

WINDY CITY TIMES

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SOUND THE ALARMS

Supreme Court pick could dismantle LGBTQ rights

A SPECIAL GUEST ESSAY BY CAMILLA B. TAYLOR

If courts retreat from protecting women's equality and autonomy in making reproductive choices free of governmental interference, including with respect to abortion, then the rights of all LGBT people, which are deeply intertwined and share a common body of law, are necessarily diminished. Indeed, the landmark victories that guard the LGBT community's right to marry and that decriminalized LGBT peoples' very existence, depend explicitly on precedents shielding reproductive autonomy.

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'PURPLE' REIGN

The Color Purple returns to Chicago.
Photo of Carla R. Stewart and Adrianna Hicks by Matthew Murphy **15**



GRAND OPENING

Steve Grand discusses his evolving world view, new CD.
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Gay Albion College alumni show the way to go.
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Derrick Woods-Morrow delights in disrupting social constructs

ARTIST PROVOCATEUR

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Derrick Woods-Morrow.
Photo by Daniel Delgado



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Above: WCT reviews *Blood at the Root*.
Photo from Jackalope Theatre Company

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TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT

'DIFFERENT' STROKES
WCT reviews the Sarah McBride book *Different Strokes*.

SERVIN' IT UP



Donterrio Johnson adds to the cast of the theatrical production *Waitress*.
PR photo

'PRINCESS' PRIDE

Windy City Times reviews productions *The Csárdás Princess* and *Victims of Duty*.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Aretha Franklin, Beth Ditto and the show *Queer Eye*.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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MCA program reads into 'Queer Narratives'

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Technology and the queer community were the topics of conversation at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago's "Queer Narratives with Zach Stafford and Jack Halberstam" program on July 15.

Stafford is the editor-in-chief of Grindr and its media outlet INTO, a digital LGBTQ magazine that launched in 2017. Previously, he was the editor-at-large for OUT Magazine and an award-winning journalist at The Guardian. Halberstam, Ph.D., is a professor of gender studies and English at Columbia University, as well as the author of six books, including *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke UP, 1995), *Female Masculinity* (Duke UP, 1998), *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (Beacon Press, 2012), and, most recently, *Trans: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability* (University of California Press, 2018). They are currently working on several new projects including a book titled *Wild Thing: Queer Theory After Nature*.

"Queer Narratives with Zach Stafford and Jack Halberstam" was part of a set of programs inspired by MCA's exhibition "I Was Raised on the Internet," running through Oct. 14. Together, Stafford and Halberstam dissected the role that technology plays within the queer community.

"For me as a queer person, I've always wanted to see things like this exist," said Stafford of the program and his participation. "They were conversations in my brain and they weren't happening. Now I see them happening. For me to be a part of them, is more than I ever would've thought. I would've just been happy sitting in the crowd, so it's very overwhelming sitting in this seat."

"We integrate voices of all different people in Chicago," said MCA Chicago Curator of Public Programs January Parkos Arnall. "The nature of the internet in its first 30 years has been somewhat exclusive to a white male perspective and it was really important to us with the programming of the exhibition, programming around the exhibition, to include a diversity of experiences and voices."

Parkos Arnall moderated the conversation between Halberstam and Stafford, covering topics such as the history and current state of cruis-

ing, social-justice intentions and ramifications of technology aimed toward the queer community, and the role that technology plays in collecting and communicating queer narratives.

"For me, I think the most important thing I brought to the conversation or try to bring to conversations like this is that Grindr has so much history and cache and I have so many feelings about it as an app and I do have a lot of feelings about what I'm doing as a journalist, like: Why are you creating journalism within this app? What does it mean to export queer journalism? Is that problematic?" Stafford explained. "I think I wanted to show people that we're being thoughtful right now. Right now, we're at this moment where there is so much happening that a lot of us started in these positions of power, whether it's at Columbia, an academic institution, or with a tech company, that we're really thinking about the past a lot and how we're moving forward and we're trying to be as good as we can be, though we always make a lot of mistakes on the way and the purpose of it now is to talk about it and have open conversation."

Stafford added that intersectional, queer conversations are not just for Twitter or blogs. The MCA, he said, has become a space for the whole city to come together to have these types of conversations.

Within the prepared topics, the speakers were candid. Parkos Arnall detailed the conversation as taking on direction toward queer community and how it is built online and in real life; Halberstam's sense of time and space—a queer time



Jack Halberstam (left) and Zach Stafford.

Photo courtesy of MCA Chicago

and space—that works against and alongside heteronormative time and space and reflecting on that concept in today's digital world; and the commercialization of queerness as well as the promise of social justice within technology, specifically platforms like Grindr. A Q&A portion was conducted toward the end of the event.

"I thought they were both incredible," said Parkos Arnall of the speakers. "They bring a range of perspectives within each of their work. They represented different generational perspectives, different fields of practice, and their chemistry together, I thought, was really delightful."

"I think what I was really impressed with and I knew Chicago would do this, is that Chicago shows up for queer things, and it's amazing, and

they also ask amazing questions and questions that you don't always have the right answer to," said Stafford, a DePaul University graduate.

"I think it's good that Chicago creates a space to reference Jack's work as a failure and learning from failure and using that as a space to learn more and create more. I've always felt so comfortable in Chicago, coming in, just being very unedited, existing and saying what I say because I learned it here, so I love that the MCA created a space with someone I learned so much from, to have a complicated, fun and sometimes tough conversation about what it means to be a queer person today."

For more information on MCA Chicago and its programming, visit MCChicago.org.

CVS racial incident involves local gay GOP candidate

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Pharmacy giant CVS has apologized to a Black Chicago woman after an Edgewater manager—a white, openly gay man who is also running for 48th Ward alderman—phoned the police after she reportedly attempted to use a coupon he didn't recognize late on July 13.

Camilla Hudson posted a cellphone video to social media July 14 that showed a visibly trembling Morry Matson speaking on the phone with police after she attempted to purchase an item using a manufacturer's coupon he alleged that she'd forged. The video was deleted by Facebook at one point, but Hudson was able to repost it.

The CVS outlet in question is at 6150 N. Broadway.

Prior to announcing his aldermanic bid, Matson said that he was heading up an effort to revitalize the local branch of the Log Cabin Republicans. He has long been active in an effort to further extend the Lakefront Path; that effort



Morry Matson.
Photo courtesy of Matson

was at one point derailed when a referendum petition Matson organized was discovered to have a number of fraudulent signatures.

Chicago Sun-Times reported on the apology by Woonsocket, Rhode Island-based CVS July 14. Spokesperson Mike DeAngelis told the paper that, "We sincerely apologize to Ms. Hudson for her experience in one of our stores. Our Region Director in Chicago contacted Ms. Hudson as soon as we were made aware of this incident. CVS has begun an investigation and we will take any corrective action that is warranted to prevent it from happening again."

Hudson noted on Facebook that Matson's trembling, visible on her video, only started when he phoned 911 a second time.

"Morry Matson was not shaking and not having tremors of any kind when he first started assisting me at the self-checkout register in the store," she said. "He also did not have any tremors when we moved over to a regular register for him to assist me with the sale. He had no tremors when he initially warned me of having called the police. The tremors began when he called the police for what he said was the second time—which is the 911 call I videotaped."

State Rep. Juliana Stratton, D-Chicago, who is also running to be the state's next lieutenant governor and is a childhood friend of Hudson's, weighed in on the matter on Twitter: "Yesterday the police were called by a@cvspharmacy employee who assumed she had the wrong coupon. We cannot take lightly the calling of police on Black people carrying out normal, everyday activities. It's traumatizing and it's wrong."

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, added on Twitter: "Dear Mr. Matson: This isn't how we treat our neighbors in Edgewater. You're an embarrassment. ... Let this racist fool know the people of the 48th Ward deserve better."

Chicago Sun-Times' article is at <https://bit.ly/2LmJTcx>.

Corrections

In the July 11 issue, the incorrect pronouns were used for About Face Youth Theatre writer/ensemble member Via Haman. Haman's actual pronouns are they/them/their.

Also, in the article on the event "Black Girl Magic," Eva Styles was incorrectly identified.

Windy City Times sincerely apologizes for the errors.

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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

SOUND THE ALARMS: Supreme Court pick could dismantle LGBTQ rights

BY CAMILLA B. TAYLOR

The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court should alarm every member of the LGBT community. His record demonstrates that if he is confirmed to the seat recently vacated by Justice Kennedy, who often played the role of swing justice and authored the most significant landmark rulings over the past 20 years vindicating the rights and equal dignity of lesbian, bisexual and gay people, Judge Kavanaugh will threaten every advance this community has made, and set back our progress by decades.

Lambda Legal's Fair Courts Project has comprehensively reviewed his record and identified many ways in which Judge Kavanaugh's extremist views endanger LGBT people. First, he believes presidents should enjoy almost unfettered authority, which is particularly worrying at a time when the Trump administration has targeted LGBT people in its cross-hairs. Our community relies upon courts to provide a check on presidential power. To name just one example, President Trump last summer tweeted out a ban on transgender military service members. In multiple lawsuits challenging this ban, the Trump administration now argues that courts must defer broadly to the president and his discretion on military matters. The administration further claims that the service members challenging the policy have no right even to seek access to documents likely to show that the ban was tweeted out on impulse, reflecting little to no deliberation or rational decision-making whatsoever. Judge Kavanaugh's views on presidential power suggest that he may agree that courts may not meaningfully review such executive actions, regardless of how animus-driven and discriminatory they may be.

Second, Judge Kavanaugh sided with religious employers objecting to the federal government providing their employees with contraceptive coverage pursuant to the Affordable Care Act ("ACA"). Judge Kavanaugh's view that the ACA burdened these employers' religious beliefs simply by requiring them to notify the government of their objection to contraception suggests that Judge Kavanaugh also may: 1) side with religious health care providers that take federal taxpayer funds but refuse to treat LGBT people; 2) rule in favor of discriminatory child welfare providers that take taxpayer funds but refuse to respect the sexual orientation and gender identity of foster youth in their care, or that refuse to license LGBT people as foster parents, citing religious objections; and 3) favor discriminatory businesses that justify withholding service to serve LGBT people in the marketplace on religious grounds. Cases

concerning these questions are likely to reach the Court in the not-too-distant future.

But what should be most worrying for members of the LGBT community is Judge Kavanaugh's views on abortion. He dissented from a decision of the full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals allowing an undocumented 17-year-old girl in detention to obtain an abortion, and in various writings has expressed hostility to *Roe v. Wade*, the foundational abortion-rights decision. If courts retreat from protecting women's equality and autonomy in making reproductive choices free of govern-

it is upon a body of law protecting reproductive autonomy and bodily integrity, similarly protects a transgender person's right to live consistently with their gender identity, requiring issuance of accurate identity documents to transgender applicants, and respect for transgender service members' right to serve in the military as the men and women they are. To chip away at the body of law protecting women's reproductive autonomy would be to chip away at the precedents protecting LGBT peoples' equal dignity, moral agency, and ability to participate in public life.

“Recently, lower courts have recognized that the due process guarantee, built as it is upon a body of law protecting reproductive autonomy and bodily integrity, similarly protects a transgender person’s right to live consistently with their gender identity.”

mental interference, including with respect to abortion, then the rights of all LGBT people, which are deeply intertwined and share a common body of law, are necessarily diminished.

Indeed, the landmark victories that guard the LGBT community's right to marry and that decriminalized LGBT peoples' very existence, depend explicitly on precedents shielding reproductive autonomy. Thus, *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down laws criminalizing intimacy between people of the same sex, and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which upheld the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples, expressly relied upon prior due process cases protecting women's access to contraception, such as *Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. The Supreme Court recognized that, just like procreative decision-making, the right to choose whom to love and to marry and how to structure one's family can be self-defining, and central to a person's dignity and identity. Recently, lower courts have recognized that the due process guarantee, built as

Additionally, reproductive autonomy matters to LGBT people for more practical reasons. Many members of the community need access to such health care for themselves. Women often take contraceptives for medical reasons unrelated to preventing pregnancy, such as to treat endometriosis or reduce the risk for ovarian and uterine cancers. Indeed, at least one study suggests that more than 50 percent of lesbian women have used oral contraceptives at some point in their lives. Of course, lesbians and bisexual women may seek contraceptives or abortion care after having consensual sex with men as well. Transgender men need abortion care and contraceptives, too. Abortion and contraceptives are simply vital health care needs regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender men already face unique barriers to care that would be compounded by the imposition of additional restrictions on reproductive healthcare.

These aspects of Judge Kavanaugh's record



Camilla Taylor.

have direct relevance to LGBT people, but it bears noting that a vast range of civil liberties organizations have voiced opposition to his nomination for additional reasons—because his record also betrays hostility to voting rights, affirmative action, workers' rights, immigrants' rights, consumer protections, and other protections for vulnerable communities. The LGBT community in all of its proud diversity has a stake in all of these issues, too.

In short, Judge Kavanaugh's record suggests disdain for anyone who requires court intervention for protection against governmental discrimination and excess, and that should worry all of us. Now is the time to speak up against Judge Kavanaugh's nomination. Decades of progress for the LGBT community are in danger of being rolled back. Please call your senators and ask them to vote against this nomination.

