

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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GEM DANDY

Don Strzepek talks jewelry business, LGBT activism.

Photo courtesy of Strzepek

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WCT serves a review of the production.

Photo of Desi Oakley by Joan Marcus



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Photo by Vern Hester

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RIDE WITH PRIDE

Matthew O'Maley readies for Ride For AIDS Chicago.

Photo courtesy of O'Maley



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Via Haman in a publicity image.
Photo by Alexis O'Connor

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OF NOTE

Lesbian music director Marin Alsop on professional, personal lives

Marin Alsop.
Photo by Kym Thomson

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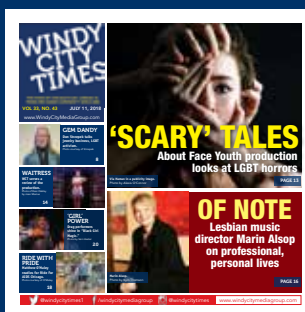
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Above: WCT reviews Support Group for Men.
 Photo by Liz Lauren

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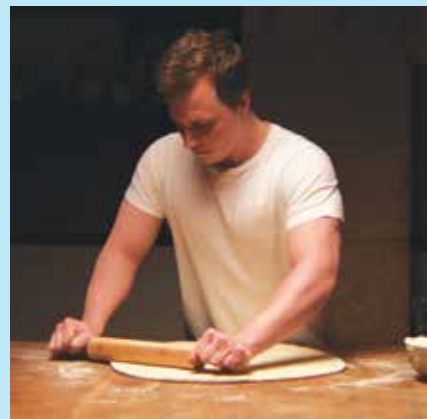


CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

WCT breaks down the sights
 (and tastes) of Pasadena.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

TAKING THE 'CAKE'



The LGBT film The Cakemaker—
 showing at the Gene Siskel Film
 Center starting July 13—is reviewed.

Photo courtesy of Strand Releasing

FIVE ALIVE

The latest Five Worth Finding roundup
 includes a magic show, ice cream and
 a book on Argentinian transgender
 individuals.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Ricky
 Martin, Idris Elba and Shirley Manson.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

This Week's Featured Properties



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 woods, and glass – all artfully integrated
 into every inch of its construction.

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Trump names Kavanaugh as next nominee to Supreme Court

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

President Trump on Monday night nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court a judge who has no known LGBT-related decisions in his 12 years on the federal appeals court. But LGBT activists feel certain that Judge Brett Kavanaugh will be no Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Rea Carey, head of the LGBTQ Task Force, said "There hasn't been a nominee for the Supreme Court this extreme since Robert Bork."

Jenny Pizer of Lambda Legal was more blunt, saying Kavanaugh will "yank the court sharply to the extreme right."

Equality California called him a "far-right extremist."

Shannon Minter of the National Center for Lesbian Rights said there is nothing in Kavanaugh's record to indicate he "understands the real-world impact of discrimination on LGBT people or the importance of constraining our nation's laws to enable them to participate fully and equally in society."

But Kavanaugh, speaking from prepared remarks in the East Room of the White House Monday night, tried with whatever he could find to suggest he understands.

He said he was deeply honored to fill Kennedy's seat. He didn't mention that Kennedy had, during his time on the bench, become a reliable swing vote in favor of equal rights for LGBT people in four landmark cases.

Kavanaugh noted that Justice Elena Kagan, when she was dean at Harvard Law school, hired him to teach students there that "the Constitution's separation of powers protects individual liberty...." He did not mention that Kagan has been a reliable vote for LGBT equality, too.

And Kavanaugh credited his mother, a judge who had once taught in public high school. He said she "taught me the importance of equality for all Americans."

Kavanaugh, 53, did not mention that he also clerked for Ninth Circuit Judge Alex Kozinski. Kozinski, who resigned last year as allegations surfaced that he engaged in sexual misconduct. Kozinski was also a supporter of equal rights for LGBT people.

President George W. Bush appointed Kavanaugh to the D.C. Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals. Prior to that, Kavanaugh worked in the White House as President Bush's Staff Secretary and he married the woman who worked as Bush's personal secretary. In the Bush White House, Kavanaugh was a key player in choosing U.S. Supreme Court nominees, most of whom were very right-wing.

At Kavanaugh's own confirmation hearing in 2006, then Senator Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) told Kavanaugh that the issue of same-sex marriage was coming up through the court system. He



Lambda Legal CEO Rachel Tiven (above) is among the LGBT leaders criticizing President Trump's choice of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Photo by Matt Simonette

asked, "Do you have a viewpoint on issues, say, as marriage and the determination of the definition of that? Is that something that the court should establish or is it left to the legislative bodies?"

Kavanaugh said he was hesitant to discuss the issue, since it might come before him on the D.C. Circuit.

"In terms of your general principle about judicial activism," said Kavanaugh, "I do think that some of the worst moments in the Supreme

Court's history have been moments of judicial activism, like the Dred Scott case, like the Lochner case, where the Court went outside its proper bounds, in my judgment, in interpreting clauses of the Constitution to impose its own policy views and to supplant the proper role of the legislative branch. So I think, in terms of judicial activism, that is something that all judges have to guard against. That is something that the Supreme Court has to guard against. And throughout our history, we have seen that some of the worst moments in the Supreme Court history have been moments of judicial activism where courts have imposed their own policy preferences."

Rachel B. Tiven, Chief Executive Officer of Lambda Legal, said LGBT people "have good reason to fear that Judge Kavanaugh will abuse his

SIDEBAR

Equality Illinois releases statement on Kavanaugh nomination

We at Equality Illinois will work with our state and national partners to analyze Judge Kavanaugh's record and call our community to action in the coming days. We will fight and resist an anti-LGBTQ nominee who would try to turn back the clock on our civil rights. The history of LGBTQ people demonstrates that we know how to show up, speak up, and fight back.

Judge Kavanaugh's record must adhere to our core constitutional values: equal protection under the law, the dignity of each person, and the freedom to be who you are without burden or discrimination. This is particularly critical now, at a time when the civil rights of LGBTQ people are under attack by the Trump Administration.

Judge Kavanaugh's record and independence should be deliberately and seriously scrutinized

power on the Court to protect the wealthy and the powerful while depriving LGBT Americans of our dignity, demeaning our community, and diminishing our status as equal citizens."

Many political observers are speculating that Trump was drawn to Kavanaugh in no small part because he thinks Kavanaugh would protect him when certain issues come before the Supreme Court. Kavanaugh has written, for instance, that he does not believe a U.S. president can be criminally indicted or subjected to a civil lawsuit while in office. U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), who is on the Senate Judiciary Committee, told the Rachel Maddow Show last night that the Kavanaugh nomination a "get out of jail free card."

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and evaluated to ensure his commitment to those core constitutional values. And the United States Senate must do its job and be faithful to our constitutional values and to the rights of the American people.

Federal courts have played critical roles in helping to advance the civil rights of LGBTQ people, including decriminalizing same-sex relationships, fighting anti-LGBTQ discrimination, defending the freedom to marry, and protecting transgender students in schools. These ruling have recognized our shared American values of equality, dignity, and the freedom to be who we are without burden or discrimination.

The opponents of equality want to transform our federal court system into instruments that would turn back the civil rights clock and allow a broad right to discriminate in public life against LGBTQ people and other historically marginalized communities. They are currently one justice away from that power, which is why scrutiny of this nominee's jurisprudence is critical for our community.

—From a press release

Affinity's leadership events in July

Affinity Community Services is hosting a virtual leadership series, "The Blackprint: A Plan for Building the Leadership Capacity of Black LGBTQ+ Women Leaders," each Thursday in July. It continues on the following dates:

—July 12: noon-1 p.m.: Building Economic Power

—July 19: noon-1 p.m.: Building Political Power

—July 26: noon-1 p.m.: Building Executive Power

"Affinity Community Services is thrilled to be actively working to develop the capacity of Black LGBTQ+ women leaders," said Affinity Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon in a press release. "Black LGBTQ+ women, communities of color, and individuals from underrepresented identities are less likely to be in positions of leadership across all fields. There are currently no Black women at the helm of Fortune 500 companies.

The Blackprint will consist of a webinar series

that will allow leaders in these fields to share what has made them successful in their line of work, and explore the challenges they have had to overcome. Participants in the series will have an opportunity to pose specific questions to these experts during the webinar to their own leadership development.

Following the speaker series, Affinity will produce a toolkit that will help organizations recruit and retain Black LGBTQ+ women and people from underrepresented identities.

This virtual leadership series is free of charge, and will take place entirely online. Participants can register for the series at <http://bit.ly/AffinityTheBlackprint>; for more information, visit Affinity95.org.

Cook County board drafts immigrant resolution

The Cook County Board of Commissioners recently unanimously approved a resolution Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia proposed that is titled "Addressing the Harmful Effects of Immi-

grant Child and Family Detention and Calling on the U.S. Congress and the Executive Branch to Rescind the 'Zero Tolerance' Policy."

Garcia said, "With this resolution, Cook County calls on Cook County to call on the U.S. Congress and the executive branch to rescind the Zero Tolerance policy and define a pathway to reunification for impacted families.

"Furthermore, it is the first county-level resolution to call for a data-sharing memorandum of agreement between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to be retracted in order to ensure the safety of immigrant children in government custody. The resolution cites demands from immigrant-rights advocates across the country to limit funding towards [sic] immigration enforcement."

Among those testifying on behalf of Garcia's resolution were Anna Duke, who read a statement on behalf of the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago School of Law; Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights' Jajah Wu; the Pozen Family Center for Human Rights' Susan Gzesh; and Renee Hatcher, of the John Marshall Law School.

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Out and Sober: Beating dual stigma

BY NOAH MCCARTHY

Tucked away on Chicago's West Side, the Gateway Foundation's Chicago Independence location is helping recovering addicts from the LGBTQ community get back on their feet.

