically, the trans community. With the participation of Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream, 3657 N. Clark St., the event was meant solely as a social gathering.

Center on Halsted Director of Transgender Relations and Community Engagement Vanessa Sheridan said, "The whole idea is that it is not driven by any agenda, this is about community coming together."

"To me, this is a microcosm of what the world should be—all ages, all races, all genders ... people being together, meeting and mingling and forming a community. It's fun to be with people in this space and there is a good mix of different kinds of people."

With scoopers Clarissa Worcester and Michele Perkins serving flavors like Darkest Chocolate,



From Center on Halsted's annual trans ice-cream social.

Photos by Vern Hester

Salty Caramel and Rainbow Buttermilk Frozen Yogurt, and with DJ X-tasy providing a mix of old-school soul mixed with new beats, roughly 150 guests mingled on the Center's third floor's sundeck and foyer.

—Vern Hester

#### Furious Spoon teams with Howard Brown Health

In celebration of Pride Month, **Furious Spoon** announces the Pride Bowl in partnership with **Howard Brown Health**, offering a colorful bowl of ramen with proceeds benefiting the organization during all of June.

The rainbow ramen creation, of course, showcases the LGBTQ flag, paying homage to Chicago's community during the celebratory month.

Priced at \$15, two dollars from every bowl will be donated to Howard Brown, which aims to eliminate the disparities in healthcare experienced by the LGBTQ community through research, education and provision of services promoting health and wellness.

The Pride Bowl is available at most Furious Spoon locations, including those in Wicker Park, Logan Square, Pilsen, Andersonville, Evanston and Lake View. (The smaller Loop location, at Revival Food Hall, will not have the dish.) For more information, visit FuriousRamen.com.

#### Taste of Chicago details

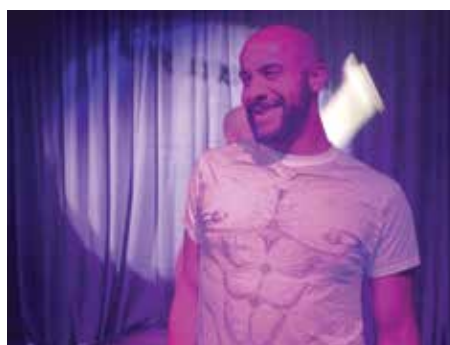
Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) announced the lineup of 73 restaurants that will participate at the 38th Annual Taste of

Chicago—the world's largest free food festival—July 11–15 in Grant Park.

Showcasing Chicago's culinary scene, this year's list of 38 five-day vendors, 22 pop-up restaurants and 13 food trucks will offer Taste-goers more than 300 menu items. Just a few of the participating businesses include Arun's Thai Restaurant, Billy Goat Tavern, Dia De Los Tamales, Premier Rollin BBQ, Classic Cobbler, Seoul Taco, Harold's Chicken, The Fat Shallot, The Lifeway Kefire Shop and Hakka Bakka Indian Kati Rolls.

Also, there will be nightly concerts at the Petrillo Music Shell that include Brandi Carlile, Juanes, yasiin bey & Talib Kweli are Black Star, The Flaming Lips and George Clinton/Parliament/Funkadelic. The Bud Light Stage will showcase local acts.

Visit TasteOfChicago.us.



## CHARLIE'S

Taking their positions at a special Pride Fest Boylesque.

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography



## ROSCOE'S

Dance, dance, dance to Dave Aude and Bimbo Jones.

Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography







## BILLY Masters

"I will see anything with Chris shirtless in a field of flowers. Or Chris looking like Jesus in the rain."—**Channing Tatum's** comments after seeing stills of a shirtless **Chris Hemsworth** in *Bad Times at the El Royale*. To recap, Tatum's divorcing his wife and lusting after a shirtless Hemsworth. Happy Pride!