Camilla B. Taylor is the Director of Constitutional Litigation for Lambda Legal, the oldest and largest national legal organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of all lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and people with HIV. She spearheads Lambda Legal's litigation challenging the Trump/Pence administration's assault on LGBT rights.

Most recently, Taylor has worked on *Karnoski v. Trump*, challenging the constitutionality of the Trump administration's ban on military service by transgender people; and *Marouf v. Azar*, a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on behalf of a lesbian couple denied an opportunity to apply to foster a refugee child in a federal program exclusively funded by HHS and administered by a faith-based agency on the ground that the couple does "not mirror the Holy Family."

The online version of this article has extensive informational links. Here are a few key ones:

- https://www.lambdalegal.org/blog/20180709_brett-kavanaugh-record
- <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-dc-circuit/1714435.html>
- [https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/C81A5EDEADAE82F2852581C30068AF6E/\\$file/17-5236-1701167.pdf](https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/C81A5EDEADAE82F2852581C30068AF6E/$file/17-5236-1701167.pdf)
- <https://civilrights.org/trump-supreme-court-pick-unfit-to-serve/>

Open Hand receives grant from Fifth Third Bank

BY ASHLEY COLLINS

This year, Open Hand/Heartland Alliance is celebrating its 30th year of service to the LGBTQ community in providing assistance in housing, healthcare, jobs and more. The organization is

the nation's only network that provides grocery services toward people who are battling against HIV/AIDS.

The program first started as "Meals on Wheels" and individuals like Lori Cannon—an advocate for the LGBTQ community who is the Open Hand's co-founder—saw an opportunity to break through and protect those dying from HIV/AIDS.

"The 30th anniversary... When you think about 18 million meals, it's jarring, stirring, bitter-sweet—but we're proud at what the volunteers and I were able to offer," Cannon said to Windy

City Times at a July 10 event at Groceryland, 5543 N. Broadway, that involved an announcement of a grant from Fifth Third Bank. "We were delivering food on the street and we would clutch their hand, no one would even touch them."

As for the July 10 event, a grant totaling \$6,500 will go toward the food pantry's services and supplies.

Along with Fifth Third Bank's Andrew Hayes and his mother, 48th Ward Alderman Harry Osterman and former local television journalist Merri

Dee praised Cannon and the volunteers for their hard work in the community.

Osterman commended Cannon on her work and told everyone, "When you think of 18 million meals, you think it's love. You think of the food that was donated, the food that was delivered, the food that was prepared for people that need it most—that's that labor of love from Lori."

For more information on Open Hand/Heartland Alliance, visit HeartlandHealthOutreach.org.



From left: Lori Cannon, Harry Osterman, Merri Dee, Andrew Hayes and Hayes' mother, Anita Butler. Photo by Ashley Collins

Tunney urges action over police staffing numbers

BY MATT SIMONETTE

In correspondence with constituents released July 13, Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward) urged constituents to contact the Mayor's Office or the office of Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson over what he said were frustrating levels of police staffing in the Town Hall 19th Police District.

"I am deeply disappointed and frustrated with these numbers and will be speaking with Mayor Emanuel about this failing commitment," Tunney said.

According to numbers Tunney cited, provided to him by District Commander Marc Buslick, there were 13 fewer officers on staff in the district in June 2018 than there was the month before. That month, there were a total of 372 officers on staff,

a drop from 385 officers in May.

Staffing levels in the 19th District have long been a concern of Tunney's constituents, especially for the month of June, when the area hosts the Pride Parade and a number of other Pride-related activities. Overcrowding and a number of incidents following this year's parade reportedly led to bars either voluntarily closing early, or being ordered to do so by CPD.

Tunney had earlier been assured by City officials that there'd be a minimum of 375 police officers on staff in the district; that came following a 30 percent cut in the number of officers.

"Yesterday, the Superintendent expressed his disappointment in current staffing and remains committed to getting and keeping police officers in the 19th District," Tunney added July 13.

The alderman urged his constituents to contact officials regarding the matter: Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office at 312-744-3300 or arahm.emanuel@cityofchicago.org; and Johnson's office at 312-745-6100 or eddie.johnson@chicagopolice.org.

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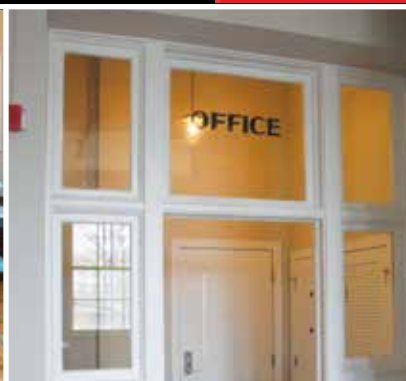
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Gay Albion College alumni on new project, other endeavors

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Over the past few years, Chicago-based Albion College alumni Austin Baidas and Larry Schook have been working on a project to send academically qualified/financially challenged students from Chicago to their small liberal arts college, located in Michigan.

Since Albion has small class sizes and professors who are committed to becoming student's mentors as well as a tight-knit campus, Baidas said this means students do not fall through the cracks and leave. Baidas explained that, in the past 30 years, 73 percent of Albion graduates from Chicago return to the city to being their adult lives. He sees their project as an opportunity to positively affect many neighborhoods, not just the ones where families can afford to send their kids to college.

"There are neighborhoods in Chicago that have problems with violence, lack of economic opportunity and other issues," said Baidas. "I believe if we are going to solve these issues we have to give smart people in these neighborhoods a way forward and that includes a college education. Albion not only trains people to follow a career

path, the college also gives them the tools to become citizens who are involved in their community."

Baidas said their goal is to finance 50 students a year over the four years of college, adding that fundraising is their primary focus because the gap right now is about \$10,000 per student per year. Baidas and Schook want the program to be fiscally sustainable for many years.

"Albion College has long been committed to students from Chicago and giving them the tools of a Liberal Arts education to change their lives, their neighborhoods and the city," said Schook. "Austin's work, as a proud Albion College alum, has been key to connecting Albion with the Chicago community, raising money and building bridges with the alumni network. He is an exemplar of the Albion College tradition."

One of the many students the project helps is Albion College LGBrits Co-President Raylan Grace, who identifies as pansexual.

"I chose Albion because I wanted to be my own independent person and the distance from Chicago gives me more of an opportunity to make new life choices," said Grace. "Being successful at Albion means I will be the first in my family to



From left: Program graduate Jordan Newson alongside Austin Baidas and Larry Schook at Chicago White Sox Albion College alumni event.

Photo by Sonny Gast

graduate from college which will start the trend of other family members dreaming of a college education. I am so grateful to be a part of Austin's program. I can always ask him for help when I am concerned about my college experience."

"I have also been helping connect students into the Chicago alumni network for internships and career opportunities," said Baidas. "Many

first generation college students after graduation make only 66 percent of what their more affluent peers do. My fellow alums can help close the gap for these talented students. I am excited to see them succeed in their careers and make a difference in their neighborhoods and the city as a whole."

Turn to page 9

LOST

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Another way Baidas gives back to his college is as a visiting scholar. He has done this three times over the past year by speaking with students either individually or in classes about his experiences in business, finance, government, non-profits and politics.

"I try to bring the real world to campus with these talks," said Baidas.

Baidas grew up in the Detroit suburbs and spent time working at his family's RV dealership as a teenager after school and on Saturdays. The most important message his father imparted on him, that his grandfather also imparted on his father, is to get a college education. When Baidas was searching for a college to attend he discovered Albion and its Gerstacker Institute for Professional Management. He chose Albion for the Gerstacker program and its small class sizes, and graduated in 1992 with a BA in economics and management. Baidas said working in his family's RV store stoked his interest in business and that is why he chose those college majors.

In addition to his interest in business, Baidas has always had a passion for public policy and politics. This manifested itself most acutely during the 2008 economic crash.

"I believe that bad public policy caused the economic crash of 2008 and the great recession of 2009," said Baidas. "Seeing the job losses, financial distress and uncertainty that my friends and neighbors went through during this time created a passion in me to get involve to prevent another man-made disaster like this in the future."

This led to Baidas' involvement with then-Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn's administration to turn around state government. He served as the associate budget director and assistant director of the Department of Central Management Services for four years.

"During my tenure, my colleagues and I were able to save taxpayers money by closing prisons, consolidating space to eliminate leases and reducing the cost of retiree healthcare without cutting benefits," said Baidas.

Baidas moved on to the Obama administration,

where he was the senior advisor to the administrator in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. In this role he "developed the Agency's business plan that tied directly to the agency's budget and operations goals."

For the past 12 years, Baidas has also been a partner at Creekside Communities which acquires, finances and manages 11 manufactured home communities in Michigan, Ohio and Texas.

Baidas was also a senior executive fellow at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2004.

"This was an executive education program that condensed the highlights of a master's of public administration degree into a very intense, six-day-a-week, monthlong program," said Baidas. "At the time, I was the youngest student in the class joining approximate 50 senior executives primarily from the federal government."

Baidas explained that in addition to giving back to his college, he is a Howard Brown Health board member and serves on the finance and development committees. He previously served on the board at the Center on Halsted and was part of the team that made the Town Hall LGBT Senior Apartments happen.

"Because Albion College and Howard Brown Health directly benefit Chicago, I felt in a Trumpian world I also needed to do something internationally focused which would make a difference so I joined the Chicago Committee of Human Rights Watch," said Baidas. "In April, I made a trip to Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress on human rights issues, and in June, I attended the Human Rights Watch Summit to hear from researchers around the world about what issues they are working on to bring about transparency and policy changes."

When Baidas is not working or doing non-profit volunteering, he spends as much time as he can with his five nephews and one niece (ages 8 to 15), plays CMSA flag football, and campaigns for state political candidates J.B. Pritzker and Kwame Raoul. He will also be participating in TPAN's Chicago Ride for AIDS this fall.

federal judge and that he delved into Schock's sexuality.

The NBC item is at <https://www.nbcchicago.com/blogs/ward-room/aaron-schock-corruption-case-set-to-begin-in-january-488199221.html>. The Politico article is at <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/26/aaron-schock-prosecutor-timothy-bass-678718>.

Elder-care support call on July 19

An elder-care support call will take place Thursday, July 19, 2-2:45 p.m. CT. The dial-in call number is 515-739-1030 and the access code is 784-468-702.

The Japanese American Service Committee is facilitating this support group, and aims to be culturally inclusive for people of color and LGBTIQI communities.

For more information, contact Liz Thomson at l.thomson773@gmail.com.

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Trial date set in Aaron Schock case

U.S. District Judge Colin Bruce has set the corruption trial for former U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock (R-Illinois) for Jan. 28, 2019, NBC 5 Chicago reported. Schock resigned from office in 2015, and was charged with misappropriation of funds.

In a conference call with the case's attorneys, Bruce provided an August-to-October pretrial schedule that involves motions and related arguments.

Bruce denied Schock's request to stay proceedings while his attorneys appeal a 7th Circuit Court of Appeals decision.

Politico recently reported that Timothy Bass—the federal prosecutor who has led the investigation into Schock for more than three years—is officially off the criminal corruption case. No official reason was given, although Bass dealt with allegations that he misled a



Derrick Woods-Morrow.
Photo by Daniel Delgado

ART

Derrick Woods-Morrow: A provocateur and disruptor, by design

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Talking with queer artist Derrick Woods-Morrow is an exercise in exploring boundaries.

This is, by no means, a criticism—it's simply an

observation. That Woods-Morrow initially comes across as shy doesn't mean he doesn't harbor lots of provocative thoughts—and the conversation he recently had with *Windy City Times* immediately took off when he expressed his thoughts

on rapper Kanye West's controversial statement, "When you hear about slavery for 400 years ... For 400 years? That sounds like a choice."

Woods-Morrow told *Windy City Times*, "It's not even that I necessarily support what Kanye has

to say. I just like the fact that he's stirring things up. He's doing a deviant thing. It makes no sense for a Black man to say some of the things he says."