The foundation offers an optional program called Out and Sober whose members meet twice-weekly in a queer-positive space, drawing approximately 10 people each week from the facilities' 100 clients. Craig Lamb, the program director, has been with the program since its inception in May 2017, and credits Center on Halsted Director of Behavioral Health Ing Swenson for initiating the program.

Emphasizing that the program was not conceived as a way to fight homophobia, but as a way to greet LGBTQ people with positivity, Lamb highlighted the program's goals in helping people work through the specific difficulties which accompany being an LGBTQ addict.

The main problems patients regularly encounter include the loss of family support due to intolerance and the nightlife that can provide drugs and alcohol. Sometimes, young people turn to drugs to escape feelings of shame caused by rejection, although sometimes the roots of addiction are more opaque. Regardless, all LGBTQ addicts must contend with the dual stigma of being an addict

and of being LGBTQ as well as the reality of a club-driven queer social life.

One client, Leeann, has experienced this problem herself, saying, "I looked around and realized I had no sober, queer friends." Leeann is a native of the Southwest Side of Chicago, and comes from a volatile home. Her father would use bourbon to treat her childhood stomach aches and flu. At 14, she was kicked out of Catholic school, moved in with her brother in Lincoln Park and started attending public school. She was faced with a suddenly open, experimental crowd and was exposed to many hard drugs. At 16, she attended rehab for the first time. Thinking she had kicked her addiction, she went out to celebrate New Year's, and was soon back into her old habits.

Like many other LGBTQ addicts, Leeann has been diagnosed with mental-health conditions. After a recent downward spiral, Leeann moved away from her partner and began to focus on her sobriety. Although she said that the close-mindedness of people on the South Side means she can't be as forthcoming about her sexuality, Leeann added that she doesn't feel that being LGBTQ has complicated her recovery. Instead, Leeann said, "I'm grateful to be gay." In fact, her advice to younger people focused on honesty, saying, "Where you fall short is when you doubt yourself, when you don't believe in yourself. In



Out and Sober member Wade.

Photos by Noah McCarthy

every situation, the first person you have to lie to is yourself."

Another Out and Sober member, Wade, grew up with a supportive family. Wade is out to their mother and sister, but has not yet discussed their identity with their father. Wade's parents are both recovering addicts, and Wade believes there might be a genetic component to their addiction.

The first time Wade drank, their mother took them to the hospital, where they registered a 0.36 blood alcohol content (BAC); a BAC of 0.4 causes loss of consciousness and sometimes death. After escalating behavior, Wade's mother delivered an ultimatum: Get sober or get out.

Wade left home at 15. Their habit spread into harder drugs, but after their first rehab stint, Wade was able to move back in with their family at 17. Wade said they "never wanted to be sober," and that they "only did it for [their] family." After falling into old addictions, they were soon met by a second ultimatum, and left again.

From ages 17-19, Wade supported themselves by working odd jobs and selling drugs. After two

of their friends had seizures, Wade learned they had been selling fentanyl-laced Xanax. (Fentanyl, a synthetic painkiller often prescribed to cancer patients, is 50 times stronger than heroin.) According to the FDA, even small amounts of the drug can have deadly side effects. Appalled, Wade stopped selling the drug.

Soon after, they reached out to their father for help, as their mother was no longer speaking with them. This led to their recovery at Gateway, and their involvement with the Out and Sober program. Wade said, "Now, I am getting sober for myself. I'm focusing on my future, my health, and my mental state." Wade adds that they have appreciated the program for providing "a space for [LGBTQ people] to talk about [their] struggles, a safe space." Out and Sober allows people to be honest with themselves and others as they move along the path to recovery.

The Gateway Foundation accepts its patients regardless of insurance status, and has a 24-hour helpline at 877-505-4673.

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Out and Sober program director Craig Lamb.



Lauren Underwood.

Photo by R. Dione Foto

HRC endorses Lauren Underwood

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) recently announced its endorsement of Lauren Underwood for U.S. Congress in Illinois' 14th Congressional District.

"Lauren Underwood is the clear choice for Illinois voters who believe in justice, fairness and equality," said HRC Senior Vice President of Policy and Political Affairs JoDee Winterhof in a state-

ment. "She will fight for Illinois' working families and champion every person's right to live and work free from discrimination and harassment.

"HRC is proud to endorse her bid to represent the people of Illinois' 14th District in Congress, and we look forward to working closely with her to move LGBTQ equality forward once elected."

She will be facing incumbent Rep. Randy Hultgren (R) in the general election in November. Hultgren has consistently received a zero on HRC's congressional scorecard, which measures members' of Congress support for LGBTQ equality.

Chicagoan among LGBTQ Youth Courage Award winners

The Colin Higgins Foundation recently announced its 18th Annual Youth Courage Award winners, whom it will recognize for extraordinary leadership and advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ youth.

The 2018 winners are Moises Rodriguez, 20, of Chicago; Grace Dolan-Sandrino, 17, of Washington, D.C.; Mahad Olad, 20, of Ithica, New York; and Dwayne Cole, Jr., 20, of Detroit.

Each winner will receive a \$10,000 award as well as an all-expenses-paid trip to attend the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference, a prominent LGBTQ advocacy and orga-

nizing event, in January 2019 in Detroit.

Hollywood filmmaker Colin Higgins established the foundation in 1986 to support his humanitarian vision, with special focus on the LGBTQ community. Since his death in 1988, the foundation has awarded more than 650 grants totaling more than \$5.6 million and, since 2000, has honored more than 54 Courage Award winners.

Gay Chicagoan gets immigrant award

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has named its 2018 Great Immigrant Award recipients—with Bernard Cherkasov among them.

Cherkasov (who is from Azerbaijan) is a former CEO of Equality Illinois, and is the current executive director of Cradles to Crayons Chicago, a nonprofit that provides underprivileged children with clothes, school supplies and other essentials.

A 2018 NBC Out #Pride 30 honoree, which recognizes 30 LGBTQ individuals, Cherkasov lives with his husband and daughter in Chicago.

For 2018, the honorees represent 30 different countries of origin, a range of personal immigration experiences, and high-level leadership in numerous fields. A few of the other honorees included actor Oscar Isaac (Guatemala), singer Regina Spektor (Russia), architect Daniel Libeskind (Poland), actor/writer Kumail Nanjiani (Pakistan),

actress Yvonne Orji (Nigeria), New York State Supreme Court Justice Carmen R. Velasquez (Ecuador) and biophysicist Joachim Frank (Germany).



Bernard Cherkasov.

Photo by Andrew Davis



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Donald Strzepek on jewelry business, early LGBTQ activism

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Lifelong Chicagoan Donald Strzepek has been in the jewelry business for more than 30 years and is currently the owner of Tucker Inc., in the heart of Jeweler's Row in the Loop.

"I grew up on the Northwest Side of Chicago, near the brickyard, with my two brothers and a



Don Strzepek.

sister," said Strzepek. "My neighborhood had lots of kids and we played outside until the street lights came on. I had a great childhood. I went to Lane Tech, which was an overwhelming experience because of the size of the school."

He graduated from DePaul University with a double major in English/communication and secondary education and, after a brief stint teaching high school English in the Chicago Public School system, began his journey in the jewelry business.

"I was too young, short and way too thin to be a high school teacher, so I decided to find other career options where I could utilize my artistic and communication skills," said Strzepek. "I found Tucker Inc. and the owner, Sherman Tucker, sent me to my first gemology course. I was hooked. He also taught me to be humble and see every customer as my first customer. I found my passion and a career path that allowed me to explore all facets of my persona."

While Strzepek was working at Tucker Inc., he resumed teaching, this time as an English as a Second Language teacher at Truman College.

"Recently, I had my students write down one word to explain why they came to the United



Left: Don Strzepek (in Hawaiian shirt) after Pride in 1985.

Below: Strzepek (next to the D) with DePaul University's Act OUT Pride Parade contingent in 2014.

Photo courtesy of Strzepek



States, and out of over 50 students only one person wrote down money," said Strzepek. "The rest of the students wrote down freedom, opportunity, love, family, war and security among other words. In my almost 30 years of teaching these classes, I have seen refugees from Bosnia and El Salvador, and professionals from many repressive countries, who have come here and taken cleaning jobs so they could support their families. All they want is security and freedom, and the right to live the American dream."

In 2006, when Tucker was ready to retire, Strzepek decided to purchase Tucker Inc., so he created a business plan, took out a huge loan and bought the company.

"This is my home, my company, my life, my passion, my joy, my adventure and, yes, even my source of angst," said Strzepek. "I have created almost every kind of jewelry design imaginable, from the sublime to the avant-garde. This includes a belt with 28 one-carat diamonds, a volcano ring with a ruby, a necklace with eyeballs and sapphires for tears, tiaras and thousands of other items. I love working with a client to create something that is unique and made especially for them."

As for wedding rings, Strzepek explained that he is a purist who does not like metal rings. He said if a couple is "making this leap of faith in each other, you need to do it with style, grace and elegance."

Strzepek has had many famous clients including Chef Art Smith and his husband Jesus Salgueiro, author Sara Peretsky, actor Chris O'Donnell and baseball player Curtis Pride. He nevertheless added that everyone who walks into his store is a high profile client.

Over the past three decades plus, Strzepek has also been involved with a variety of local LGBTQ- and HIV/AIDS-focused groups and events.

When Strzepek was in college, he and fellow classmates Edward Maldonado, David Gayley and Bliss Frings founded the first LGBTQ student group, The Society of the Individual, for a Catho-

lic university in the world. Four years ago, the group (now called Act OUT) invited Strzepek to take part in their Pride Parade contingent as their guest marshal.