Let's start with a story about **Jeff Lewis** from *Flipping Out*—who I didn't even know was still relevant. Jeff and his partner, Gage Edward (which I'm guessing is his porn name), hired a surrogate. She signed a contract with Bravo that allowed them to film her doctor's appointments. But she claims the producers surreptitiously filmed the birth! In the episode, they showed a blurred image of her vagina, which is enough for me! What really pissed her off was something Lewis then said on camera: "If I was a surrogate, and I had known there was going to be an audience, I probably would have waxed. And that was the shocking part for Gage. I don't think Gage had ever seen a vagina, let alone one that big." She's filed suit, saying the experience has caused her incredible anguish, self-loathing, contempt and depression. Lewis responded to the suit, saying, "I guess we won't be using her again."

See if you can figure out why the following headline caught my eye. "Man walked around Target exposing himself for \$20." Hmm, what could it be? This story comes to us courtesy of the Ocala Star-Banner—of course, it happened in Florida! The man in question is 21-year-old Richard Kuhn. The lad was at the store with some friends when they said they'd pay him \$20 to "walk around the store with his genitals out," according to the publication—so clearly the recession has hit everyone. Reportedly, his penis was spotted in the home-decor section, the women's clothing aisle and the frozen-food section, which I think speaks quite highly of the lad. The store got complaints from three different women—proving once again that women wouldn't know a good thing if it hit them in the face.

Summer's here and the time is right, for dancing with a peach. The soundtrack from last year's *Call Me By Your Name* is about to drop in vinyl format. But it's not just a record. The LP is peach-colored and has a peach scent! This limited edition will only be available during Peach Harvest season—which Wikipedia tells me is late June through mid-August. So I guess you can get it now.

We may not have seen the last of **Roseanne**—the show, not the comedienne. Sources say that ABC is working overtime to salvage what was their biggest hit of the season. The whole plan hinges on getting Barr to sign a deal that would give her a one-time payout from the network and not profit from the new show. It sounds like Roseanne is open to this option. Since the reboot primarily focused on the **Sara Gilbert** character of Darlene, the natural choice is to re-brand the show Darlene. However, Gilbert has pushed back on this idea, saying she's not interested in the



The soundtrack for *Call Me By Your Name* will remind fans of the movie in more ways than one, Billy says.

responsibility of carrying the show. She also feels conflicted about usurping the role of matriarch from Miss Barr. More likely, the show will return as *The Connors*.

Way back in 1988, another show jettisoned its eponymous leading lady. When negotiations with **Valerie Harper** stalled, Valerie was rebranded Valerie's Family, and her character was killed off; eventually, it became *The Hogan Family*. Aside from the Roseanne situation, this is topical because the idea of a Hogan Family reboot was recently brought up to Jason Bateman. Here's a wacky idea—why not bring back Valerie? Maybe Mom was in the witness-protection program. Or had amnesia. You wanna keep Sandy Duncan around? Fine. Once Valerie returns/regains her memory, she finds that her husband is dead, and is consoled by his sister. Bing, bang, boom—Valerie and Sandy are a lesbian couple. I smell a hit—well, I smell something!

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Henry in Boston: "Are you watching *The Bachelorette*? What do you think of that male model?"

I think he's gay—that's what I think. Of course, I can't prove it, but riddle me this—how many straight men regularly use the word "bitch?" But here's what fascinates me—**Jordan Kimball** doesn't stand out in a group of hot guys. And yet, he keeps talking about being a male model. As a professional, I'd like to give him some advice. The next time you decide to walk around a cocktail party in your underwear (been that, done that, destroyed the video evidence), do a sit-up or two first! Not that he looks bad, but there's nary an ab in sight—especially since in the past he looked pretty ripped. Either that or he had some terrific retouchers working overtime on the photos we've posted on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm bitching about a "model," it's time for me to end yet another column. All sorts of models—in and out of clothes—can be found on BillyMasters.com—the site that even features questioning Bachelorette competitors. You can all write to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Ben & Jerry's comes out with a special Peaches & Cream flavor for the summer! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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### HELP WANTED

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO** is seeking 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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## Northalsted Pride Fest