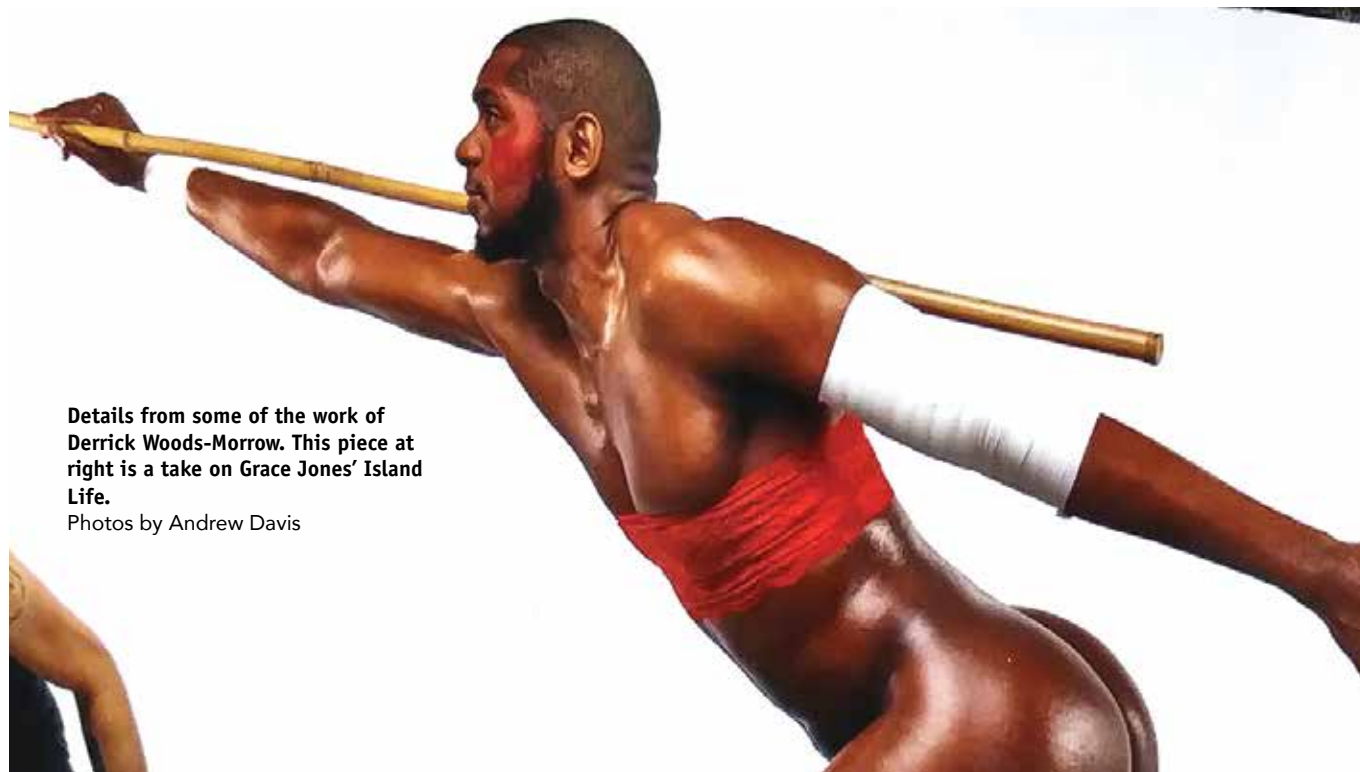
The artist is certainly more than this thoughts, though. The 28-year-old Brown Summit, North Carolina, native aims to "practice navigates and negotiates sexual identity by fragmenting notions of representation, exploring personhood and memories, and reimagining ways to understand power dynamics as they pertain to consent and self preservation," according to his bio for *Windy City Times*' 30 Under 30 Awards. (He was an honoree this year.) Accomplishments include being an alum of the Fire Island Artist Residency 2016, a current Chicago Artists coalition 2017-2018 bolt resident, and being an adjunct assistant professor of photography and teaching artist at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

And this is an intriguing time to be an artist—especially given today's often-turbulent political climate. When asked how politics inform his art, Woods-Morrow said, "I believe everything is political; anything can be made political. So maybe history informs the work, and I'm actually more invested in trying to make future spaces—and I'm doing that by trying to connect historical objects to ideas I had oftentimes as a child to trying to bring them to a space where I can ... play.

"With my body being a mega-6'4", 280-pound Black body not being allowed to play—but there's something innately queer about play, or deviance. There's always a little deviance in the work."

And this is true, whether it's about one of his works showing him imitating the cover of the Grace Jones album *Island Life* ("It's my body being between masculine and feminine," according to Woods-Morrow) or another piece of art involving a rainbow arrangement of bricks.

"The bricks were given to me (and I won't say



Details from some of the work of Derrick Woods-Morrow. This piece at right is a take on Grace Jones' *Island Life*.

Photos by Andrew Davis

how, but these bricks are from where there was a lot of Black gay cruising in the '70s, '80s and '90s), but the sand is stolen from Fire Island—so I was trafficking sand. In a way, it's about who owns and who can reclaim land. For years, white bodies have been trafficking sand and eroding those beaches. For years, Black bodies weren't even allowed on that island so, when I steal sand, I'm asking, 'Can I have my sand? Is it anyone's sand?' So, now, the U.S. Postal Service has blacklisted me from sending sand through the mail."

"There's another work where I basically proscribed for Polaroids. If I had a connection, we worked out an arrangement where I had access to their cellphones. All of these works exhibit some type of deviant action or quality."

When asked if he sees himself as a disruptor, the response is decisive: "Yes, I do—and I don't even have to be loud to be disruptive. I can disrupt and control in ways people don't see. When I enter a space, I see what goes on around me and I'm very aware of my position. I'm disrupting because people will see me and don't understand how I can act the way I do. 'How does he have the audacity to do that?' I think our bodies tend to disrupt things—especially Black, trans, queer and GNC bodies. And I welcome disruption; it brings discomfort, which brings about knowledge—it's revolutionary." For Woods-Morrow, enlightenment is key—no matter who learns something.

As for said enlightenment, Woods-Morrow said he believes that anyone can learn from anyone else. However, he added, "I have lots of unpopular opinions, like it's easier to learn from people who are inside your ethnic group. But I also think that opinions from the far right teach me a lot, including how I want to be seen."

With Woods-Morrow being such a fan of disruption, it led this writer to wonder if there are aspects of traditions he embraces—which propelled the artist to talk about growing up in the South (and the revelation that he and this writer went to, respectively, Randolph College and Randolph-

Macon College in Virginia). "Oh, yes—Southern family, Southern food—mac 'n' cheese, sweet tea, yams. ... And, of course, I love Black people; I grew up with Black people." He's also traditional in the sense that he likes to build or maintain bonds with other people: "I like to build relationships with people from my past, like a [man] named Adam who I had sexual experiences with when I was younger. [Note: They were both boys at the time.] I like to connect and reconnect with all sorts of bodies." Now, Adam is a police officer who's posed for some of Woods-Morrow's works.

Then, the artist talked about turning some societal mores on their heads, through art. "I worship Black bodies. My impetus, though, is to make white bodies perform for me in the work. I have an extreme interest in having Black bodies at rest and not having to work all the time. Being Black seems to mean you have to labor—it's all about labor. And, even now, I struggle with positioning Black bodies in my works, because I sometimes feel they become spectacle for white audiences. I'm constantly worry about Black bodies being at rest and not having to worry. These are things I think about. It's about my love for Black people and Black identity."

And, like any artist, Woods-Morrow sees his art evolving. "The art is evolving now," he said. "I wasn't making some of these items a year ago. I think about how I can push objects into different media and see where I go."

Not surprisingly, sexuality is another element of his life that Woods-Morrow happily sees as going against the grain. "At one time, I identified as straight or bi," he said. "Now, I identify as a queer man who has an openness with everyone, but who predominantly sleeps with men. I am attracted to lots of different types of people—lots of genders and sexualities. I like that a thin top can come my way. Maybe I'm interested in the destabilization of my large Black body because I think I'm supposed to have a role where people see me one way."

And those are the proud words of a disruptor.



Derrick Woods-Morrow's "Interloper."

Photo by Andrew Davis



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Travel map shows LGBTQI (in)tolerance worldwide

Global travel insurance provider WorldNomads.com has released a map of (in)tolerance—revealing which countries are potentially dangerous for LGBTQI travelers because of legal status and societal attitudes.

The company has said it is important LGBTQI travelers make conscious and informed decisions about the places they choose to travel.

WorldNomads.com says 72 countries and territories worldwide criminalize same-sex relationships, including 45 in which sexual relationships between women are outlawed.

In eight of those countries, homosexuality can result in the death penalty, and there are dozens more in which same-sex acts can result in a prison sentence.

There is a spectrum when it comes to legal recognition and the provision of protection through anti-discrimination laws, and this color-coded map (attached) is designed to help LGBTQI travelers make informed decisions about where they go.

WorldNomads.com has attempted to integrate legal status with attitudes from the general public. For example, Russia, where homosexuality is legal, is colored yellow because of open hostility and the prevalence of violence toward LGBTQI people.

The color code is as follows:
RED: Homosexuality is illegal. The death penalty may apply.

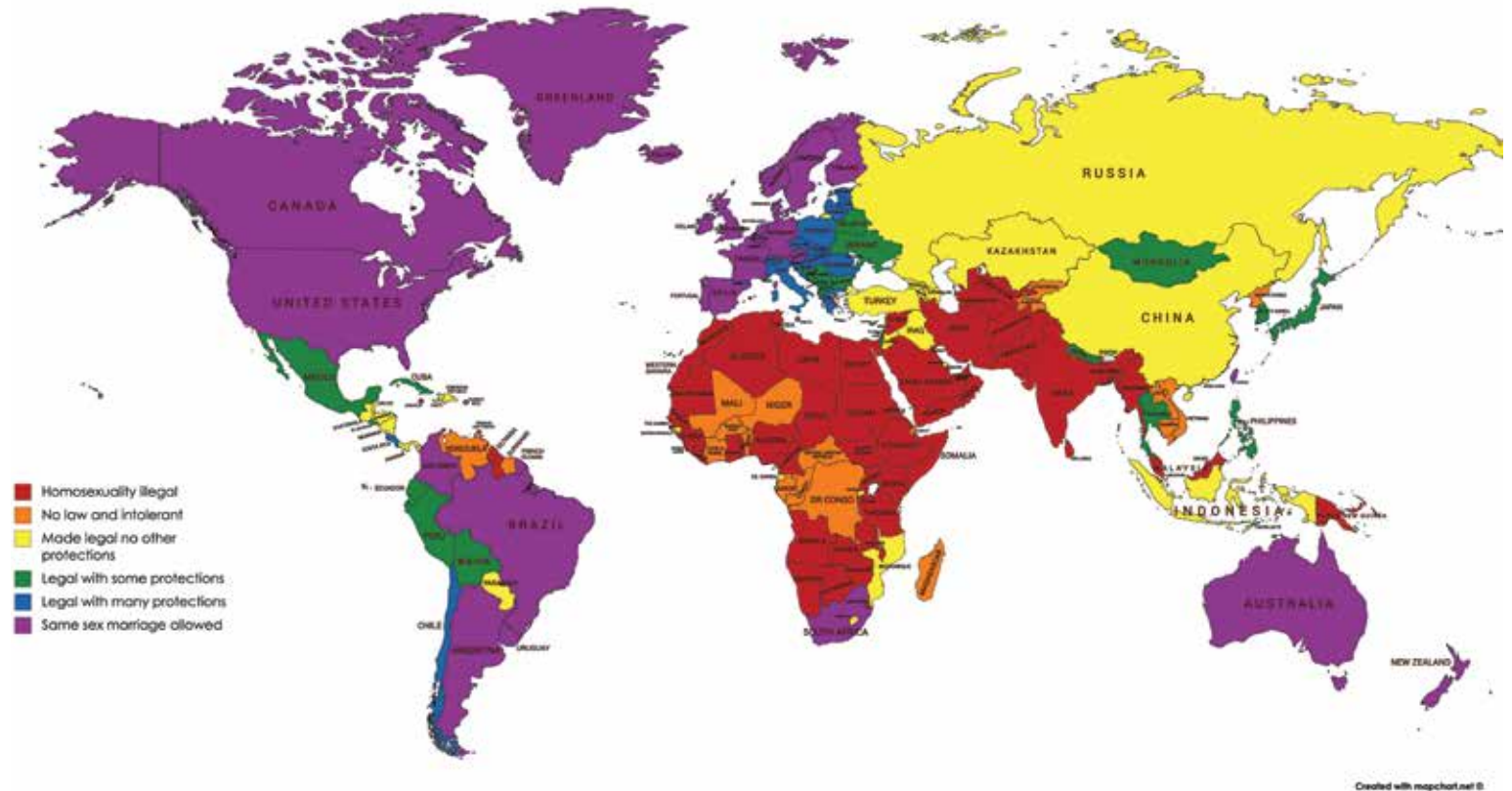
ORANGE: In these countries homosexuality is legal, but by default. They have never enacted legislation specifically outlawing it. It's perhaps more accurate to describe the legal situation as "not officially illegal."

YELLOW: Have legalized homosexuality, but there is no other protection for the LGBTQI community, and there is often open hostility from the majority of the population.

GREEN: Have legalized homosexual acts, but have a very limited number of other protections against discrimination.

BLUE: Have legalized homosexuality, but there is no other protection in place.

PURPLE: Countries that have legalized and codified same-sex marriage and offer (generally) a full suite of protection of rights.



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Rule could force choice between federal funds, anti-LGBT discrimination

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Grave financial and moral choices await Illinois authorities if the U.S. House of Representatives passes a budget amendment penalizing states prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination in their adoption and foster care system, say stakeholders.

A group composed of elected officials, service providers and advocates, among others, called on the Illinois' Congressional delegation to uniformly reject the proposed Aderholt Amendment, which was attached as a budget rider on a bill funding the Departments of Health, Labor and Education, at a July 16 press conference at the UCAN offices in Homan Square.

The amendment—which, according to its authors, supposedly “prohibits discrimination against a child welfare service provider based on the provider’s religious or moral beliefs”—allows the federal government to withhold up to 15 percent of funding for child welfare programs if a state does not permit an agency to refuse to work with LGBT families. U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) proposed the rule.