One of the ways Strzepek gave back as a young adult during the AIDS epidemic of the '80s was by participating in Howard Brown Health's early safer-sex awareness research studies. They met every six months to discuss the issue and get tested for HIV. Strzepek has gotten tested every six months since.

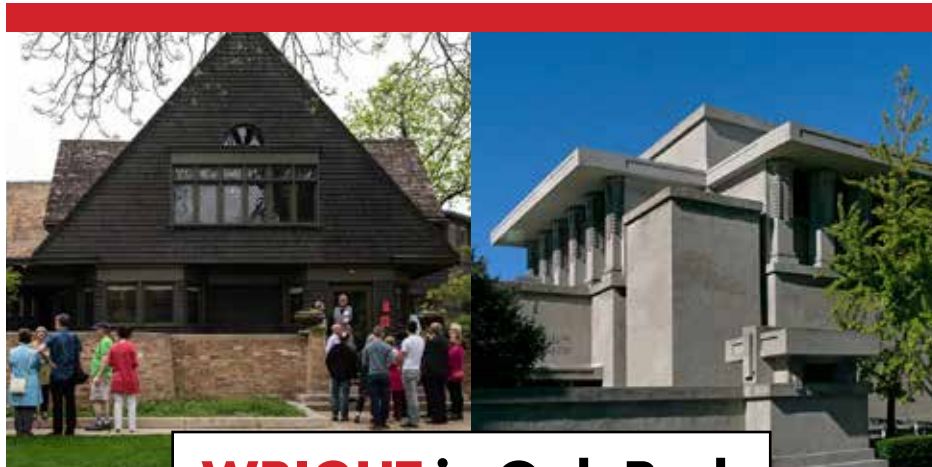
He started attending Chicago's Pride Parade in high school and has never missed a year since then.

In 1985, Strzepek recalled, he and his college friends were walking alongside the parade's lineup area. A man asked if anyone wanted to ride on his AIDS-awareness float since the people who were supposed to participate had recently died of AIDS. They decided to jump on the float since no one else was willing to do it.

"As we went through the parade route, the thing that came to my mind was this moment was like a Fellini movie," said Strzepek. "It was surreal. When our float went down the street there was total silence. People were coming up and saying they admired our courage and how much more research and medical funding needed to happen. It was an awe inspiring moment."

"I can remember how different the parade was in the early days. There were rallies after the parade in the park with poets, speakers, musicians and politicians. I have witnessed so many changes and advancements, yet I still see so many challenges that need to be met. We still need HIV/AIDS education, human rights awareness and, yes, I see an ever growing need to address the opioid crisis that is escalating within the gay community."

Strzepek also started the Halloween Parade with Maldonado in 1997. They got the idea after seeing New York City's parade in 1996.



WRIGHT in Oak Park

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Legacy Walk to unveil Tchaikovsky exhibit Oct. 13

CHICAGO—One of the immortal composers of classical music, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, will join the ranks of such LGBTQ icons as Alan Turing and Sylvia Rivera with a biographical memorial



The Tchaikovsky plaque will join others such as Sally Ride's (above) on The Legacy Walk, located in Chicago's Boystown. Photo courtesy of Victor Salvo

in Chicago's award-winning outdoor LGBT History Museum's "The Legacy Walk."

With Ravinia Festival, Ravinia Board Chairman Jennifer Steans, Illinois state Sen. Heather Steans (D-7th District), and Ravinia President/CEO Welz Kauffman and husband Jon Teeuwissen sponsoring, the Tchaikovsky exhibit will be unveiled at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 13, in the Boystown area of Chicago.

Award-winning jazz pianist/composer/accordionist Ben Rosenblum will give a street performance at the dedication and will make his Ravinia debut later that night. A "Dedication Celebration" will follow the installation at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

The Legacy Walk is an international and multi-cultural half-mile installation that celebrates the contributions LGBT people have made to world history and culture. Its bronze biographical memorials feature detailed text and images of individuals who have championed the community, such as Jane Addams, Bayard Rustin, Alan Turing, Sally Ride and James Baldwin.

Each marker is digitally linked to a cloud-based Near Field Communication system that enables patrons to access video and download lesson plans, study guides, and reading resources through their smartphones. The Legacy Walk also serves as an "outdoor classroom" for LGBTQ youth to learn about historically significant role models. The streetscape, which soon will be granted historic landmark status, is the only installation of its kind in the world.

See LegacyProjectChicago.org.

Emanuel proposes housing department

Mayor Rahm Emanuel proposed the Chicago Department of Housing, a new City department exclusively focused on supporting access to housing as a core component of all neighborhoods.

The new department will implement Chicago's affordable housing strategies and create a long term institutional framework, according to a statement from the city.

The new department will be responsible for implementing the strategy outlined in the next Five-Year Housing Plan. The mayor will be calling on the plan's Steering and Advisory committee to create a new vision for housing.

The mayor's 2019 budget will outline the structure and funding for the new department. The investment will include an increase in staffing and resources to achieve the department's strategic objectives.

LGBT Hall of Fame restructuring; no 2018 event

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame has issued a statement on a restructuring happening regarding the 27-year-old organization. The Hall of Fame will be on hiatus for 2018, and is expected to return in 2019.

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame is "going

through a period of reorganizing and reconstruction," a statement from the board stated. Several longtime board members recently resigned, and the new board is seeking time to decide the future of the Hall. Over the summer and fall of 2018, the board will be meeting with community members and organizations to decide if a potential merger with a larger, similarly focused organization will create a more sustainable model for the Hall to survive.

The Hall is both a historic event and an exhibit that has been in the community since 1991. "This organization continues to help not only the residents of Chicago but also the world to be aware of the contributions of Chicago's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities," board President Kathy Caldwell said.

See GLHallOfFame.org or call 773-281-5095.

WCT looking for stories from 1968

Windy City Times plans to examine what happened precisely 50 years ago—in 1968—and is looking for stories from LGBT individuals who were in Chicago at that time to shed light on what the climate was during that pivotal year.

WCT plans to run 100-200-word reminiscences.

Please submit items to Andrew Davis or Tracy Baim at, respectively, Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or Editor@WindyCityMediaGroup.com. The deadline is Friday, July 15.

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Shedd Aquarium jazzes with Pride

BY THERESA VOLPE

After 22 years of the Shedd Aquarium hosting its popular Wednesday night summer-event series "Jazzin' at the Shedd," it held its first on-site pride-focused event, LGBTQ Pride Jazzin', June 28 in an effort to connect new audiences with the aquarium.

At first glance, the event screamed pink-washing, with its reception-style round tables draped in white linen encircling the aquarium's 90,000-gallon Caribbean Reef exhibit, each table decorated with a pair of miniature Pride and Bi-sexual Pride flags while enormous rainbow flags swung from balconies at every turn. But the experience and message for the evening proved differently.

This gathering, where singles go to meet and mingle, had an LGBT-inclusive vibe to it. Amongst the diverse crowd of around 500 people were queer couples holding hands, stealing kisses, and wrapping their arms around one another as the relaxed tempo of cool jazz scattered soft sound bites throughout the terrace over looking the lake and city skyline.

One couple, Cheryl Cesario and Kim Beck, totting Sweetness, Beck's Maltipoo, in a roller-bag pet carrier, appreciated the welcoming LGBTQ-friendly atmosphere. The two danced closely, exchanging romantic glances as the band played Cesario's song request, "Fly Me to the Moon."

"It's nice the Shedd is doing a Pride event. I wanted to take my beautiful girlfriend some place spectacular and this is special," said Cesario.

"We go other places that are more straight," said Cesario. "I would still ask Kim to dance, but I definitely feel more comfortable dancing here," she said. "We know this event is for us and other

[straight] people know it's LGBTQ as well, so they are going along with it."

The couple were touched to hear positive reactions from other attendees. "A mother and a daughter saw us at the Wild Reef Exhibit and commented on how wonderful it was to see our love for one another," Cesario said.

"People pick up on positive, loving intentions, whether your gay or straight. It's all about love," added Beck. "This event allows people to get to know the LGBT community."

The couple admitted a band member appeared taken aback when they made a song request. "Then the musicians saw we were having fun and we're pretty good dancers, so they got into it," said Cesario.

The evening included a Science Pub Chat, titled "Celebrating Diversity: The Living Rainbow," that Shedd Aquarium marine biologist Keoki Burton presented; it explored the beauty and importance of diversity in the aquatic world. The topics ranged from examples of sequential hermaphroditism—where marine life such as clownfish change sex at some point in life—to parental roles under the sea, citing how the male sea horse gives birth to babies.

"Diversity is needed in the animal kingdom for it to exist and for beauty to happen," explained Burton.

Based on follow-up questions, it was apparent audience members fell into the post-millennials category due to the numerous references to the Pixar film Finding Nemo. When Burton explained how the clownfish takes on the role of child-rearing while the female watches to make sure he is doing his job, the crowd roared with approval applause.

The Shedd thoughtfully and purposefully



Kim Beck (left) and Cheryl Cesario at Shedd's Pride event.

Photo by Theresa Volpe

planned content for the presentation. "We wanted to provide information for the audience so they could make a connection to their own lives," said Johnny Ford, the Shedd's manager of communications.

The Shedd's new special exhibit, "Underwater Beauty," also emphasized the importance of diversity and individual beauty in the world. Signage with themes about "life working together in harmony" were evidence of inclusive content as was the "Discover a living rainbow" section of the exhibit.

James Horine attended the event with two

friends. He came out to hear the Lakeside Pride Music Ensemble and was happy to support the Shedd. "It's important to support public places when they are aligned with inclusivity and diversity to the LGBTQIA community," said Horine.

The evening concluded with guests taking in Navy Pier's weekly fireworks display on the aquarium's terrace on the lake.

Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy and Chicago Ald. James Cappleman (46th Ward), both openly gay, also helped kick off the event at the start of the evening.