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Wed., June 20

### Windy City Times' 30 Under 30 Awards

Honors 30 who are 30 years or under as of June 30, have made substantial contributions to the Chicagoland LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas. 5:30 p.m. reception. 6:00pm - 7:30pm Polo Cafe, 3322 S Morgan St, Chicago

### Cirque du Sidetrack: Sidetrack's 36th Anniversary Party

Celebrate under the Big Top with \$2 well cocktails, \$2.50 frozen and other cocktails. Giveaways and drawings for great prizes. Free bite bites during the night from The Slide Ride and Chubby Wieners. Bring donations of paper products or a donation to The Heartland Alliance. 6 pm - 2 am, 3349 N. Halsted St.

**The Boys of Fairy Town: Sodomites, Female Impersonators, Third Sexes, Pansies, Queers, and Sex Morons in Chicago's First Century** Author Jim Elledge will appear in conversation with local LGBT historian Owen Keehnen to discuss his first novel. A Q&A and book signing will follow the event. 7:00pm Unabridged Bookstore 3251 N Broadway Chicago <http://unabridgedbookstore.com>

## Thursday, June 21

**Queer, Ill and Okay** A public arts program challenging and exploring how queer people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses are creating new narratives. Tonight, Kia LaBeija + Kristiana Rae Colon 6:30pm Hyde Park Art Center 5020 S. Cornell Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/events/248032605777293>

**W.O.M.B. Poetry** Monthly women of color poetry and spoken word open mic night 7:00pm - 9:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago <http://www.affinity95.org>

## Friday, June 22

### Love is Love Pride Party for Seniors at The Breakers

Open to the LGBT community and allies of all ages. Refreshments, appetizers, entertainment by Madame X and Creaoke Karaoke. Group tour of senior lifestyle facility follows after. RSVP by phone 2:00pm - 3:00pm The Breakers, Showroom 3rd Floor, 5333 N. Sheridan, Chicago 773-257-7358

**Lunch n Learn PrEP** National HIV Testing Day on PrEP. Free Program 2:00pm - 3:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/lunchnlearn?erid=8250109&trid=09824ff9-e3b1-4f99-8e04-09657a3eae7b>



## LEADING RAINBOW Sunday, June 24

The 49th Annual Chicago Pride Parade will take place in Uptown and Boystown.

Photo by Matt Simonette

**Back Lot Bash's 'Whiskey, Wine & Women'** A Pride Tasting Event. Mix. Mingle. Taste an array of fine whiskeys, wines & craft beers. Mediterranean Dinner Buffet 5:00pm The Annex @ Reza's Restaurant Chicago <http://https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3398049>

**Pride Kick Off Celebration** Pride bash overlooking Halsted Street on the Roof Terrace. Live performance from ADA VOX, American Idol finalist, Nina Bo'Nina Brown, and International DJ/Producer DJ Deanne. \$25 includes beer, wine or soda, bites and performance 5:30pm - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/PrideKickoff?erid=8250109&trid=09824ff9-e3b1-4f99-8e04-09657a3eae7b>

**The Boys of Fairy Town: Sodomites, Female Impersonators, Third Sexes, Pansies, Queers, and Sex Morons in Chicago's First Century** Explores the stories of "fairy town," otherwise known as the lively Chicago neighborhoods where queer men sought to establish lives for themselves. Author Jim Elledge reading his first novel followed by a Q&A with June Sawyers 6:30pm City Lit Books 2523 N. Kedzie Blvd. Chicago <http://citylitbooks.com>

**Pink Orchids with post-show discussion, "Dating with HIV"** Discussions follow performances of British play in which five eloquently interwoven and often funny monologues explore the experience of living with HIV 7:30pm The Buena, Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway <http://pridefilmsandplays.com>

**Laramie Project** A community's deeply-moving response to the 1998 murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard, written by Moises Kaufman and the Members of Tectonic Theater Project. Through Sunday, July 8. 8:00pm The Raven Theatre, West Stage, 6157 N. Clark St., Chicago <http://www.astonrep.com>