Since Illinois has strong protections against

such discrimination in place, about \$94 million dollars in funding would be at stake, said James McIntyre of Foster Care Alumni of America’s Illinois chapter, who added that the primary impediment to quality foster care is not religious-based discrimination, but, rather, “not enough providers of loving homes.”

State representatives from both sides of the aisle voiced their opposition to the amendment; state Rep. Steve Andersson (R-Geneva) decried the use of “religious-held beliefs” as the rationale for the rule, adding, “This is not the sort of issue we should be revisiting.”

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago) called on Gov. Bruce Rauner to voice an objection to the amendment and said, “It is time to put this nonsense aside and move forward.”

After the amendment passed a committee vote on July 11, Aderholt released a statement lauding its passage, asserting that the legislation would both increase placements in loving homes and help families who had been negatively affected by the opioid crises.

Both rationales were dismissed at the July 16 conference. Amanda McMillen, chief program officer of Illinois Collaboration on Youth, said that,



From left: Kyle Hillman, Amanda McMillen, Charles Golbert, James McIntyre, Steve Andersson and Kelly Cassidy.

Photo by Matt Simonette

while the state does indeed have numerous flaws in its child welfare system, the state’s anti-discrimination protections are not contributing to those problems. Colleen Connell, executive director of ACLU of Illinois, vehemently disputed the assertion about the opioid epidemic, saying the new rule would make it that much for difficult for children adversely impacted by the epidemic to find stable homes; she further called Aderholt’s idea “absurd.”

McIntyre said the next step was reaching out to

the members of the state’s Congressional delegation—especially Republicans—to reiterate the implications of the bill.

“We have to tell them not to vote ‘yes’ just because it is a budget bill,” he added.

There are about 7,000 children in foster care in Cook County, according to Cook County Acting Public Guardian Charles Golbert, who also spoke July 16. Kyle Hillman of National Association of Social Workers’ Illinois chapter also gave remarks.



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viewpoints


**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

Concerns about the afterlife in this life with Trump

A pall hangs over many Americans since Trump has taken office.

One sign of this dark cloud has been an uptick in dystopian novels. Classics like George Orwell's 1984, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, Sinclair Lewis' It Can't Happen Here, and my favorite, Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale—a drama web television hit on Hulu are now all horrifyingly prescient. Our devouring of these tomes is a search for answers to a potentially frightening new normal.

For example, Kellyanne Conway's use of the Orwellian phrase "alternative facts" to corroborate with then-White House press secretary Sean Spicer's fallacious claims about Trump's crowd size at his inauguration signaled to people that facts and the truth are inconsequential in this administration.

Just as there has been an uptick in these dystopian classics, there has also been a steady stream of queries about the afterlife. The afterlife refers to an individual's soul or spirit living beyond the life of their physical body. Also, there is the belief that in the afterlife one's moral choices and actions in life can result in their soul residing—based on divine judgment—in a place of reward or punishment, known as Heaven or hell, respectively. Many—religious and non-religious—folks feel if there is indeed a hell, then Trump will unquestionably be going there directly. However, thoughts about the afterlife can be a search for answers to potentially a frightening new normal, too.

With Trump appearing to be both unstoppable and invincible—in his erosion of fundamental freedoms and protections to various disenfranchised, vulnerable, and historically marginalized populations in the country and immigrants, his nativist spirit of patriotism and isolationist rhetoric to "Make America Great Again," and now his U.S. Supreme Court nominee that can potentially shape future generations—questions about the afterlife not only speak about social anxiety but, sadly, about hopelessness. As a minister in this Trump era, I've been receiving lots



GLAD (GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders) Janson Wu spoke out against the normalization of hate, the Rev. Irene Monroe stated.

Photo courtesy of GLAD, and by Susan Symonds, InfinityPortraitDesign.com

of queries about the afterlife.

Examples: "I want to ask you, what do you believe will happen in the afterlife? Are we as the human race going to be okay? Should I worry about what's going to happen to me after death? My girlfriend, who believes in God, but struggles with what to believe in exactly—is she going to be okay? I'm terrified right now, and as one of the very few looking past religious dogma, I need your help, or at least some insight into what I should be doing, praying for, anything."

Many religions create theologies with elaborative and fictive narratives of reward and punishment systems as a form of social control, like the Christian concept of heaven and hell. I don't think, after death, one is likely to go to heaven or hell in an afterlife. Sadly, Trump gets off the hook regarding going to hell.

I do, however, believe that crushing setbacks; grinding poverty, racial, gender and sexual orientation; and profiling religions, to name a few, unquestionably make for a living hell.

The belief in an afterlife, in my opinion, can create complacency and indifference to present social-justice issues and crimes against humanity like the Holocaust, U.S. slavery, lynching and the immigration crisis presently at the United States-Mexico border.

For example, in the case of enslaved Africans, the

belief in an afterlife was passed on to my ancestors as an intentionally Christian theological concept as a form of social control to maintain the status quo of perpetual servitude. The indoctrination of an overjoyed and jubilant afterlife wasn't to make them better Christians but instead obedient, subservient and God-fearing slaves.

For African-American slaves, however, the belief in an afterlife was a coded critique of an unfulfilled life denying them of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in this life. The belief in an afterlife functioned as an eschatological hope and aspiration that their future progenies would indeed have a fulfilled life that they could only purportedly experience in death.

People—across the country as well as the world—have taken to the streets in protest. Social justice and pro-democracy organizations are now employing intersectional approaches to stem the deleterious and regressive laws of this administration.

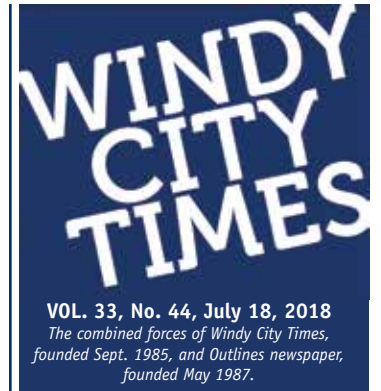
And it brings to the fore the now urgent need to speak up like Rev. Martin Niemoller, a Protestant pastor who was an outspoken public foe of Adolf Hitler. Many know his world-renowned quote: "First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist..."

Janson Wu, executive director of GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), wrote a remake of Niemoller's famous verse in his article "Resistance and Solidarity in the Era Trump," which is in Boston Pride Guide 2017. In speaking out against the normalization of hate and prejudice, Wu, like Niemoller, is letting us know who are today's present-day targets:

"When they come for immigrants, they come for LGBTQ people. When they come for women, they come for LGBTQ people. When they come for Muslims, they come for LGBTQ people. And the inverse is true: when they come for LGBTQ people, they come for everyone."

While many people might feel fatigued from the daily dramas emerging from the White House and feel hopeless with thoughts of an afterlife, we can alter the dystopian pall Trump has cast by living in the present moment fighting back optimistically. One way is to vote in November.

Moreover, while there are now a plethora of materials evident of the afterlife, like the New York Times bestseller Proof of Heaven, by Harvard-trained neurosurgeon Eben Alexander, MD., I feel the concept (real or imagined) can potentially deprive us of living fully present in this life—missing small miracles, random acts of kindness, and the beauty of a sunrise and sunset in a single day.



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e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or
Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

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WCT reviews *Blood at the Root*.

Photo courtesy of Jackalope Theatre Company

THEATER

South Side native comes home for 'The Color Purple'

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

South Side native Carla R. Stewart looks to Rihanna when summing up Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning 1982 novel "The Color Purple."

"It's a story about broken people, finding love. Celie and Shug find love in a hopeless place," Stewart said in a paraphrase from Rihanna's mega-hit "We Found Love."

As Shug Avery in the national tour of the musical version of *The Color Purple*, Stewart knows that story well. Along with co-star Adrianna Hicks (Celie), she stars in the production running through July 29 at the Auditorium Theatre.

An instant classic when it was published, *The Color Purple* went on to become an Oscar-nominated movie and then a Tony-winning musical.

Set primarily in early 20th-century rural Georgia, the plot follows Celie and Shug as they endure and ultimately triumph over all the brutality the Deep South is capable of heaping on impoverished African-American women. Celie is 14 when the show begins, pregnant with her stepfather's child. Shug is a sexually fluid siren capable of bringing all genders and orientations to their knees with her incandescent, unapologetic sexuality.

The women's relationship—a mix of fathoms-deep friendship and sizzling sexual chemistry—is part of the plot's backbone. The musical (book by Marsha Norman; music and lyrics by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray) features a radiant mix of jazz, blues, slow jams as sweet and

hot as simmering molasses and raise-the-rafters gospel stompers.

"I never saw myself playing some so sexy like Shug," Stewart said. "But that essence, that power that Shug taps into when she performs in the juke joints, that showed me the endless possibilities of who I can play and who I can be."

"Shug shows there is beauty in us. No matter what we're told, we have power. We are not weak. We are not small. We do not have to limit ourselves," Stewart said.

Hicks saw *The Color Purple* in 2008, as a senior at McKinney High School in suburban Dallas. For four years, she'd been the only Black student in the school's musical-theater program.

Hicks went on to study musical theater at the University of Oklahoma and then made a name for herself in Europe, landing gigs in a German production of *Sister Act* and an Austrian *Legally Blonde*. She made her Broadway debut in 2014 as part of the *Aladdin* cast.

Stewart graduated from New York City's American Music and Dramatic Academy and returned to Chicago to start her career. It started slowly. After performing in Congo Square's *Black Nativity*, Stewart made it through several callbacks for shows at the Goodman, but never got cast.

"I had a friend 'behind the table,' there," Stewart said. "He told me, 'Hey, they really like you. But they're concerned you're too green—that you don't have enough credits.'"

So Stewart left Chicago and began to rack up credits across the country (*Grease* in New Jersey;

Ain't Misbehavin' in Florida, *Hairspray* in Reno). She did a stint at sea singing on a Disney Cruise, and snagged the plum role of Oda Mae Brown in the national tour of *Ghost*. But, in 2015, Stewart's mother was dying. She came home.

Her mother's decline coincided with auditions for the Broadway revival of *The Color Purple*. Stewart briefly thought she'd love to audition, but quickly put the show from her mind. She had no intention of leaving her mother. Her mother, however, had other ideas.

"She told me to make a video and audition with that," Stewart said. "So we got the script. She and my brother read [lines] with me. My mom gave me notes. I sent it off thinking 'nobody is going to watch this thing.'"

Stewart's agent called shortly thereafter. She had an audition. It was scheduled for the same day as her mother's funeral. "I said I couldn't make it, and figured that was that," Stewart said.

After the funeral, the agent called again. The producers still wanted to see her. "I wore the dress to auditions that I'd worn to the funeral. I felt like my mother was watching over me. I still feel that," Stewart said. She was cast in the Broadway show's ensemble, alongside Hicks.

Celie and Shug's journey traverses decades and continents.

For Celie, sex before Shug is nothing but rape and humiliation, and love is something that's largely non-existent. "Celie's story is specific but also universal," Hicks said. "You might not have the same experiences as Celie, but you'll recognize the things she feels."

For Hicks and Stewart, the musical's redemptive arc gives it power and grace.

"Redemption and forgiveness—that's the entire theme to me. We would all love to write some people off. We think that will make us feel better," said Hicks. "But you actually free yourself when you forgive someone. I praise Celie. She's strong enough not to let reprehensible acts control her. There's power in that."

Color Purple runs through Sunday, July 29, at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress Pkwy.; visit BroadwayinChicago.com.

Carla R. Stewart's one-woman show *Truth Be Told* is at 7 p.m. Monday, July 23, at the Lilydale Progressive Baptist Church, 10706 S. Michigan Ave. Tickets are \$15; visit <https://tinyurl.com/y8j2yjjz>.



Carla R. Stewart (left) and Adrianna Hicks in *The Color Purple*.

Photo by Matthew Murphy

THEATER REVIEW

Pamplona

Playwright: Jim McGrath

At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.

Tickets: GoodmanTheatre.org; 312-443-3800

Runs through: Aug. 19

BY KAREN TOPHAM

Stacy Keach tried to bring his Hemingway show *Pamplona* to the Goodman Theatre's stage last year, but a mild heart attack felled him.

This year, in the one-man show that Jim McGrath wrote, Keach conjures a Hemingway who, in what will be the last year of his life, is easily sidetracked, quickly angered and unable to focus enough to finish (or even much more than start) his current project, a series for *Life Magazine* about bullfighting. He is a tired Hemingway, broken by the events of his later life including two plane crashes, serious health issues, and the apparent loss of his relationship with his fourth

wife, Mary. Under frequent collaborator Robert Falls' direction, though, Keach portrays him with the kind of inner vigor that defined Hemingway.

The play takes place in a Spanish hotel room five years after Hemingway won his Nobel Prize. In the 90-minute production, Keach's Hemingway reveals both the triumphs of his life and its failures. It focuses on a single moment in his life: his frustration in trying to find the right hook with which to write that magazine article. It's a moment that allows Keach to explore the author's entire life and those who had the most effect on him. The term "tour de force" is often thrown around a bit too casually, but here I think it truly applies: Keach simply embodies the writer. The audience around me reacted viscerally to both his humorous moments and the stark realities of the author's life. It's not necessary to know anything at all about the latter to understand the play, though familiarity with Hemingway and his times might add depth to the experience.