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More from Shedd Aquarium's Jazzin' at the Shedd event

Photos by Theresa Volpe



STRZEPEK from page 8

"The New York City parade was a spectacular event with flame throwers, Joi Cardwell singing dance tunes, marching bands, Broadway stars performing and, yes, costumes, costumes and more costumes."

They eventually obtained a permit for a Chicago parade and, the following year, it took place from the CTA Red Line stop at Belmont to Sidetrack.

"Here is the kicker, we were to remain on the sidewalk," said Strzepek. "If anyone stepped onto the street, we would have been arrested. I think that first year consisted of about 30 people. A family with two children in a red wagon, a couple of people walking their pets and the wonderful brave cast of characters I call friends and family. The first year there was a police officer in uniform along the curb about every 20 feet keeping us on the sidewalk. Now the parade is a wonderful, beautiful, much larger event."

Additionally, Strzepek participated in the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality and the very first Dance for Life as a volunteer.

When Strzepek is not working he loves to watch foreign films, ride his bike, go to the gym, go dancing, hang out at the Kit Kat Lounge on Wednesday nights, eat out in restaurants and watch other people cook because, he said, "I am the world's worst cook."

His message to the world is "Be proud of who you are. Love is love in all its glory. Never stop advocating for what is right and just."

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viewpoints


**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

Independence Day celebration for whom?

Last week we celebrated the Fourth of July with rounds of festivities marking our nation's 242 years of independence. Scenes of hyperpatriotism were on display, too.

People were singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" or reciting the pledge of allegiance or reenacting the Continental Congress of 1776 or simply watching reproductions of the "rockets' red glare and bombs bursting in air." All of this and more was done on a grander and more highly commercialized scale to show ourselves, and the world, our mettle to "Make America Great Again."

As a consequence for the United States' need to showcase her nativist spirit of patriotism, it comes at the expense of fundamental freedoms and protections denied to various disenfranchised, vulnerable and historically marginalized populations in the country and immigrants.

For example, President Trump's indefensible immigration policy of criminally punishing undocumented immigrants crossing the border from Mexico into the United States highlights how his "zero-tolerance" policy means zero humanity—first separating children from their families (even a child who was being breast-fed) to now locking up families together indefinitely in detention centers.

Another example of the litmus test of U.S. patriotism in sports these days is whether you stand for the national anthem, ignoring that the protest started as a statement against police brutality and systemic racism. However, since 9/11, the militarization of our sports culture has created a sports-military complex that has many white fans attending not only for the entertainment but to display fidelity to police and the military, too.

With Trump now having an opening to appoint a pro-life Supreme Court justice to the bench in the hope of overturning *Roe v. Wade*, women's reproductive-justice issues will no longer be of serious consideration, impacting predominately poor, disabled



Rev. Irene Monroe thinks that the new U.S. Supreme Court will go after the marriage-equality case *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Photo of plaintiff Jim Obergefell by Kat Fitzgerald

and women of color.

There is already an erosion of LGBTQ rights under the guise of religious liberty. A new Trump Supreme Court justice will likely go after *Obergefell v. Hodges*, returning same-sex marriage to the states.

While Trump bloviates his isolationist rhetoric to "Make America Great Again," our democracy hangs in the balance, revealing both its hypocrisy and its inhumanity. However, this is not the first time this country's Independence Day celebration didn't include all its citizens.

I am reminded, for example, of the African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass' (1818-1895) historic speech, "What, to the slave, is the Fourth of July?" In it, he stated to a country in the throes of slavery: "What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? ... I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. ... This Fourth of July is

yours, not mine."

As a lesbian American, one of our most significant moments of patriotism in this last century involved the Stonewall Riots of June 27-29, 1969, in New York City's Greenwich Village. And, as an African-American, I am proud to live up to what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in his Montgomery Bus Boycott speech on Dec. 5, 1955: "The great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right."

When patriotism is narrowly defined, as it is today, it can only be accepted and exhibited within the constraints of its own intolerance, and narrow worldview, like Trump's travel ban (aka Muslim ban), which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld in a five-to-four decision.

Evangelical patriotism is suffused with conservative or fundamentalist tenets of Christianity. It waves the flag of "God, guns and glory" that's sadly shaping today's landscape. Perhaps that's why when this country's school-age children ask for gun reform at the "March for Our Lives" rally held in the nation's capital, our government is willing to spend more money arming teachers with guns than supplying them with textbooks and computers.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the United States has changed radically. This country's acceptance of racially and religiously profiling Muslims or those who look like or who worship like Muslims is all done in the name of patriotism, but it is really fear and hatred of the "other" and is un-American.

And this ugliness has imploded on us.

We have become a country where partisan politics rule the day so that we can no longer agree to disagree, and shouting matches laced with expletives have taken the place of civil discourse.

One of our most famous American Revolution heroes is Patrick Henry. His famous final words, "Give me liberty or give me death"—in his speech on March 23, 1775—explained how he viewed himself as the "other" yet maintained the core value of being an American patriot.

He said, "No man thinks highly than I do of patriotism ... but different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs."

With so many people, on this Fourth of July, feeling the effects of a polarized country, this Independence Day celebration was for whom?

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Points to Ponder(osa)

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WCT reviews Sagittarius Ponderosa.

Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

THEATER

About Face Youth's 'Stories' examines everyday horrors

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Forget werewolves, aliens zombies and creatures from the black lagoon. The real monsters are lurking within and among us. With Scary Stories to Save Your Life, About Face Youth Theatre taps into horrors more terrifying than anything your basic scary movie franchise is apt to crank out.

"There [are] no witches, no Frankensteins, no exorcisms," said youth ensemble member Via Haman, a freshman theater/psychology major at the University of Illinois, Chicago. "When I was writing my piece for the show, I was thinking about the day after the 2016 presidential election." Haman's "Help"—one of 12 playlets in the production—centers on a young person abandoned to the locked ward of what could be a "conversion therapy" unit.

Opening Saturday, July 14, at Center on Halsted, the Scary Story one-acts run about 10 minutes each. The 13-to-24-year-old playwrights set their stories in banal places: Hospitals, high schools, offices, homes. What transpires in these ordinary settings will leave you with a sense of unease ranging from pleasantly tingly to pass-the-Xanax.

Director Donny Acosta, 27, began working with the 10-member ensemble last October, leading weekly three-hour workshops that segued into rehearsals as the months went on. He started with a writing prompt.

"I asked everyone what their anxiety would look like if it were a monster," the Orange County native and veteran queer performance artist said.

"If you could write a letter to your anxiety what would you say?" Acosta said.

Given the topics at hand, making the rehearsal room a safe space was an imperative.

"There's no room today to be uneducated about what's going on around us," said Haman. "But being educated can be scary, and we got really deep into some really scary things. There was a lot of hugs and a lot figuring out how to do self-care," Haman said.

Peruse the script and the necessity of a debriefing process becomes clear. In "Trust," social media takes a turn for the profoundly sinister. In "Red," life in an office turns bloody. In "Skin" a superficially "revitalizing and noble" political slogan is stripped down to its weaponized, deadly bones.

In sharing, the youths found solace and common ground. Haman, for example, related to "Red" and its take on traditional business culture.

"I had a job at the East Bank Club," Haman said of the upscale River North sports/spa/dining facility. "I was one of two out queers in 600 employees. We'd complain to each other about the gendered bathrooms and feeling invisible. We were working in a space that wasn't meant for us. That can make you anxious."

Acosta can relate. "Before I came to About Face full-time I worked as a shift supervisor for an online grocery delivery service. The atmosphere was super masculine and misogynistic. I had to be super careful about how I acted, what I said," he said.

Haman has been writing on Scary Stories' themes long before getting involved with the production. Haman's college entry essay was about being a non-binary person in a binary world. Haman's not one for labels. "I have never felt a connection to womanhood or manhood," Haman said. "There is So. Much. In. Between. I'm a person. I feel great as a human."

"I hope the play starts a dialogue," Haman said. "I hope it makes people more aware. It's like 'hey, there are humans being marginalized oppressed. What are you going to do about it?'"

Within the horrors of Scary Stories, Acosta said, there is truth and power. "As queer performers, we aren't represented a lot. Or when we are, it's as the sassy gay best friend. Or the tragic guy with AIDS. The chance to tell our own personal stories through our lenses is empowering."

And all the right kind of scary.

Scary Stories to Save Your Life runs July 14-22 at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St. Tickets are \$20 or pay-what-you-can; visit AboutFaceTheatre.com.



Jimbo Pestano in a publicity image for Scary Stores to Save Your Life.

Photo by Alexis O'Connor

THEATER REVIEW

Waitress

Playwright: Jessie Nelson and Sara Bareilles
 At: Cadillac Palace Theatre,
 151 W. Randolph St.
 Tickets: \$39-107; BroadwayInChicago.com;
 312-977-1700
 Runs through: July 22

BY KAREN TOPHAM

Recipe for everything you could desire in a musical pie:

Start with sugar, butter and flour. Fold in enjoyable characters based on a sweet little 2007 Adrienne Shelley film. Add lovely tunes by Sara Bareilles and a clever book by Jessie Nelson. Mix well with a story about a pregnant pie shop waitress who desperately needs to escape her abusive husband and ends up having an affair with her doctor. Blend with humor and bake for two and a half hours in front of a live audience.

Shelley's story tells of Jenna (played here by

Desi Oakley), whose pregnancy complicates her plan to get away from her dead-end life with Earl (Nick Bailey). She spends her days baking pies and coming up with new recipes for things like "Devil's Food Chocolate Oasis Pie" and "I Can't Have An Affair Because It's Wrong (And I Don't Want Earl To Kill Me) Pie." She dreams of somehow winning a pie-baking contest and disappearing from the life she has led, which fortunately for her includes two great friends, the shy Dawn (Lenne Klingaman) and boisterous Becky (Charity Angel Dawson) who help keep her sane, and a cantankerous boss Cal (Ryan G. Dunkin) who isn't anywhere near as bad as he wants to be seen.