[astonrep.com](http://www.astonrep.com)

**Queen! show with CeCe Peniston, Dajae** DJ Steve "Silk" Hurley is the headliner; special guests are slated to include dance-music star CeCe Peniston ("Finally"), house-music artist Dajae ("Brighter Days"), Joe Smooth, Shaun J. Wright and Hey Rae Chardonnay plus drag personalities Lucy Stoolie, Dida Ritz, JoJo Baby, Monica Beverly Hillz. 9:00pm Metro Chicago 3730 N Clark Chicago <http://www.redbull.com/us-en/music/events/red-bull-music-presents-queen>

**Professionals Do Pride Happy Hour** Celebrate Pride with Chicago Professionals at Sidetrack! Tickets are \$20 at the door (cash only), with two drink tickets included and a chance to win one of several door prizes. All proceeds go to this year's beneficiary: Care2Prevent at the University of Chicago. Attending companies include Accenture, AFC, Avanade, Barilla, BMO Harris, Career Builder, Cars.com, Deloitte, MillerCoors, Morningstar, Northern Trust, PepsiCo, PNC, PwC, Razorfish, Schafer Condon Carter, Slalom, Tyson, UBS, United Airlines, and more. 5:30-8:30 pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

## Saturday, June 23

**Legacy with Pride** Cocktail fundraiser with raffle prizes and surprises. Benefit Legacy Projects' participation in the Chicago Pride Parade. 2:00pm - 5:00pm Hydrate Nightclub 3458 N Halsted Chicago

**Dyke March** Chicago Dyke March Collective presents 22nd annual in Little Village 2:00pm - 6:00pm Piotrowski Park, 4247 W 31st St [http://www.facebook.com/events/257708284800365/?active\\_tab=about](http://www.facebook.com/events/257708284800365/?active_tab=about)

**Back Lot Bash** Featuring Kate Moennig, Kittens, Brooke Candy, Whitney Mixer, Rose Garcia, CATFIGHT, Bridget Lyons, Jade The Ivy, Dance Loud Music, DJ Zel, DJ All The Way Kay and DJ Kristin Sanchez. 21+ 4:00pm Parking Lot Behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark, Chicago <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3400455>

**Queer the Pier, Navy Pier Beer Garden** Adam Ness & Friends, Cece Peniston, Slo 'Mo Party travels sonically and visually through history of queer club culture. Chicago R&B vocalist Adam Ness & special guests cover "queer club anthems" followed by a fashion show of "queer club looks through the decades" devised by vintage shop Kokorokoko. kristenkaza@gmail.com . 5:00pm - 12:00pm Navy Pier 600 E Grand Ave Chicago <http://navypier.org/articles/third-annual-navy-pier-pride/>

**Navy Pier's 3rd Annual Navy Pier Pride** Navy Pier's 3rd Annual Navy Pier Pride, a full day of family-friendly Pride events starting with the opening of the Chicago Children's Museum's Family Resource and Activity Station, where guests can learn about the Museum's resources for LGBTQ+ families and participate in pride-themed arts and crafts activities from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the South Dock. At noon, catch Storytime with Drag Queens,

presented in partnership with Chicago Children's Museum, at the West Platform on the South Dock, a special reading of classic children's books by a few of Chicago's fun and fabulous drag queens. Free and open to the public. 11:00am Navy Pier 600 E Grand Ave Chicago <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Navy-Pier-Pride-Celebrates-LGBTQ-Community-and-Culture/63124.html>

**37th Annual Proud To Run** 10K run and 5K run/walk. Last year had 2,000 runners, 200 volunteers, and hundreds of friends, families, and community partners, raising \$65,000 for beneficiaries. 10K run starts 8:04 a.m.; 5K run/walk - 8:24 a.m. 600 W Montrose Harbor Drive (Montrose Harbor Drive & Simonds Drive; just north of Montrose Harbor) <http://www.proudtorun.org>