Kevin Depinet designed the hotel room—its realistic accoutrements at odds with the forced

Stacy Keach in *Pamplona*.

Photo by Liz Lauren

perspective effect of its walls and windows, a surreal touch that allows Adam Fleming surfaces on which to project images of Hemingway's life and the people who made it interesting. The projections are truly a second character in the play, letting us see the various subjects Hemingway is speaking about and providing cityscapes for background with the help of some lovely lighting by Jesse Klug and with Michael Ross's original music setting the tone. Like all one-man shows, this one is far greater than the single character.

Keach is clearly in better health this time around, as he proves during this dynamic and fascinating character study. No matter what your relationship to Ernest Hemingway's writing might be, you'll find Keach's portrayal to be eye-opening. Although he covers no truly new ground in this play—the historical record is tremendously clear—Keach and McGrath make the blunt-spoken, ultra-macho Hemingway into someone who is a joy to spend an evening with.

THEATER REVIEW

Topdog/Underdog

Playwright: Suzan-Lori Parks

At: Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre,

927 Noyes St., Evanston

Tickets: \$15; Noyes Cultural

Center; 847-866-5915

Runs through: July 29

BY KAREN TOPHAM

In the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Topdog/Underdog*, by Suzan-Lori Parks, two brothers struggle with some of the cultural, family, and societal aspects of being young Black men in the United States.

Named Lincoln and Booth by their father for a joke, the boys were abandoned by both parents when they were young and left to take care of each other. Lincoln is the titular "topdog"—

older, steadily employed (as an arcade Abraham Lincoln whom tourists can "shoot"), possessed of great skill with cards he has used to make a living before and could again. Booth, the younger sibling, can boast only of a ratty apartment, an on-again-off-again relationship with girlfriend Grace and a less-than-adept skill at three-card monte.

Parks paints these siblings with some beautiful language. Of his feelings about the gun used by the tourists are complicated by memories of a best friend gunned down in the streets, Linc says, "The gun is always cold. Winter or summer the gun is always cold. And when the gun touches me he can feel that I'm warm and he knows I'm alive. And if I'm alive then he can shoot me dead. And for a minute, with him hanging back there behind me, it's real."

For his part, Booth is more concerned about his relationship with Grace. In a highly embel-

lished recounting of a night in her company, he says, "She wants me back. She wants me back so bad she wiped her hand over the past where we wasn't together just so she could say. ... She been mine since the dawn of time."

The notion of deception runs throughout almost all of the play. The brothers are never totally honest with each other, both keeping secrets and outright lying. The central card game, too, three-card monte, is notorious for its power to deceive "marks" into believing they have a chance to win when, as Linc points out, "It may look like you got a chance but the only time you pick right is when the man lets you." Both brothers are guilty of not letting the other win in one way or another.

Jelani Pitcher and Keith Illidge are superb as Booth and Lincoln, respectively—each creating just enough sympathy for his character that we can (almost) overlook when they do something

unkind or even terrible. And Parks' script helps there as well: she creates so many marvelously humorous moments that the audience doesn't have time to anticipate any darkness. Director Tim Rhoze calls the play "a fierce combination of dark comedy and high-stakes drama," and he certainly does his job well in bringing us that combination, both in the pacing of the scenes and in the performances from his actors. I could have done with a lot less of the overwhelming jazz music playing through many scenes, but it did certainly set a mood, which is undoubtedly what Roze wanted. In all, *Topdog/Underdog* is a powerful piece of theater, and Fleetwood-Jourdain does the play and its author proud.

CRITICS' PICKS

Support Group for Men, Goodman Theatre, through July 29. These are confusing times for everyone, but Ellen Fahey 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

Guards at the Taj, Steppenwolf Theatre, through July 29. Rajiv Joseph's very modern play with an historic setting explores friendship, loyalty, beauty and power through comedy and terror. 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 production about the Haymarket Affair and violent birth of the labor movement. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

Blood at the Root

Playwright: Dominique Morisseau

At: Jackalope Theatre Company and

The Yard Ensemble at the Armory,

5917 N. Broadway

Tickets: \$10-\$25; JackalopeTheatre.org

Runs through: July 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There are two things you should know before the start of the play: First, one day in 2006, on a high school campus in Jena, Louisiana, an African-American female student running for class president sat in the shade of an oak tree on campus—a venerated site habitually that "snobs and cliques" occupied. The next day, three hangman's nooses dangled from its branches and, later, a cafeteria brawl resulted in a white male student being severely beaten and

six Black male students arrested.

Second, in 2014, rising-star playwright Dominique Morisseau met Penn State professor Steve Broadnax, who asked her to write a play for his graduate acting class. This proposal might have produced a paint-by-numbers docudrama listing its issues in tidy power-point; instead, it supplied Morisseau with material for a "cho-reopoem" (a term earlier that Ntozake Shange coined) that blended dialogue, spoken-word poetry, rap music, jazz dance and visual imagery to create an intimate collage focused squarely on the witnesses to the incident under scrutiny.

This means we get no inflammatory TV newscasts, no patronizing op-eds, "objective" analyses or weepy epilogues to overextend the brief stage time (80 minutes). Adult authorities appear in only one scene, and the sole journalists are those on the school newspaper. The teenagers of "Cedar High" whose futures depend upon their response to the crisis speak for themselves, articulating their convictions with

undiluted candor and spontaneity.

Gradually, a summary emerges from the welter of dissenting reports, raising more questions than answers: Were the nooses a racist hate crime, or simply an adolescent joke? Was the fight precipitated by racism or homophobia? Were all of the participants to blame for its instigation? Does the prospective punishment exceed the crime?

By the play's conclusion, we still don't know. (A Wikipedia search finds the real-life accounts just as unresolved.) What you *will* find in this revival of Jackalope's collaboration with the Yard Ensemble are performance dynamics generating electricity so palpable you can almost see the sparks as the protesters' chants break over the fourth wall to envelope the audience—rendering the smack of clapping hands in the Armory's brick-and-concrete cell a volley resounding with the urgency of a thousand firecrackers exploding in righteous anger.



Kumar Rohit (left) and Conor McGarry in *Fucking Men*. Photo by Paul Goyette

THEATER REVIEW

Fucking Men

Written by: Joe DiPietro

Directed by: David Zak

At: The Broadway Pride Arts Center,
4139 N. Broadway

Tickets: PrideFilmAndPlays.com: \$25-30

Runs through: Aug. 26

BY ERIC KARAS

Pride Films and Plays is presenting Joe DiPietro's *Fucking Men*—a production that is not as salacious as it sounds.

This play centers around the interactions of men in several connected vignettes exploring gay male sexuality, intimacy and connection. Instead of sex scenes, we have dance numbers by choreographers Jake Ganzer, Daniel Hurst, James Muel-

ler and Katelyn Stoss—with results varying from interesting to unintentionally funny.

However, the cast is uniformly terrific, and some standouts include a charismatic performance by Roy Samra as a porn star, Conor McGarry as a cocky college student, Lars Ebsworth adding comic relief as a frantic playwright and Whitman Johnson as a hustler whose desperation is palpable.

This play is about nine years old but seems pretty dated. References to porn videos, renting movies, Blackberries and a star being hated for coming out seem from another time. However, the themes of the relationships are universal and timeless. The topics of navigating open relationships, sexuality, coming out etc are still worth exploring. This is the type of show where the coffee discussion afterward with friends will be as interesting as the show itself.

Immigration event July 18 at Victory

Victory Gardens Theater will present "Town Hall: Reunite!," an event where Chicago artists will respond to the current immigration policies of the United States.

The event will be held at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., on Wed., July 18, at 7 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Artists and community partners will perform original poetry, music, dance and performance

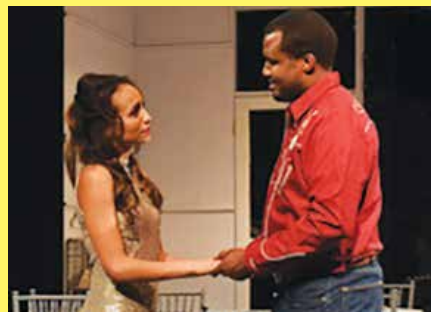
pieces to give more visibility and voice to citizens, residents, migrants and refugees who are affected by these policies.

"Town Hall: Reunite!" participants will include After School Matters: HiDef Dance Ensemble, Growing Concerns Poetry Collective, Luis Alfaro, Melissa Castro Almandina, Kaina Castillo, Bilal Dardai, Keren Diaz de Leon, Isaac Gomez, Arti Ishak, Ginger Lane, Rohina Malik, Victor Musoni, Lily Padilla, Victoria Peralta, Ireon Roach, Karen Rodriguez and more.

See VictoryGardens.org /also-playing/reunite/.

SPOTLIGHT

In *Bus Stop*, director Steve Scott takes on William Inge's classic about a bus stranded by a snow storm and the group of desperate, disparate passengers holed up in a diner waiting for the weather to clear. The group includes a cross-section of Americana: cowboys, cabaret singers, law enforcement, lovers, liars and thieves—many of them profoundly changed by their time stuck somewhere outside of Kansas City, Missouri. As ensemble shows go, it's packed with star turns and rich characters. It runs through Aug. 19 in an Eclipse Theatre



production at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave. (\$30. EclipseTheatre.com)

Caption: Photo by Scott Dray

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'Carnaval of New Latinx Work' July 19-21

The Latinx Theatre Commons (LTC) is presenting the 2018 LTC Carnaval of New Latinx Work (Carnaval 2018: ConeXion!)—featuring readings of six new Latinx plays paired with Latinx directors, actors, designers and dramaturgs—at The Theatre School at DePaul University, 2350 N. Racine Ave., on July 19-21.

Carnaval 2018: ConeXion! is an event celebrating the abundance of Latinx talent in U.S. theater. Additionally, Carnaval participants are able to experience Chicago's Latinx theater community through events created by local Latinx companies Urban Theater Company, Aguijón Theater, Teatro Vista and the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance.

Readings are free and open to the public; visit LatinxTheatreCommons.com.

Emanuel announces plan to reopen Uptown Theatre

Recently, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Ald. James Cappleman, Jam Productions and Farpoint Development to announce Chicago's Uptown Theatre will be restored and reopened.

The 93-year-old landmark building—vacant for more than 35 years—will be used for a variety of live performances and special events. The \$75-million project fulfills a commitment Emanuel made in his first term.

The City of Chicago has worked to protect and preserve the building for several decades. It started in 1991, when the venue was designated a City of Chicago landmark to preserve its exterior and interior from alteration or demolition. Jam purchased the building in 2008.

Ysaguirre named new Court Theatre ED

Angel Ysaguirre has been appointed executive director of the University of Chicago's Court Theatre, effective Sept. 4.

Ysaguirre will join Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director Charlie Newell as co-leader of the company.

For the last five years, Ysaguirre has served as executive director of Illinois Humanities, a not-for-profit organization aimed at strengthening the social, political and economic facets of Illinois through constructive conversation and community engagement.

THEATER

Medieval morality makeover: 'Everybody' at Pride Arts Center

BY JAMES R. WILKE

A 2018 Pulitzer Prize finalist for drama, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Everybody* is a modern retelling of the 15th-century morality play *Everyman*, an allegory where the titular character recounts his life before "God" and "Death."

In Jacobs-Jenkins' playful version, *Everyman* illuminates the inevitable human path toward death. Chicago audiences can see the Brown Paper Box Co. production of the one-act at Uptown's Buena Theatre, at Pride Arts Center.

Lottery days

From the start, *Everybody* veers from conventional theater.

"Five of the nine actors have their roles selected by a lottery that happens onstage at the beginning of the show," said director Erin Shea Brady. "Four of the nine are the same every night. And then the five, they call them the 'Somebodies,' are selected from the audience at the beginning of the show, brought up on stage by 'Death,' and then randomly (each) given one of five tracks, one of which is 'Everybody,' who is the lead. They don't know who each other is to play... We immediately go into blackout. And then the play starts."

There are 120 possible variations of the play that an audience can see, in what appears to be an attempt by the playwright to simulate the randomness of life and death. "There aren't other plays that exist quite like this one," Brady continued. "So, it's been a unique challenge. We figure a lot of it out as we go."

Non-improv improv

The play is scripted and not improv, although an improv background can come in handy, Brady said.

"It's all scripted," she added. "You know, it's a big ask (of the actors). Anyone who has a pre-show ritual of going through the play before the show starts every night, anything like that really doesn't vibe. Because you're physically on stage in front of the audience every night when you learn who you'll be playing that night."

"I've obviously set a framework for each of these scenes. And we know the motion of the story that we're going in. But I can't direct 120 versions of the play. So, there's very much an element of surprise and spontaneity," Brady said. "I think what I was looking for in terms of casting was who has both understudy experience and improv experience," she said.

'Everybody' on the spectrum

Brady's diverse cast ranges in age from 12 through 60s, and spans a spectrum of genders and orientations. "The only thing (the script) specifies is that one of the roles is played by a child actor. Everything else is open. Between the five Somebodies, we've extended that to age, to gender, to sexuality, to race. So, we have five very different people coming into this room with very different life experiences," she said.