When discovery of her pregnancy leads her to consult the new gynecologist in town (Bryan Fenkart), Jenna's life grows even more complicated. The two have an instant awkward chemistry that Oakley and Fenkart play beautifully and comically. Both are immensely likable actors, and it's easy to want them to be happy together despite the fact that this is an affair for both of them.

Bareilles is clever enough to showcase individually almost her entire cast. Klingaman's "When

Desi Oakley in *Waitress*.

Photo by Joan Marcus

He Sees Me" lets us get deeper into Dawn's inner life as she imagines a date with someone she met online. That date turns out to be Ogie (Jeremy Morse), who has his own hilarious solo with "Never Getting Rid Of Me." Dawson too has a highlight moment as she explains her own affair in "I Didn't Plan It." Even Old Joe, the shop's owner, gets into the act with the sweet "Take It From an Old Man." But it's Jenna who gets the bulk of the songs, whether she is singing with Fenkart (the comic "Bad Idea" or the sweet "You Matter to Me"), with her friends ("Opening Up") or on her own (the poignant "She Used to be Mine"), and Oakley's strong voice and equally strong acting utterly endear her to the audience.

This is an uplifting and joyful play that, under Diane Paulus's direction, zips along very quickly. And it's clear that this excellent cast is having a good time, which is the recipe for Standing Ovation Pie, a heaping serving of which was doled out at the end of the opening performance. Joe's Pie Diner is a fun and lively place full of delightful performances and delicious moments—a joyous place to spend the evening.

THEATER REVIEW

Sagittarius Ponderosa

Playwright: MJ Kaufman
 At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
 Tickets: 773-728-7529;
 Redtwist.org; \$35-\$40
 Runs through: July 29

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Sagittarius Ponderosa is stuffed with unfulfilled possibilities despite a more-than-competent production. A work of magic realism, it seems an exercise in style and technique rather than focused on character or story.

For reasons not fully explained, the setting is central Oregon near a majestic ponderosa pine

forest (perhaps there's a personal connection for playwright MJ Kaufman), and scenic designer Kristen Martino's set skillfully incorporates four gargantuan tree trunks. Here, between one Thanksgiving and the next, a small family goes through major transitions.

First, returning late-20s daughter Angela (Jaqueline Seifert) has transitioned to Archer, a name taken from her birth sign, Sagittarius the hunter. Spending nights in the forest, she meets Owen (Christopher Acevedo), a grad student, and they begin an affair. Then, long-widowed Grandma (Kathleen Ruhl) creates a love potion (intended for Angela) that triggers a romance with her geriatric neighbor (a puppet operated by Brian Parry).

Archer's father/Grandma's son (also Brian Parry) takes a new name, too, so Death won't know him. He has an unspecified lingering illness with no symptoms (but perhaps diabetes), and Death col-

lects him anyway halfway through the 75-minute play. He reappears to Grandma and Archer in supportive ghostly visits but not to his newly alone wife (Jacqueline Grandt), who has mutual communication issues with Archer.

Then, Owen leaves without telling Archer his last name, where he's going or if he'll return ... and Archer doesn't ask. Ze decides to stay with Mom and get a local job. And then it's Thanksgiving Day again with Mom, Archer, Grandma and her new bf counting their blessings.

Earlier, Owen tells Archer about old Native American knowledge of controlled burns that cleared the forest floor, thereby renewing and strengthening the ponderosas, and the play seems to be about renewal. It's difficult to tell because there's so little information about the characters; things such as the parents' reactions to Archer's transition, why they live in the woods

or the source of mother-daughter conflict. Next, Dad's relationships to his wife, child and mother are so incompletely written that his death makes no difference. Finally, Owen's abrupt departure is unfulfilling for the audience and leaves a gap in understanding Archer, the play's central figure. At the end, only Grandma appears to have chosen life and renewal via her new relationship. Mom and Archer count their blessings, too, but they really don't seem to have any.

Sagittarius Ponderosa is well-performed under director James Fleming. The actors have charm and tenderness despite the sometimes-confusing "magic" style. But the character writing is so sketchy that it's difficult to really care about them.

CRITICS' PICKS

Support Group for Men, Goodman Theatre, through July 29. These are confusing times for everyone, but Ellen Faurey doesn't neglect the other half of the population and their search for meaning, identity and companionship on a noisy night in Wrigleyville. MSB

The View Upstairs, Circle Theatre at Pride Arts Broadway, through July 22. A time traveler from 2018 finds himself among ghostly companions at a gay bar in 1973, but while the passing decades have brought about progress, "it gets better" is still far away. MSB

Gaslight District, The Second City e.t.c., open run. The 42nd revue at The Second City's "junior" stage strikes at Trump, improvises a song, engages an audience member and trumpets its multiethnic, multiamorous cast. JA

Haymarket, Underscore Theatre at the Den Theatre, through July 22. A star is born in Bridget Adams-King's clarion-voiced portrayal of Lucy Parsons, who is front and center in this riotous new folk music about the Haymarket Affair and violent birth of the labor movement. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

Support Group for Men

Playwright: Ellen Faurey
 At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.
 Tickets: Goodmantheatre.org;
 \$25-\$80
 Runs through: July 29

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

It's tempting to give the side eye to a play titled Support Group for Men. Generally speaking, guys are not the demographic most in need of a support group right about now—especially the cis het guys who meet weekly in Ellen Faurey's new play.

As it turns out, Support Group should not be judged by its title. The play is good, but not great. It peters out (so to speak), fizzling to a close several scenes after it should have ended. It's unrealistically tidy: Ignorant people open their minds. Lonely people find love. Cops are

more apt to share their feelings than they are to shoot someone in the back.

But Support Group also has humor and a killer cast, anchored by Keith Kupferer as Roger, a fiftysomething white guy who is perpetually hurt and bitter because life hasn't turned out the way he wanted. Roger is also confused by non-gender pronouns, and all that they signify.

Directed by Kimberly Senior, Support Group follows one particularly eventful session in group leader Brian's (Ryan Kitley) Boystown apartment. While drunken fratboy Chads act like assholes below Brian's living-room window, the support group men get all up in their feelings. As cheesy as that sounds, it's genuinely moving, especially in Roger's case.

The other group members have issues too: Brian's major accomplishment in life is his ability to control his home lighting and music systems with Alexa. Delano (Anthony Irons) peaked as a teenage jock at Oak Park River Forest High School. Kevin (Tommy Rivera-Vega) is significantly younger than the other three. His troubles that are sometimes met with blank stares from his elders.

The group is upended by the arrival of Alex (Jeff Kurycz), a muscle-bound interloper who proceeds to smash the binary to bits (metaphorically) right in the middle of the living room.

Support Group for Men has been called transphobic on Instagram and Facebook by trans* people. The primary issue: Alex's character exists only to A) get bashed and B) enlighten the non-trans* characters about gender, sexuality and life in general. (The criticism is based on a workshop of the production, which the Goodman says has been significantly rewritten for its mainstage debut.) I'm not trans*, so it isn't my place to question the criticism's validity.

What I can say is that Kurycz makes Alex charismatic and easy to empathize with. I also found Alex heroic.

For those who grew up saying "Fuck that guy" every time John Wayne vanquished a tribe of Native Americans, Support Group for Men is a bit of a corrective. It is also quite funny, even before some sort of ayahuasca-like substance, complete with exuberant hallucination. And it wouldn't be a bad idea for Faurey to pen a sequel based on Alex's life outside the support group.



David Fiorello
(left) and
Christopher
Pazdernik.
Photo courtesy
of Pazdernik

CABARET

A look at 'Top 40 Showtunes You've (Probably) Never Heard Of'

BY AARON HUNT

With federal funding for the arts diminishing and arts' patrons considering the new tax implications of charitable giving, singing artists are rushing to create their own shows in lieu of waiting around for other opportunities.

Enter writer/producer/director/emcee Christopher Pazdernik and frequent collaborator/musical theater talent David Fiorello, musical theater nerd par excellence. With Chris & David's Top 40 Showtunes You've (Probably) Never Heard, they're modeling and reinventing the art form.

Pazdernik—the casting associate for Porchlight Music Theatre, artistic director of Refuge Theatre Project and aficionado of all things musical theater—brings his flashy wit and dishy scoops to the microphone as he hosts an striking array of Chicago's singing elite, serving up a list of songs compiled in tandem with Fiorello, who provides background vocals and the requisite keyboard flourishes.

Pazdernik and Fiorello met at an audition and bonded over the under-appreciated 1994 recording of Jesus Christ Superstar: A Resurrection, featuring the Indigo Girls. "At the first break I found out David and I had this mutual fascination and from then on we were pretty much inseparable for the rest of the day," said Pazdernik. Fiorello added, "I didn't think there was another person

in the world who knew about the Indigo Girls' Jesus Christ Superstar album, so there was lots of 'nerding' going on."

In the last two years, the pair has worked together on such projects as Porchlight's Do Re Mi and New Faces Sing Broadway. Chris & Dave's Top 40 is the duo's first self-produced cabaret, and features a catalogue of semi-secret treasures. Chestnuts such as "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "Meadowlark" won't be on the program. Each of the performances will be a different show as ten songs (five choices each from Pazdernik and Fiorello) get introduced, dissected and thrown down for audience edification. If you want the fullest experience, mark your calendar for the next three Mondays.

"About a year ago we began talking about doing an evening of the Top 50 songs of musical theater, but that proved to very subjective because who's to say this song from Showboat is better than this song from West Side Story?" Fiorello said. "We whittled it down to songs that people probably don't know very well, whether [they] be cut songs or songs from shows that just didn't play Broadway or only played four performances," he said.