**Berwyn Pride March** Gather outside the James Joyce, walk to Karasek Park for guest speakers and end at Lavergne's, a family-friendly bar and restaurant with an outside patio. 1:00pm The James Joyce, 7138 Windsor Ave., Berwyn <http://www.whyberwyn.com/living/lgbtq-pride/>

**Screening Coming Out: A 50 Year History** Film featuring high school and college students interviewing older LGBTQ people who "came out" in different historical eras from the 1950s until today. It will also be aired on WTTW 2:00pm - 4:00pm Chicago Cultural Center Claudia Cassidy Theater <http://www.wttw.com>

**Kia LaBeija at Dyke March Chicago** Part of Queer, Ill + Okay, a public arts program aimed and challenging and exploring how queer people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses are creating new narratives. 5:30pm Little Village, Piotrowski Park, 4247 W 31st St, Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/events/257708284800365/>

**You're Being Ridiculous celebrates PRIDE at Steppenwolf** LookOut Series, a performance series that presents the work of artists, writers, storytellers and companies across genre and form. Seating limited so buy early. 8:00pm Steppenwolf Theatre 1650 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: <https://www.steppenwolf.org/tickets--events/seasons/2017-18/youre-being-ridiculous/>

## Sunday, June 24

**Chicago's 49th Annual Pride Parade** A million expected to line the parade route 12:00pm Steps off from Broadway and Montrose <http://www.chicagopridecalendar.com/>

**Welcoming Churches Parade Day worship and witness** Working to bring hope to the LGBTQ community in a challenging period, member organizations have a differing range of resources and capacity to engage justice-making strategies on racism, xenophobia, transphobia etc. Time:TBA To be announced <http://chicagowelcomingchurches.org>

**Back Lot Bash** Post Parade Bash After the Parade 4:00pm Parking Lot Behind Cheetah Gym, 5238 N. Clark, Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/>

events/1910876188977028/ Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3400455>

**Black LGBTQ Family and Ally Pride Day** Openly gay hip-hop Miami reality show star Bobby Lytes. Bring picnic basket, chairs, music, friends and family! RSVP 4:00pm - 8:00pm Montrose Beach, 4400 N. Lake Shore Dr <http://www.facebook.com/events/1683095761726420/?ti=icl>

**Dance Divas 2018, kicking off Dance for Life 2018** Chicago's leading dance men portraying the world's leading female Dance Divas from film and stage. Benefiting The Dancers' Fund. \$50 6:00pm Baton Show Lounge 436 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/dance-divas-dance-for-life-chicago-2018-kick-off-party-tickets-45670826672>

**A Queer Pride and IT Presents Green House Queen House** After-party to Pride Parade, whimsical adventure of drag, live music, DJ sets and fashion, interactive and immersive transformation of the theater into a larger than life greenhouse filled with towering flowers, butterfly tunnel 9:00pm - 2:00am Annoyance Theatre 851 W Belmont Chicago <http://do312.com/aqueerpride>

## Tuesday, June 26

**Black Girl Magic** Asia O'Hara, Monet X Change, Monique Heart, the Vixen, Shea Coulee, Dida Ritz, Bambi Banks, Eva Styles, Lucy Stoolie, and Sasha Love. \$30. All ages. 8:30pm Metro Chicago 3730 N Clark Chicago <http://metrochicago.com/event/black-girl-magic>

## Wed., June 27

**Walgreens offers testing for National HIV Testing Day** List of participating Walgreens locations and additional information about HIV testing, including year-round testing sites at the link. 10:00am - 7:00pm Participating Walgreens stores <http://www.greatertan.org/walgreens>

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

## Thursday, June 28

**Hines Veterans Hospital Pride event** Theme "Remember the Past, Create the Future." Mid-day gathering, information tables. On the Hines campus in Building 1, Room E471 11:00am - 1:00pm Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, 5000 S. 5th Ave, Hines, IL







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