"The main character is *Everybody*. And then the remain-



Everybody director Erin Shea Brady.

PR photo courtesy of Brown Paper Box Co.

ing people play elements in their life. Nobody plays people in this play. Everyone plays ideas... So, it's been fun to see the range of possibility within these big conversations. You know, friendship looks really different for a lot of people. How many different ways can friendship look? How many different ways can family look?"

Conscious comedy

"There's a neutrality to it in terms of religion," Brady said. "It definitely runs on the more existential, philosophical, spiritual side. It really is just a play about joy, and vulnerability, and accountability, and how we move through our lives, and the things that matter most to us," Brady said.

Although this may sound like heavy subject matter, Brady said with a laugh, "It does fall on the comedic side a lot of the time," she said.

"I mean, it's a play about death," she concluded. "(That's) not an easy thing to talk about."

Everybody runs from through Aug. 12 at The Buena at Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway. For more info, visit BrownPaperBox.org.

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Steve Grand.
PR photo by William Dick

MUSIC

A more worldly Steve Grand: It's 'not the end of me'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Steve Grand has been through a lot.

That much is evident on not the end of me, Grand's newest album. There are certainly uptempo numbers that incorporate everything from country to pop to light reggae, but the lyrics reveal someone who has certainly had his ups and downs (professionally and personally) since he broke out as an openly gay country star in 2013. Grand has even said of the 12-track album, "This album is autobiographical—very personal, somber and reflective."

Windy City Times: Let's talk about the title of the album. Did you feel like it might have been the end of you, at one point, professionally speaking?

Steve Grand: Well, I think a lot of us go through that time of our lives when we're down—or even that we don't want to go on. I've had some pretty dark moments over the last couple years, and a lot of these songs were written when I was pretty low.

But this title is about resilience. One of the things I've learned over the past couple of years is that you can't control a lot of situations in life. You can't control what you've done in the past—but you can control your attitude about it. Part of that is saying, "Despite getting down, I'm going to try to be better today than I was yesterday, and I'm going to try to start every day with a sense of humility and gratitude."

WCT: I think some people think that celebrities have lives that are always glamorous, or that you're never lonely. On this album, there are moments of happiness—but I sensed that you're someone who's older and wiser, but who's had a few bumps along the way.

SG: That's a great way to put it.

To say I'm a celebrity is a bit of a stretch, though; I'm lucky to have a solid, supportive fan base—mostly within the gay community. After my first song and video went viral, it was a zero-to-60 thing—and I wasn't ready for it, although I don't think anyone is ready for that. Despite what people may see on Instagram, lives are more complicated than they think. That's important to remember: We're not just flat images—we're people with all kinds of complications and struggles. To be human is to suffer.

WCT: There are lyrics in "Pink Champagne" that involve a toast to someone who was "cheering on [your] decay." I didn't expect the album to go there.

SG: [Laughs] Yeah. I wrote that song during a pretty dark and bitter time.

One thing about me is that I'm pretty open and honest with myself. It takes me time to come around. I am very willing to self-correct. I'm going to keep changing and my perspective is going to keep changing. It's a common thing to go through in your 20s, and you get away from your formative years.

WCT: So, given the personal nature of the

songs, would that explain the three-year gap between your last album and this one. However, I do know you were also involved with [the web series] Falling for Angels.

SG: Yeah—that's part of it, but I don't want to let myself off the hook. I should've been putting more music out more frequently. As an artist, you keep wanting to edit yourself, ad infinitum. I'd look back at songs I wrote a year and a half ago, and realize "I'm in a different place now." But the problem is you can always update songs, so it's like a dog chasing its tail. So I might do an album of five or six songs, and release items more frequently. It's good to push yourself, although you don't want to go overboard.

WCT: I can't believe it's been five years since that national exposure. It seems like yesterday.

SG: I know! I was a deer in the headlights then. [Laughs]

WCT: So what would the Steve Grand of 2018 tell the Steve Grand of 2013 about life and music?

SG: Hmmm... It's so difficult because there's a part of me that's very stubborn and doesn't listen to others. I don't even know if I'd listen to my older self. I was just going to do what I was going to do. But maybe I could shake him and say, "All the things that are going to feel like the end of the world are not going to be. You will come back. You should hold your feet to the fire, but you should also learn from your mistakes."

WCT: You alluded to this earlier, but what do you want listeners to take away from this album?

SG: That I go through the same things everyone else does—and that we all have to find our own unique paths forward. You have a sense of resilience in this world, especially if you're going to put yourself out there. Resilience is key.

Also, when a lot of us are younger, we want to fix everything around us. Over the last couple years, I've learned that perhaps I need to look at myself and fix myself before trying to fix the problems in the world. Looking inward instead of pointing fingers outward is a great exercise.

WCT: I have to ask this because I'm an editor: Why is everything in lower-case?

SG: [Laughs] I wanted to give the feeling that these are pages from a diary. The font is actually my handwriting, and I did all the artwork for the album myself. These are pages from my diary because it's really personal and unfiltered. It was a cathartic experience writing these songs.

Also, there's a sense of the unfinished—that it's not the end of me. [Laughs] Upper-case seemed too proper; I wanted to give a sense of forward motion.

Follow Grand at SteveGrand.com (where not the end of me is available), on Facebook, on Instagram @stevegrandmusic and on Twitter @SteveGrandMusic.

Mj Rodriguez (left) and Ryan Jamaal Swain.
Photo by JoJo Whilden/FX

NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

Mj Rodriguez strikes a 'Pose'

BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Mj Rodriguez plays the character Blanca on FX's *Pose*, the show set in the '80s about ballroom culture in New York City.

Co-creators Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Steven Canals have made television history with the largest cast of transgender actors in series regular roles. The cast includes Rodriguez, Dominique Jackson, Indya Moore, Hailie Sahar and Angelica Ross.

Rodriguez began with a breakout role in an off-Broadway production of *Rent*, playing HIV-positive street musician Angel Dumott Schunard. She later portrayed Ebony in the movie *Saturday Church*, along with Moore.

Prior to *Pose*, Rodriguez was on TV with *Nurse Jackie*, *The Carrie Diaries* and *Luke Cage*.

Windy City Times: Hi, Mj. I'm calling you from Chicago. Have you been here before?

Mj Rodriguez: No, but my mom travels there and has not invited me. I will have to come there and tell her I went, anyway!

WCT: Where are you originally from?

MR: I was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. I went to Queen of Angles Catholic School. I was a rambunctious kid. They let me be who I was in school. I went to Arts High School at 14 years old. I was immersed in the world of dancing, singing and music. I majored in singing there.

WCT: This sounds similar to the storyline in *Pose*, but this time you were the mentor. How does that feel?

MR: There are young kids now contacting me through direct messages and Facebook messenger

asking me how to get involved in acting or where they can find refuge. It always feels good and I have lots of feedback for them. It is good to hear and have that label of mother. I am still very young, but I am naturally nurturing.

WCT: Do people recognize you on the street?

MR: Yes. Me and Indya Moore were shooting one of our scenes and a woman and her husband came up to me. They asked for a picture and In-

dya dropped her food to be in the picture. It is really good so see that people are receiving it well.

WCT: I thought maybe mainstream America would have issues with *Pose*, but haven't heard much negativity yet.

MR: You want to know why that is? When there is so much love put out into the world, you really can't show any hate. I always believed that love trumps hate. When you put something out there

that is only positivity and only shedding light on a world that a lot of people don't understand. It is educational as well as entertaining. There is no negative context behind it. You can only love the people that are behind it, because you know it's genuine and coming from a good space.

WCT: Were you nervous auditioning for *Pose*?

MR: Oh, yeah. [Laughs] I was nervous as all hell! I went in for a tape audition. I had been hearing about it from a lot of my friends and was also auditioning for another show. I was talking to my mom just three days before and thought I was going to give up and find a nine to five job.

Literally, four days later, I get a call from Ryan Murphy. I didn't expect that to happen. I was sitting down, listening at my computer to Rihanna's "Wild Thoughts." He called and said the part was mine and I had nothing to worry about. I just cried. I didn't let him hear my ugly cry.

WCT: How has it changed your life so far?

MR: It has changed my life drastically, but in the best way possible. I finally feel that the responsibility that has been placed on me is finally deserving. I have always wanted to be a light for all demographics, especially the LGBT community, but in general for the masses and to change the dynamic in the world when it comes to individuals like me as well as individuals in my community. I feel like I am able to finally take hold of my responsibility and constantly shed positivity and light on us, how we are human and how we bleed like anyone else.

WCT: How is working with Billy Porter?

MR: He is everything. He has known me since I was 19 and Rent. I feel like there's a family member on the set. He's like my uncle. When we have scenes together it is a natural chemistry.

WCT: The music is an important part of *Pose*. Is there a certain song you like?

MR: Oh, child—all of that music I was raised on. I like "Heartbeat"—the first song that sticks out on the first episode.

Read the entire interview with Mj Rodriguez at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

GCLS honors lesbian writers

On July 7, the Golden Crown Literary Society (GCLS)—the nation's only lesbian literary organization whose mission is education and the promotion and recognition of lesbian literature—announced the winners of the 14th Annual Literary Awards on the final evening of its literary conference, held in Las Vegas.

Author R.J. Samuel received the Ann Bannon Popular Choice Award for *An Outsider Inside*.

Dorothy Allison received this year's GCLS Trailblazer Award, while Judy Comella was honored with the Directors' Award. Elana Dykewomon received the Lee Lynch Classic Award for *Riverfinger Women*, which Lynch presented.

Some of the winners in different genres included Meghan O'Brien (for erotica, fr *Her Best Friend's Sister*), Nina Packebush (in the young adult category, for *Girls Like Me*) and Sarah Hahn Campbell (nonfiction, for *Grief Map*).

See GoldenCrown.org.



Sarah Paulson.
PR photo

70th Annual Emmy nods announced

The 2018 Emmy nominations have been announced.

Shows receiving nods included *The Crown*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Stranger Things*, *This Is Us* and *Westworld*. Atlanta, Barry, Black-ish, GLOW and *The Marvelous Ms. Maisel*.

The LGBT event *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* is one of the nominees for Outstanding Limited Series. The revival *Queer Eye* is among the shows competing for Best Structured Reality Series. (The show received four nods.)

Evan Rachel Wood, Sarah Paulson, RuPaul, Ricky Martin, Wanda Sykes, Kate McKinnon, Tituss Burgess, Ellen DeGeneres, Ryan Murphy, Tim Gunn, Lily Tomlin and Jane Lynch were among the LGBT TV figures garnering nods in various categories.

The 70th Emmy Awards will air Monday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m. CT on NBC.

NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Ezra Furman writes his 'queer outlaw saga'

Ezra Furman.
PR photo



BY JERRY NUNN

Singer Ezra Furman continues to push the boundaries between gender, sexuality and religion on his latest album *Transangelic Exodus*. The songwriter was born in Chicago in 1986, and said his parents supported his music career.

Furman talked backstage with Windy City Times about his latest work and rocking the vote.

Windy City Times: Where did you grow up?

Ezra Furman: Mainly in Evanston, Illinois. I first lived in Lake View when I was a toddler, then we moved to Evanston.

WCT: Did you study music in school?

EF: No. I took two guitar lessons when I was 13. I self taught after that and was not interested in music theory for years but I am now. I was a proud amateur and still am in some ways.

WCT: What artists did you look up to?

EF: I wanted to be in a punk band or to be a great songwriter like Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen or Randy Newman. I was always big into writing stories.

WCT: Your album, *Transangelic Exodus*, has been getting great reviews. Is that fulfilling?

EF: What is fulfilling is that it came out as close to as good as I wanted it to be. The reviews are an after effect and nice to hear.

WCT: What was the concept to the album?

EF: There are a lot of references to an angel and escape from hostile authorities, with road-tripping across the country in fear and solidarity. It wasn't planned. I found it in my brain. It began with a song called "Suck the Blood From My Wound."

I was developing what I might do with the next record but that song just showed up. It was illogical and fascinating. It was like having a dream when I wrote that song. I was looking into my subconscious and its debris.

WCT: You have described the album as a "queer outlaw saga." Is that the experience of it?

EF: Yes. That gets at the fact that its a saga. There is a theme of queerness, but possibly grating against mainstream society.

Being Jewish and queer are both things that oriented me from a young age to be against the mainstream. It has placed me in a queer mindset and a queer culture that has something to say to the mainstream. It pushes against it.

WCT: How do you identify?

EF: Labels can be hard for me to define, but let's say I am a feminine-presenting man who is attracted to all of the genders.

I said I was genderfluid one time a few years ago and I became tagged with it. It is not quite accurate because I am male. I just do it differently. I am very attached to feminine presentation.

WCT: Is "Transangelic" a reference to the transgender community?

EF: It is really not a word. There is a sermon from the 19th century that I found it in that was about angels. That's not where I got it from. I made it up.

WCT: Aren't angels non-gender?

EF: That's a really interesting question. I have never been asked that before. They do have names that have a gender associate like Gabriel or Michael. They wouldn't be one gender or the other. They are pure energy. There a lot of different takes on what angels are.