"We made separate lists," said Pazdernik. "Between the two of us, we had close to 200 songs with almost no overlap." After this summer's Top 40 are served up, there's plenty of repertoire for the next iteration.

Chris & David's Top 40 Showtunes You've (Probably) Never Heard runs July 16, 23 and 30 at Davenport's Piano Bar & Cabaret, 1383 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tickets are \$20 each; call 773-278-1830 or visit DavenportsPianoBar.com.

Note: The extended version of this article can be read at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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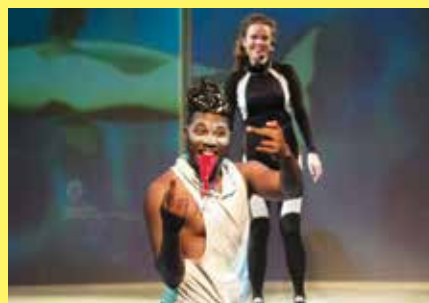
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SPOTLIGHT

Kristiana Rae-Colon's hypnotically gorgeous and emotionally shattering drama **Tilikum** delves into the legacy of slavery, the obscene profits of the prison-industrial complex and (not incidentally) the tragic life of the Seaworld's longtime star attraction, the orca Tilikum. Gregory Geffard's galvanizing performance as Tilikum is backed by a percussive soundscape and shimmering projections that capture the beauty of the ocean depths. In all, **Tilikum** is of the best shows of the year. It runs through July 29 in a Sideshow Theatre production at the



Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.; \$15-\$30. Visit Victorygardens.org.

Caption: Photo by Jonathan L. Green

Chicago athletes set to compete in Gay Games 10

More than 170 people from the Chicago area are heading to Paris to compete in Gay Games 10.

All Chicago-area participants are invited to join Team Chicago at Opening Ceremonies.

Team Chicago uniforms are on sale through July 15 and can be ordered online through Facebook at Team Chicago Athletics and Culture.

They stated: "Please join us at Andersonville Brewing Company, 5402 N. Clark St., July 23 from 709 p.m. for a send-off party. Email SweetTeamChicago@gmail.com for questions about Team Chicago or to order your Team Chicago uniform.

The Paris 2018 Gay Games 10 is taking place Aug. 4-12. More than 10,000 participants are registered for over 30 sport and cultural events.

The Team Chicago uniform celebrates Chicago's iconic blues scene. They noted: "We encourage members to complete the look by embellishing the uniform with all things Blues Brothers (Fedoras, Sunglasses, Ties); hopefully with some rainbow highlights." The cost of the uniform is \$27 (plus tax and delivery if requested) and can be ordered at Sweet Team Chicago: http://shop.shirtsillustrated.com/sweet_team_chicago_paris_2018/shop/products/all?page=1.

You can choose to have it delivered, pick it up at Shirts Illustrated, or at the Team Chicago Bon Voyage Soiree.

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MUSIC

Marin Alsop: The maestra returns

BY SUZANNE KRAUS

Who is Marin Alsop?

She is an internationally acclaimed conductor of classical orchestras and the first female music director of a major U.S. orchestra, known for instituting innovative programming and increasing the number of successful women conductors. She is also openly lesbian, living with her partner Kristin Jurkscheit, whom she met at Tanglewood in 1990.

Her current primary responsibilities involve being music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (starting in 2007, with two contract renewals to 2021); music director of the Sao Paulo Orchestra; chief conductor designate of the Vienna Radio Orchestra; director of graduate conducting studies at the Peabody Institute, JHU; and the Ravinia Festival's musical curator for the Bernstein Centennial 2018-2019.

Windy City Times: You were brought in as music director with the Colorado Symphony 1993-2005 and helped to turn it around. Then, in 2005, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra selected you to be its next music director. Were there similarities between the challenges you encountered between the Colorado Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony?

Marin Alsop: The key is being open and receptive. It is important to recognize you can only do what your team allows you to do—only as much as your musicians are interested in participating in. In both Denver and Baltimore I have had great partners, in terms of management, board, the willingness and interest to be part of the 21st century and not always a part of the past. My success was interdependent on the largesse and willingness of all those other participants.

The fundamental philosophy for me is always the same, wherever I go, "How can we reach out and open the doors wide to our community?" I think being open and receptive to the community's needs, interests and wants is key. "How can we be a resource for our community?" Other than just sitting on our stage and playing a concert. We can't just wait for the people to come, it is not going to happen. We must create opportunities for more people."

WCT: Your OrchKids program in Baltimore is a great example of reaching out to the community. [Note: It's a free, after-school music education and training program in its 10th year, with more than 1,300 enrolled.]

MA: In Baltimore, there was a clear mandate—at least, to me. Our orchestras must reflect onstage what people see in their neighborhood. Baltimore is over 60-percent African-American. When I started there was only one Black musician. Why is that? That led to a whole series of questions. Our orchestra must reflect the community. That is the foundation of our motivation to offer these kids the opportunities to learn music. It is much more than changing the landscape of the future, it is changing individual lives. Creating a pathway for kids to learn. We have exceeded our goals. It is a program about possibilities.

WCT: How do you feel when you are conducting? When you finish the piece?

MA: It depends on the piece, but generally I am entirely focused on what I am doing so I am not conscious of "how" I am feeling. It is about the music, not about me.

WCT: Who is your favorite composer or which specific pieces do you love to conduct? That you never tire of?

MA: There are few composers that I would ever tire of conducting—I especially love conducting Mahler and



Marin Alsop.

PR photo courtesy of Ravinia

Brahms.

WCT: Do you have professional goals or challenges that appeal to you?

MA: I don't have any specific goals other than to try to constantly improve artistically and technically, and to expand my repertoire and abilities. I do think I have ended up in the right places. I believe a little bit that things happen for a reason.

WCT: Our readers are interested in your personal story. When did you realize that you are a lesbian?

MA: I just sort of always knew from when I was very little. My parents were very open-minded and supportive. I was an only child. It was never an issue. Everyone suffers from the challenges of feeling different, feeling like an outsider. I never felt it was a big issue, no big drama. It always felt natural to me. Even though for society at the time it was not considered natural by older generations. Things are changing. I am relieved. There is always that pendulum swinging in the opposite direction. I am very concerned about the Supreme Court rulings lately. Concerned about the future. I see with my son and his friends' attitudes that things really have changed. They are non-issues. I was fortunate; my parents were very accepting.

WCT: Yes, it is a confusing time. On the one hand, we are told that the millennials have no issues with LGBT, yet there is a growing vocal anti-gay population—very reactionary and desperate.

MA: It reminds us that we have to be always vigilant about human rights. Sexual, gender, women's rights we have to make sure that we stand strong. What scares me most is that I see people I respect caving and cowering. It breaks my heart. We need strong people as leaders; we don't need cowards.

WCT: Are you and Kristin married?

MA: No. Since we have a child, there were so many hurdles to clear. We have spent a lot of time, energy and money making sure that our son Auden is protected. Securing his connection to me. All the legal requirements we put into place quite a while ago, even before he was born. In the end, the act of getting married for us might jeopardize everything we have worked so hard to put in place. We are fine.

Marin Alsop will conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia featuring Bernstein and others beginning Thursday, July 12, with Bernstein's Overture to Candide. Visit Ravinia.org for all the details.

Alsop will also be part of the regular CSO season, conducting a Concert Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the end of WWII on Oct. 18-20. Visit CSO.org.



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Matthew O'Maley.
Photo courtesy of O'Maley

New bike, old memories: O'Maley set for Ride for AIDS Chicago

BY ROSS FORMAN

Matthew O'Maley started planning for the 2018 Ride for AIDS Chicago one year ago, during a major fundraiser for the 2017 Ride—when he won a bicycle in a silent auction.

"Two of my friends who are Ride veterans had been pushing me to get back to riding," said O'Maley, 50, who lives in Chicago's Buena Park neighborhood with his partner, James, and their dog, Jackie. "It was right around my 50th birthday, and quite honestly, I had been toying with the idea for a while. I [had taken] my old bike for a spin, and while I had thousands of miles on that bike over the years and some wonderful memories, it was time to retire [it]."

O'Maley went to the "View From The Top" fundraiser last summer in Boystown and there as a bicycle available in the fundraising silent auction—and it was exact Trek Hybrid that he had been looking at.

He paid just under \$1,000 for that bike.

"It's amazing how much bike technology has improved since I bought my last bike 23 years ago," he said.

He knew he had to ride in 2018.

"The bike and all the stuff that goes with it, [such as the] helmet, shoes, bags, lights, etc., take up too much space in my home to not do the Ride; [it] would be a very expensive laundry rack if I didn't get on it and go."

So, O'Maley is joining hundreds of others riding in the 15th annual Ride for AIDS Chicago which moves from July to September, taking place on Sept. 8-9, and instead of riding to Wisconsin, they will cycle to Michigan.

The Ride for AIDS Chicago is the Midwest's only back-to-back century cycling event. The traditional two-day, 200-mile event will feature an option for a special anniversary distance, with an additional 15 miles in each direction for 230-miles in total. There also is a 100-mile route.

"This actually is my second time doing this Ride. I did it back the early-2000s ... and [I]

wanted to go one more time," O'Maley said.

"It has been a long time since I last did a Ride, and since my mid-life crisis was in full swing as I turned 50, I decided to get back on the bike. I have some friends who have been involved in the Ride for several years, and they knew I had done Rides in the past, so they were really encouraging. Last year they succeeded in getting me to commit."

"When I look back at some of the most important moments in my life, the Rides I had done certainly placed near the top of that list, so it is time for me to go back. I lived through the years of going to funerals every weekend [for those who died from HIV/AIDS], of delivering meals on wheels to those [in] need, and it wasn't until I was in my 30s when I could say I had [lived] more years than I had dead friends. While things have dramatically improved for those who are HIV-positive, prevention, awareness, affordable treatment, and ultimately a cure are still needed in the community."

O'Maley, the regional director of procurement for Peninsula Hotels, said he is neither nervous nor excited for the upcoming Ride. Rather, it is comforting.

"I have done it before, and while I hope to complete the full 200 miles, I don't have anything to prove to anyone except myself," he said. "The funds raised for TPAN, raising awareness, and the community that comes from an event like the Ride are far more important to me than how many miles I ride. To me, getting back to the Ride feels [like] coming home."

O'Maley was born and raised in Rockport, Massachusetts, and has lived in Chicago for the past 20 years. He served on the crew for an AIDS ride in the mid-2000s from Orlando to Miami—a three-day, 300-mile trek.

"It wasn't until the last day, maybe three miles from the finish-line on a road that was very familiar to us, when one of my friends pulled up beside me in tears and whispered, 'I can't believe we are actually going to finish this,'" O'Maley re-

called. "Back then, all the riders were held just short of the finish-line, and once everyone was together, all the riders rode across the finish-line together. I remember everything about that day, [including] the music that was playing, the color [of the] shirt I was wearing, and an emotional rollercoaster like no other—sadness for those we lost, hope for a better future, accomplishment and pride in doing something I never thought I could do, and a sense of community among the riders and crew that I never expected.

O'Maley has participated in multiple other AIDS rides, such as one from Boston to New York City; Minneapolis to Chicago; and Fairbanks to Anchorage—and all were filled with memories, not just challenges.

He is on Team TPAN for the 2018 Ride, and is hoping to raise \$2,000.

"More than any one specific person, it is the experience of living in the late-1980s and early 1990s—that terror and fear, the constant of this epidemic wiping out an entire generation of LGBTQIA+ people that drives me. I wouldn't wish that experience on anyone and will do my damndest to make sure we don't return to that point."

O'Maley also for 18 years has volunteered with The Night Ministry's Homeless Youth programs. "The issue of homeless youth disproportionately affects the LGBTQIA+ community, and with that comes a host of issues including HIV/AIDS," he said.

The 2018 View from the Top fundraiser, benefiting the Ride's Team TPAN and hosted by SKIN Productions, will be Sunday, July 15, in Boyston, and it will feature DJs, raffles, silent auctions, go-go dancers and more.

"I have gone to this event, arranged donations in the past, and won a few raffles over the last couple of years. This year, participating [in the Ride] as a rider, [the View From The Top fundraiser] has taken on a new importance to me. Every year this event raises more money than in the past, and we hope to do it again this year.

DJs Alyson Calagna and Jesse Mercado are volunteering their time and services for the fundraiser.

"There are 1,000 clichés that are all appropriate for something like this, but it really boils down to compassion, empathy, community, action, dedication, determination and love. Find what you're passionate about, and do something. Do a walk, a run, a ride, write a check, volunteer your time. I am 50, completely non-athletic, and let's call it 'full-figured' ... If I can do this, so can you. This fight is not over," O'Maley said.

The Ride For AIDS Chicago major fundraiser for the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), the annual "View From The Top" fundraiser, is Sunday, July 15, 3-8 p.m. at 3526 N. Halsted St.. To buy tickets, go to: <http://support.tpan.com/site/Calendar/1718852406?view=Detail&id=100081>.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Mott St.; Silver Fork program

BY ANDREW DAVIS

If your idea of adventurous eating is shrimp-fried rice, just skip **Mott St.** (1401 N. Ashland Ave.; <http://www.mottstreetchicago.com/>) right now. The spot specializes in mixing the familiar and unfamiliar, resulting in dishes that challenges patrons' taste buds—and maybe even their mindsets.

For example, the Asian-focused menu takes appetizers like grilled cauliflower and adds sahmjang butter, fennel seed and almonds. Brussels sprouts are wok-fried, with additions such as lamb pancetta and maple brown butter. (I could've eaten this dish all night.) The shrimp-and-kohlrabi salad (which comes with chicken, peanuts, oranges, lime, fish sauce and fresh herbs) was delicious and refreshing.

And there is what many consider the restaurant's centerpiece: the Mott Burger—a dish so popular that it's been hailed as Chicago's



Brussels sprouts at Mott St.

Photo by Andrew Davis
best burger (even besting Au Cheval's, in some people's minds). Mott St.'s concoction (only available during brunch, at the bar during the week and in the restaurant for only the first hour of operation during the week) is a work of art, indeed, consisting of double chuck patties, sweet-potato shoestrings, hoisin aioli, pickled jalapenos, dill pickles, miso butter and American cheese. This is a must-try.

However, there are plenty of other enticing dishes as well. I was pleasantly surprised with the bone marrow (accompanied by pineapple-pickled peppers and imperial black rice) as well as the stuffed cabbage (napa kimchi stuffed with pork butt and sticky rice).

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Desserts are enjoyable—although the apps and entrees set an almost impossibly high that the sweets fall just short. The mango sticky rice is a solid treat, although my friend dove into the ricotta donuts with relish, uh, joy.

There's also a wonderful assortment of drinks, from cocktails to wine to sake. (I highly recommend the Gin Cloudkicker, a cocktail with gin, shochu, lemon, sweet potato and egg white.) Also, we were treated to small servings of coffee mezcal, post-dessert—and that unique cocktail really hit the spot.

The only possible drawback to this place, at least for me, involves the hours (Tuesday–Thursday at 6–10 p.m., bar until 11 p.m.; Friday–Saturday at 6–11 p.m., bar until 12 a.m.; and Sundays at 10 a.m.–2 p.m.). However, as my dining companion pointed out, that could also be construed as a smart marketing move.

Regardless, if you manage to make it to Mott St., you're in for a culinary ride.

Center on Halsted's Silver Fork program

Center on Halsted's Silver Fork is a free nine-week culinary arts and job readiness program. It is ideal for adults who want to enter or re-enter the hospitality industry and experience a fresh outlook on their career potential. Participants experience intensive culinary training coupled with service training, job readiness and career counseling.

Applications are being taken Thursday, July 12, with the first class taking place Tuesday, July 24. (Classes meet Tuesdays through Thursdays at 11 a.m.–4 p.m. each week.) Graduation is Thursday, Sept. 20.

See CenterOnHalsted.org/silverfork.html, call 773-472-6469 or email silverfork@centeronhalsted.org.

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

Drag stars display 'Black Girl Magic' at the Metro

BY VERNON HESTER

On June 26, The Vixen—fresh from RuPaul's Drag Race—hosted a sold-out “drag concert” featuring an all star cast of local and nationally acclaimed performers at the Chicago Metro.

The event, titled “Black Girl Magic,” was part of The Vixen's movement to address racism in the gay and drag communities while celebrating the art of drag performance. For several months, The Vixen has been building momentum for this event with monthly Black Girl Magic events at Berlin Nightclub.

Audience members waited patiently for hours in the rain for the show, and they weren't disappointed, with some members driving in from out of state to attend. Among the performers featured were former fellow Chicago-based ‘Drag Race’ contestants Shea Coulee and Dida Ritz, along with Bambi Banks, Eva Styles, Monet X Change, Sasha Love, Monique Heart, Lucy Stooile and Asia O'Hara.

A contingent from Test Positive Aware Network was on hand to offer free HIV testing before the show.



Photos by Vernon Hester





BILLY Masters

History was just made with the crowning of a trans woman as Miss Spain. She was not crowned because of or despite of her being trans—she was crowned because she was the best/most attractive contestant. **Angela Ponce** will now go on to compete in the Miss Universe Pageant, making her the first trans contestant in that pageant's history. (Trans people were banned from the contest until 2012.) Felicitaciones, Angela!

An Irish priest has been placed on "personal leave" after a gay-sex video surfaced showing a man in vestments performing sexual acts on another man. A local paper described it thusly: "Priest desecrates altar with gay-sex acts!" It was filmed at St. Bartholomew's Church in Kildorrery, North Cork and, according to the subheading, "State Police in Ireland investigating the sacrilege." Words like "desecrates" and "sacrilege" always catch my eye.

The video first appeared on a gay "dating" app and was brought to the archdiocese by Bishop Pat Buckley—so we have a good idea what Pat does at night in the rectory. (I love spending time in the rectory.) Two guys aged 18 and 19 claim they met the priest through the site and he brought them to St. Bartholomew's. The church has not identified the cleric in question, although people whisper it is Father Michael Lomasney, who resigned due to alcoholism. There is concern that the church has to be reconsecrated due to the sacrilege. Some parishioners are even calling for an exorcism! Yeah, like this is the first time a Catholic priest had gay sex on an altar.

Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black have a new young man in their lives—and, no, it isn't what you think. They recently posted, "Welcome to the world our precious little Robbie Ray Black-Daley. The amount of love and joy you have brought into our life is immeasurable, our precious little son." Within days, online trolls began clamoring for the child to be removed from the home and accused the diver of child abuse. One such tweet said, "It's astonishing. Twitter has been full of outrage about children being taken from their mothers on the Mexican border but, when Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black take a baby from its mother, everyone says how wonderful it is."



Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black have welcomed a new young man into their lives, Billy says.

Now, I don't know the details of their surrogacy deal, but I would reckon nobody was taken from anyone.

Speaking of British divers, our "Ask Billy" question comes from Patrick in Boston: "You wrote about nude photos of **Freddie Woodward** before. Are those the same photos he's suing about?"

Back in 2015, the allegedly heterosexual Woodward took part in the "Naked Issue" of the UK Gay Times. All of a sudden, his lawyers are threatening to sue websites posting the three-year-old photos. Or perhaps they mean those even nuder (and erect) photos that fell into my hands. If anyone's interested, they're on BillyMasters.com.