The image of a person with wings is one of being terribly beautiful and out of place. There were times when I needed a guardian angel because of feeling threatened.

WCT: Where does the album cover come from?

EF: That was a photo taken in a small town in Virginia a few days after that Charlottesville riot. We went there to make a music video for the song "Driving Down to L.A." Fear was in the air because of the riot. After making the video we took a few photos.

I'm glad you asked me about that because there was real fear in that photo while wondering what was happening about my country!

It is a fearful record, but one with a lot of solidarity between the emotions of it.

WCT: Why did you change the name of the band to *The Visions* if it's the same lineup?

EF: Our mission and the mood has changed. It was the Boy-Friends before, and that is entirely too friendly for what we are doing now. It was too childish and there is something more adult now.

People have to come to us. We are not into playing music that makes people comfortable or is as easily classified. We are doing something a little weirder now. I think that is reflected in the name.

WCT: What do you want to tell people about your music that hasn't heard it yet?

EF: I face that all time. I tell people I am a musician and they ask me what I play.

I don't think it's a good idea to talk about music that you haven't heard. I hope they use an internet search engine and see what they find.

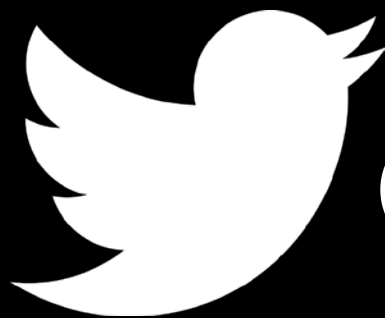
WCT: What are you working on for the rest of the year?

EF: I am putting out a book. It is a part of a series of books called 33 1/3. They are all by different authors and each one is about a different pop music album. They had an open call for submissions and I had idea about Lou Reed's *Transformer*.

It is a music criticism with a lot of memoir. It is about how having a public persona mutates you a little bit and how that interacts with being queer. The fact is I am obsessed with Lou Reed and I have to figure out why.

The other thing is I am trying to get voter registration at my shows. I am still working on it. I think every band should have booths at their concerts in 2018. I want to start a movement!

Furman and *The Visions* play Chicago on Saturday, July 28, at Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont Ave., and Sunday, July 29, at the Wicker Park Festival, with ticket info at EzraFurman.com. In addition, Furman and *The Visions* return to Thalia Hall Dec. 1; visit EzraFurman.com.



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Grace under pressure: Ernest Hemingway in 'Pamplona'

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

No matter how impressive their canon, glamorous their lifestyle or enduring their legacy, there is nothing more unexciting to watch than a writer working, unless it's a writer not working.

This incontrovertible fact makes for the irony in playwright Jim McGrath opting to depict Ernest Hemingway during a bout of the descriptive paralysis known colloquially as Writer's Block.

"[I wanted] to tell a story unfamiliar to people," McGrath has said of his choice regarding the literary artist whose laconic narratives of outdoor adventure would be imitated by generations of would-be scribblers globally over the latter half

of the 20th century. Beneath the seemingly simple structure, however, was an aesthetic transporting the narrative voice from "moralistic to fatalistic" in what director Robert Falls declared "a personification of the American ideal thrust into an exhilarating new era [whose writing] reflected both the new realities of the post World War I era and his own insatiable lust for experience."

Our play begins in 1959, with its hero bunkered down at a secluded hotel in the ancient Spanish citadel city of Pamplona—the inspiration for the corrida sketches that first brought him recognition in 1923. Over the course of its 80 minutes, we see him struggle with the first sentence of the story promised to a North American magazine

paying a princely sum that his debts will exhaust almost immediately, his progress constantly beset by interruptions—telephone calls from absent comrades, the complaints of a possible stalker occupying the next room, the temptation presented by a supply of palliative substances (some prescribed, some self-imposed) and the suspicion that his productivity may have dwindled beyond resuscitation.

These are annoyances faced by every writer that ever lived (albeit on smaller scale, perhaps). Hemingway's unease, though, is exacerbated, not just by the accumulated consequences of his reckless lifestyle, but the phantoms invading his solitude to awaken the anger and guilt shadowing the Oak Park lad whose male lineage encompassed a history of suicidal depression, along with gender-identity confusion arising from a mother who dressed him as his sister's twin throughout infancy and a father who instilled in him a likewise inflexible definition of masculinity.

Our host's retrospections also reference the circle of expatriate artists converging in Paris during the 1920s under the patronage of wealthy



Stacy Keach as Ernest Hemingway in Pamplona. Photo by Liz Lauren

dilettante Gertrude Stein and the waning celebrity of F. Scott Fitzgerald (whose decline Hemingway fears presages his own), as well as his four marriages and countless injuries—most recently, two consecutive plane crashes inflicting severe concussions.

"Writing is a lonely life," Hemingway observed on the occasion of being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954—an honor he worries will destroy his creative impulse—and therein lies its danger. If the writing experience is the quest for something unattainable, then the writer risks being "driven beyond his boundaries to where no one can help him."

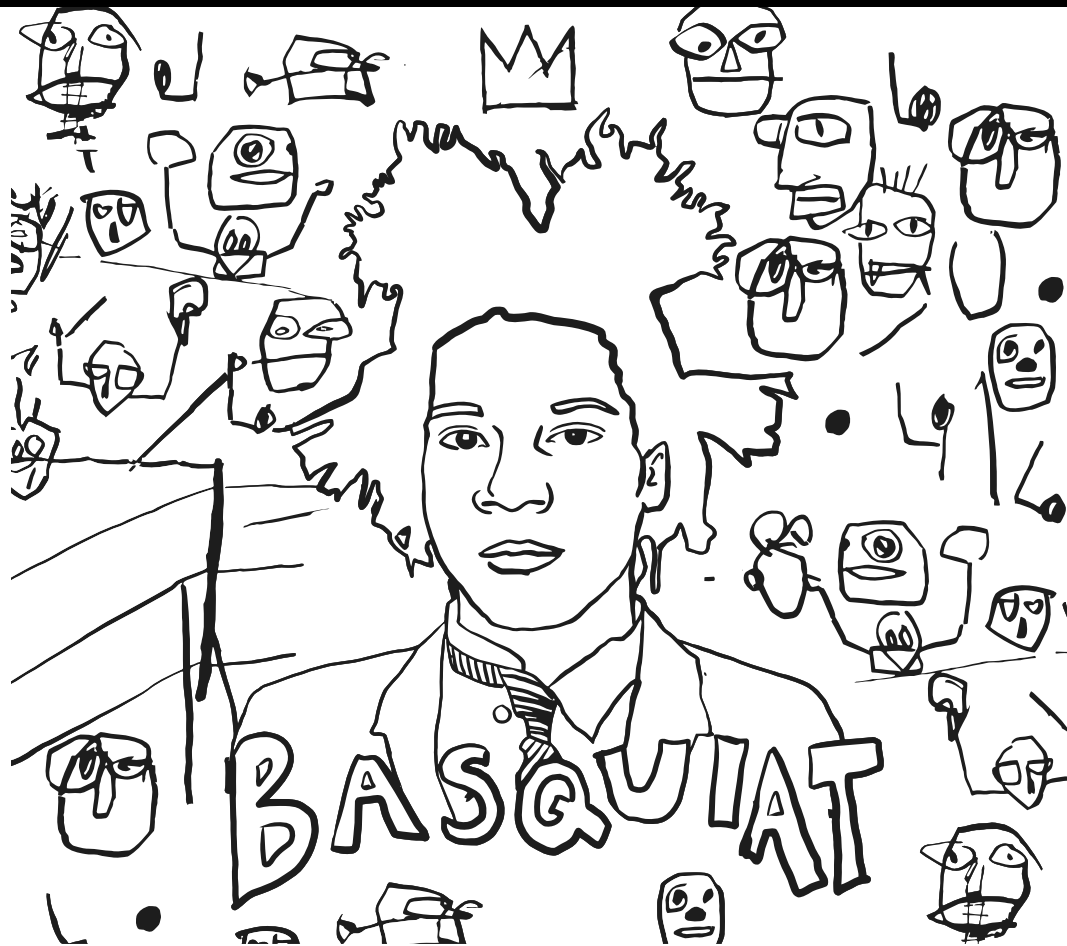
My play is about how Hemingway got through one of the days when he didn't kill himself," said McGrath in a recent talk at Chicago's American Writers Museum. Hindsight may tell us who emerges the victor when a lone man is pushed to the edge of his capabilities, but Hemingway's courage at the "moment of truth" is an inspiration for all time.

Pamplona continues through Sunday, Aug. 19, at The Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St. Visit GoodmanTheatre.org or call 312-443-3800.

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 artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, by artist Ruby Western. Basquiat, born in Brooklyn, NYC, Dec. 22, 1960, was part of the SAMO ("same old") graffiti duo on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. His early success on the streets morphed into a very successful gallery- and museum-based career in the 1980s. He used his art in politically and social justice ways, including attacking power structures, racism, colonialism and class struggle. He collaborated with Andy Warhol, David Bowie and more, and dated Madonna on her way up the celebrity ladder. He was just 27 when he died of a heroin overdose in 1988. Said one of his friends and painting subjects, Jack Walls: "Jean-Michel was intrigued by homosexuality, I believe. He was sexually attracted to girls. He had many non straight male friends. I think he had some understanding of what it was like to be gay. He certainly had had sex with a few men before he became well known. Homosexual men played a big part throughout his short lifetime." According to Wikipedia, Jennifer Clement (a friend of Basquiat's girlfriend Suzanne Mallouk) described his sexuality as "not monochromatic. It did not rely on visual stimulation, such as a pretty girl. It was a very rich multichromatic sexuality. He was attracted to people for all different reasons ... It was, I think, driven by intelligence. He was attracted to intelligence more than anything and to pain." (From Clement's *Widow Basquiat: A Love Story*, Broadway Books.)

See <https://www.houseofroulx.com/blogs/news/jean-michel-me> and <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/sep/03/jean-michel-basquiat-retrospective-barbican> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Michel_Basquiat.



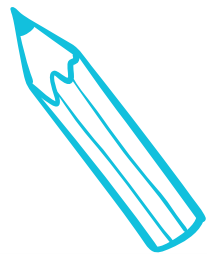
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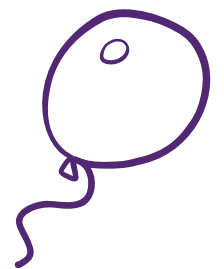
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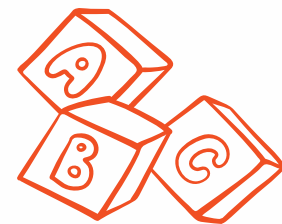
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Business table, \$95; Nonprofit or Schools table \$75
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BERLIN

Happy birthday, America!
Photos by Jerry Nunn

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BILLY Masters

"Yes, I did offer them acting jobs in exchange for sex, but so did and still does everyone. But I never, ever forced myself on a single woman."—Harvey Weinstein's justification for his legal woes. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury—the defense rests.

I'm mad that after 68 years, the Gypsy Robe will now be called the Legacy Robe. Why? Because Actors Equity does not want to upset the Romani people. For the last time, Broadway "gypsies" are performers who go from show to show ... like gypsies. They're not reading tea leaves, banging a tambourine or dancing. No, that's me!

Someone else aggravated is **Dame Diana Rigg**. She is in the Broadway revival of *My Fair Lady*, playing Henry Higgins' mother. **Lauren Ambrose** has decided that due to the burden of carrying a show, she will take off Sunday matinees. Well, Dame Diana is not amused: "I learnt, courtesy of a newspaper, that our leading lady will not be appearing in future Sunday matinees. Now call me old-fashioned, which I unashamedly am, but I don't think this development is fair to audiences. They have booked their seats in advance, paying an exorbitant price for them to see what they have been led to believe is the original cast. The very least we can do as actors is to acknowledge their presence as a privilege and take care never to abuse it. It is time management put their audiences first and insist on the old adage, slightly adapted by me, 'The show must go on—with ALL principals.'" Hear, hear!

Another legendary lady got some bad news. **Olivia de Havilland's** suit regarding how she was portrayed in *Feud* was rejected by the California Supreme Court. Even worse, the news came nine days after her 102nd birthday. We hear she is considering bringing the case to the Supreme Court. She'd better hurry!

The Boys in the Band has added a special show as a benefit for The Actors Fund on July 26 at midnight. Since it's a late-night performance, perhaps someone getting out of the shower on stage will take a few extra minutes putting on his undies. Grab your tickets at ActorsFund.org. Tell 'em Billy sent you!

I'm already scheduled to be in NYC that night because that's when *Head Over Heels* opens on Broadway. The long-gestating show featuring the music of The Go-Go's will surely be a momentous occasion—not the least of which because it will feature the first openly trans person to star in a Broadway musical! Not only that, but **Peppermint** is playing a trans role—the oracle Pythio, who is described as "neither he nor she." When it comes to replacement casting, the possibilities are endless.



Harry Styles (pictured here in an ad for the VMAs) offered a helping hand to a fan at his concert.