When we've got an erect diver in our hands, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Due to a scheduling snafu, my first week in Provincetown straddled both Circuit and Bear weeks. Alas, I'm too fat for the circuit boys and too thin for the bears—I'm a man without a week! While I try to find one, you can find loads of ... well, loads on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that has something for everybody (and every body). If you have a question, dash it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com. Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



Eva Styles performs at Black Girl Magic at the Metro.
Photo by Vernon Hester

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july 16

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WEDNESDAY
july 18

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dixie lynn cartwright

drag by
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WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., July 11

Taste of Chicago 73 restaurants will participate in the world's largest food festival. Through July 15. 11:00am - 9:00am Grant Park 337 E. Randolph St Chicago <http://TasteOfChicago.us>

Twisted Trivia - Pride Night Test your LGBTQ history knowledge. 6 people are allowed per team. Free to play. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Anthony's on Front bar & grill, 11104 Front St., Mokena, Illinois

Authors Katie Schenkel and Chad Sell Schenkel, author of werewolf comic Moonlighters and the upcoming 100 Light Years of Solitude, lives in Chicago with her partner. Chad Sell created and drew The Cardboard Kingdom with writing from 10 other authors. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Thursday, July 12

Queer Genre Fiction Book Group Each second Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Affinity Community Services virtual leadership series "The Blackprint: A



SELL-ING POINT

Wed., July 11

Illustrator Chad Sell (above) will appear with Katie Schenkel at Women and Children First.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

Plan for Building the Leadership Capacity of Black LGBTQ+ Women Leaders," each Thursday in July 12:00pm - 1:00pm Affinity Community Services, 2850 S. Wabash, #108. <http://bit.ly/AffinityTheBlackprint>

Friday, July 13

Black Lesbian Archives Exhibit closing reception Mix and mingle. Bring food or drinks if you can or just bring yourself and a good time 6:00pm - 8:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago <http://www.affinity95.org>

GLBTQ Veteran Meetup Veterans get together to swap stories, hear speakers, get information on programs and services for veterans and enjoy light food and drink. Admission and food are free and there will be a cash bar. Find AVER Chicago Chapter on Facebook 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Steamworks: The Musical Singing and dancing extravaganza tells of a wide-eyed young man who moves to the Windy City seeking love ... and ... every Friday through Aug. 10. \$20/\$15 Students 8:00pm - 9:30pm Annoyance Theater Mainstage, 851 W. Belmont, Chicago <http://theannoyance.com/>

Saturday, July 14

Gay is Good: Homophile Activism before Stonewall Detailing the beginning of the homophile movement in the U.S., its peak during the ECHO and NACHO conferences, and eventual decline after the Stonewall Riots. Through September 10:00am - 4:00am Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Queer Karaoke! The Miller Consulting Group (MCG) in support of Beautiful Brown Bag, a nonprofit organization serving LGBTQ+ youth. \$15-\$25. 8:00pm - 12:00am Reunion Chicago, 2557 W. North Ave. <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/queer-karaoke-tickets-46570270934>

Side Eye for the Straight Guy. Wig Bullies, an LGBT-themed comedy group, dedicates this show to straight guys. The ones that feel uncomfortable around gays. The ones afraid of female presidents. 8:30pm Maat Theater Tickets: <http://www.secondcity.com/shows/chicago/wig-bullies-presents-side-eye-for-the-straight-guy/>

Sunday, July 15

Queer Narratives With Zach Stafford, editor-in-chief of Grindr and INTO and scholar/author Halberstam for a frank conversation about the role that technology can play in collecting and disseminating queer narratives. \$8-\$15 3:00pm Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) 220 East Chicago Ave Chicago <http://mcachicago.org/Calendar/2018/07/Talk-Queer-Narratives-With-Zach-Stafford-And-Jack-Halberstam>

Purple Rain, Tribute to Prince Third Sunday of every month. DJ Adam EL. No cover 10:00pm - 4:00pm Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago <http://www.berlinchicago.com/index.html>

Thursday, July 19

Affinity Community Services virtual leadership series "The Blackprint: A Plan for Building the Leadership Capacity of Black LGBTQ+ Women Leaders," each Thursday in July 12:00pm - 1:00pm Affinity Community Services, 2850 S. Wabash, #108. <http://bit.ly/AffinityTheBlackprint>

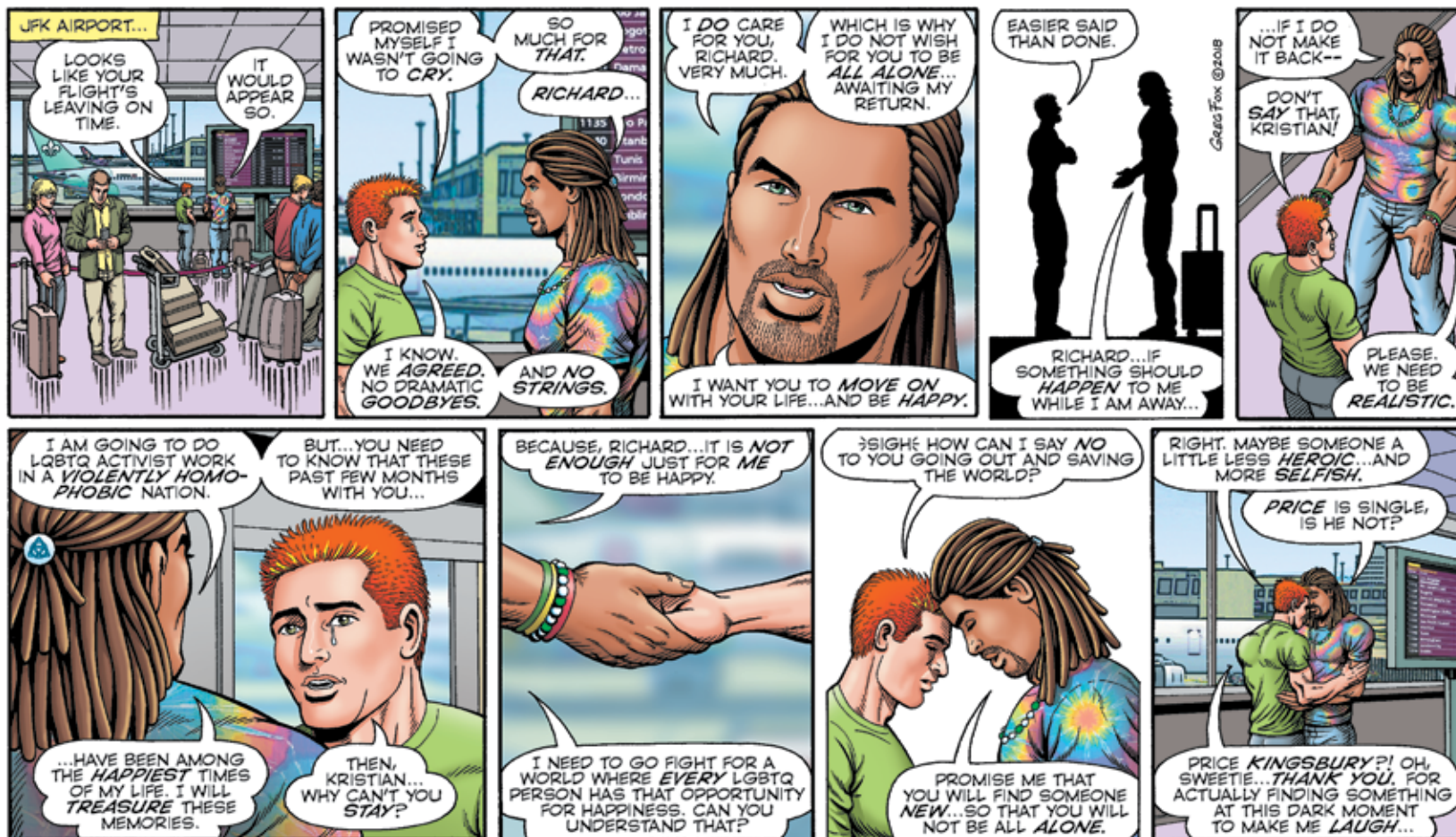
Monthly Eldercare Support Conference Call For anyone involved in elder care. Facilitated by Japanese American Service Committee, culturally inclusive for people of color and LGBTQI. Access code 784-468-702 2:00pm - 2:45pm By phone 515- 739-1030

Women2Women presents Three Experiences in one night: Mediation, Drums, and Tea Leaf Reading An Evening of Mediation, Drums, and Leaf Tea Reading 6:30pm - 8:30pm Evolve Her, 358 W. Ontario St.; <https://www.women2women.space/> Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/meditation-drums-and-tea-leaf-reading-tickets-47034893633>

Saturday, July 21

15th Annual Disability Pride Parade New parade route. Post-parade festivities follow. Free. Register online to march or support. 11:00am - 12:00pm Balbo & Columbus Dr. and south to Roosevelt & Columbus Dr. <http://www.disabilityprideparade.org/>

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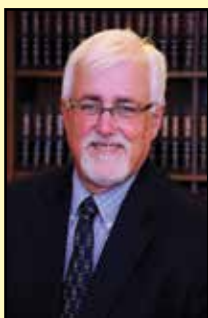


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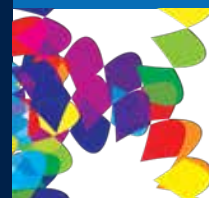
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JULY 13



ALAN CUMMING
LEGAL IMMIGRANT

JULY 15



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THE PARK WITH
AUDRA MCDONALD
AND THE CSO



AUGUST 3

WHOOPI



AUGUST 5



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HITMAN TOUR

AUGUST 14

MICHAEL
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