Harry Styles helped a fan come out to her mother. The fan, Grace, made a sign to hold up at Harry's concert, which said, "I'm Gonna COME OUT To My Parents because of YOU!!!" Harry spotted the sign, stopped the show, and spoke directly to Grace. He asked where her parents were. Grace said her mom (Tina) was back at the hotel, Styles said congratulations, and then the whole audience chanted "Tina, she's gay!" Grace showed her mom the sign and the video of Harry and the audience. Mom's response? "Yes, I do love you and you can be whoever you want to be." Now Grace is bringing Tina to see Harry in Los Angeles. So, the ball's in your court, Harry.

Not to be outdone, a gay couple got engaged at a Taylor Swift concert—well, anything to avoid listening to that twit! I'll let one of the boys explain what happened: "He asked me to marry him while Taylor Swift was singing our song in front of us and I said ABSO-FUCKING-LUTELY." Samy (the proposer) knelt in front of Ric (the proposee)—I suspect guys get on their knees all the time at Taylor Swift concerts. And just like that, Samy popped the question. In this case, the singer played no part in the proposal—she was just background noise.

When a gay couple is getting married in spite of Taylor Swift (you look at it your way, I'll look at it my way), it's time to end yet another column. Just after last week's column went out, we heard about the death of Tab Hunter. As I wrote only weeks ago, he certainly defined an era and was without a doubt one of the most breathtakingly beautiful men to walk the Earth. Of course, lots of other breathtaking men can be found at BillyMasters.com—the site that'll take more than your breath away. I didn't have room for an "Ask Billy" question this week, but you can always contact me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Jamie Lee Curtis replaces Peppermint in *Head Over Heels*. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

The Purple Pig

BY NOAH MCCARTHY

"Whoa, this place is literally famous. I heard about them back home!" Two tourists admired the sign hanging under **The Purple Pig**—"Cheese, Swine and Wine"—before snapping a selfie. After leaving, I was half-tempted to commemorate the occasion myself.

Located on the south end of 500 N. Michigan Ave., The Purple Pig opened in 2009 and features various dishes from around the Mediterranean. The restaurant itself is fairly cramped. Tables are packed to the extent that those sitting along the wall will almost certainly have to brush uncomfortably close to their neighbor's food. These sorts of close quarters are fairly common in Magnificent Mile restaurants, but increased



From The Purple Pig.
PR photo

elbow room would have been appreciated. Since the odds of having an empty seat next to your own are essentially zilch during one of the restaurant's bustling dinner services, the space

becomes doubly appreciated. Luckily, the patio seemed more accommodating.

Service was excellent throughout the night, ever-courteous and approachable despite the brimming confines. There were certain moments when staff began to hover, standing hawk-like just a few feet away as we finished whatever plate we were working on. Despite being somewhat discomforting, over-attentiveness is a good problem to have.

Once inside, the decor emphasized the last item on its tagline: "wine." One side of the restaurant is dedicated to wine racks and another to various wine-barrel decorations. In fact, every item on the menu comes with its own recommended pairing from sommelier Alan Beasey. The decor, between the burgundy chairs and white tiling, is warm but not stuffy.

As for the food, if its eight straight years of Michelin recognition didn't cue you in, it is wonderful. Chef Jimmy Bannos Jr., a Chicago native, has drawn the menu's inspiration from Italy, Greece and Spain. The dishes are diverse but consistent. Highlights from the night include octopus a la plancha on a bed of green beans and fingerling potatoes, all served with a perfect salsa verde, and roasted bone marrow served alongside unspeakably good bread.

The Purple Pig's menu is ever-changing with the

seasons. (Offerings from this summer's iteration include duck fat-roasted radishes and lamb chop with sweetbread, dolmades and grapes. It might be worth a second visit to try these items.) The table next to us ordered another seasonal dish, grilled broccoli in an anchovy vinaigrette with roasted garlic and breadcrumbs—and the smell alone made me want to sit down to begin the meal again.

The desserts kicked off with a Sicilian iris—a gooey ricotta-and-chocolate-filled brioche that's worth every calorie. Be warned, however: They only make a certain amount for every day, and regularly sell out. You owe it to yourself to arrive early enough to nab one of these Chicago classics. The final dish of the evening was a peanut butter-and-marshmallow mille-feuille; although it certainly recalled childhood, it also recalled why we eventually grow out of those sandwiches.

Though it has been a Chicago mainstay for some years now, The Purple Pig shows no signs of slowing down. Dishes are seasonal and exciting, and the constant bustle of people in and out make for a vibrant atmosphere. If you want a charming night out with top-notch food, but without breaking the bank, there are still few places on par with The Purple Pig.

Leather Archives announces Kinky Rummage Sale

Have a root around in the Leather Archives & Museum at their Kinky Rummage Sale, Saturday, July 28 and Sunday, July 29.

Over 600 items will be made available for sale, including leftover Male Hide Leathers/Shel-Don Chicago stock, magazine, books, clothing, handcuffs, medical equipment, restraints, bondage gear, IML-related items and more. Also up for sale, you can walk away with a pup cage or a St. Andrew's cross.

The sale begins Saturday at 9 am with a LA&M members-only preview. Door open to the public at 11 and the sale goes until 5 pm. Sunday hours are 11 am - 5 pm.



Items start as low as \$1 and plenty of good finds can be purchased for under \$10.

It is asked that you bring your own bags for merchandise. Otherwise, Fist tote bags are available for \$2.

These sales hours include free admission to the museum for Saturday and Sunday.

Leather Archives & Museum is located at 6418 N. Greenview Ave.

Photos courtesy of Leather Archives & Museum



SIDETRACK

Happy birthday, America!
Photos by Jerry Nunn

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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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Market Days acts announced

The Northalsted Business Alliance (NBA) delivers a diverse and dance-heavy line-up for this year's Market Days, set for Aug. 11-12, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

The fest (said to be the largest two-day event in the Midwest) will return to Boystown with entertainment, shopping, food and more.

Entertainer Todrick Hall will take the stage as part of his Forbidden tour on Aug. 11, while Betty Who will sing her power pop on Aug. 12. MAX, with the gold single "Lights Down Low," will end the festival.

Some of the other acts include former American

Idol acts Trenyce and Kimberly Locke; legendary songstresses Martha Wash, Kristine W and Ultra Nate; the girl group Exposé; local act 16 Candles; out country singer Ty Herndon; and the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus.

There is a \$10 suggested donation.

Formed in 1980, NBA represents more than 100 businesses along the Halsted Street corridor. The organization hosts major events throughout the year, including Chicago Pride Fest, Northalsted Market Days, the Halloween Parade and Frost Fest. For information about NBA, visit Northalsted.com.

Saturday, Aug 11

Addison Bud Light North Stage

1:30-3:30 p.m. - Drag show
2:30-3:30 p.m. - Todrick Hall
3:30-4:15 p.m. - Trenyce
5-6:30 p.m. - Cat Fight
7-7:45 p.m. - Kimberly Locke
7:50-8:35 p.m. - Ultra Nate
8:40-9:25 p.m. - Martha Wash

Hydrate Stage

11:30 a.m. - DJ Laura Bee
1 p.m. - Drag show
4 p.m. - DJ Laura Bee
5:30 p.m. - DJ Cajjmere Wray
7:30 p.m. - DJ Oscar Velazquez

Roscoe Stage

1:15-2:30 p.m. - Hello Weekend
3:15-4:30 p.m. - Girl Power Night
5-5:45 p.m. - DJ
5:45-6:25 p.m. - Crystal Waters
6:25-7 p.m. - DJ
7-7:45 p.m. - Ty Herndon
8:20-9:45 p.m. - Hank & Cupcake

Aldine Jazz Stage

1:30-3 p.m. - Sam Fazio Quartet
3:30 p.m. - Lakeside Pride Strayhorns
5:30-7:30 p.m. - Feathered Beaus

Sunday, Aug. 12

Addison Bud Light North Stage

1-2 p.m. - DJ
2-2:45 p.m. - Betty Who
3:30-4:30 p.m. - Sushi Roll
4:45-6:15 p.m. - DJ
6:15-7 p.m. - Exposé
7-9 p.m. - DJ
9-9:55 p.m. - MAX

Hydrate Stage

11:30 a.m. - DJ Laura Bee
12:30 p.m. - Drag show
3:30 p.m. - DJ Guy Scheiman
5:30 p.m. - DJ Toy Armada
7:30 p.m. - DJ Tom Stephan

Roscoe Stage

1-1:45 p.m. - Chicago Gay Men's Chorus
2:15-3:45 p.m. - Boy Band Review
4:15-5 p.m. - Kristine W
5:15-7:15 p.m. - Rod Tuffcurls
7:45-9:45 p.m. - 16 Candles

Aldine Jazz Stage

1:30-3 p.m. - BMR4
3:30-5 p.m. - Joe Policastro Trio
5:30-7:30 p.m. - The Flat Cats



See Todrick Hall on Saturday, August 11. PR photo



Betty Who performs Sunday, August 12. Photo by Zak Cassar

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., July 18

Chicago Soul in Action, Tribute to Gwendolyn Brooks and Curtis Mayfield Cheryl Corley, voice. Lucy Smith, voice. Bring your own chair/blanket. Free 6:00pm - 7:30pm Palmer Park 201 E. 111th St., Chicago (772) 747-6577

Town Hall: Reunite! Immigration event at Victory Gardens Theater Chicago responds to U.S. immigration policies with original poetry, music, dance and performance pieces. Free. 7:00pm Victory Gardens Theater 2433 N Lincoln Ave Chicago <http://VictoryGardens.org/> also-playing/reunite/

Thursday, July 19

2018 LTC Carnival of New Latinx Work (Carnaval 2018: ConeXion!) Featuring readings of six new Latinx plays paired with Latinx directors, actors, designers and dramaturgs. Through July 21 9:00am - 7:30pm Theater School at DePaul U., 2350 N. Racine, Chicago <http://www.latinxtheatrecommons.com>

Affinity Community Services virtual



MILLY OF THE VALLEY

Saturday, July 21

Milly's Orchid Show Summer Musical Extravaganza will take place at the Park West.

PR photo of Brigid Murphy, as Milly

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

Stories of Resistance, Healing and Social Change Chicago Foundation for Women and Chicago Public Library co-sponsor an evening of performance as local artists share their stories of resistance, healing and social change. Free but registration required. 6:00pm Cindy Pritzker Auditorium Harold Washington Library 400 S State St, Plymouth Court entrance Chicago Tickets: <http://www.cfw.org/dare-to-create/>

Scary Stories to Save Your Life Twelve playlets about something more frightening than werewolves: real life. Through July 22. \$20 or pay-what-you-can 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://AboutFaceTheatre.com>

Friday, July 20

BTQ Book Group 3rd Fridays 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

Wendy L. Rouse, author Her Own Hero: The Origins of the Women's Self-Defense Movement Progressive Era at the turn of the twentieth century also witnessed

the birth of the women's self-defense movement. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Saturday, July 21

Gerber Hart annual boo sale Includes LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ fiction and non-fiction books, videos, and erotica. Supports operations of Gerber/Hart. By-the-bag and by-the-box pricing. Atrium, down the hall from the library. 10:30am - 2:30pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Genderqueer Chicago Clothing Exchange Bring clean, gently-used clothing for a clothing swap for trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, and questioning folks. All may donate; trans, nonbinary, and questioning people are welcome to pick up clothes. Free no reservations. Contact eprice3@luc.edu to donate. 11:30am - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Milly's Orchid Show Summer Musical Spectacular Extravaganza One-night-only with David Cale and sneak peek of new musical memoir, We're Only Alive for A Short Amount of Time. Doors 6pm. \$35 7:30pm Park West Chicago 322 W Armitage Ave Chicago <http://www.ticketfly.com/>

Legacy Night at Ravinia with concert of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's greatest classics

To announce the October 2018 Legacy Walk Induction of Classical Music's Most Iconic Composer onto Chicago's one-of-a-kind Outdoor LGBT History Museum. \$50 for select seating,. By the Legacy Project. 7:30pm Ravinia Festival 418 Sheridan Road Highland Park, IL 60035 <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/legacy-night-at-ravinia-tickets-47608579543>

Sunday, July 22

Diesel Tykes Album Release Show for Songs For The Rainbow Family Release of 12-song album for all diverse, rainbow families. With Congress of Starlings, Laura Doherty, Erick Deshaun Dorris, Lnk, Scott Free & Jenny Urban. 7:00pm Wishbone (Lakeview) 3300 N Lincoln Ave Chicago <http://www.dieseltkyes.com>

Wed., July 25

The Burning City Neo-Vintage Entertainment Festival Inspired by the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition with entertainment styles seen along the White City's Midway Plaisance in a massive city-wide, week-long event through July 29. Eight stage shows include top producers and performers. Fest passes \$49-\$235 Time:TBA Uptown Underground, 4707 N. Broadway St., Chicago <http://www.burningcityfestival.com>



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AUGUST 21

JULY 29

LOST 80'S LIVE

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
NAKED EYES
WANG CHUNG
ANIMATION
FARRINGTON AND MANN
(ORIGINAL VOCALISTS OF WHEN IN ROME UK)
NU SHOOZ
DRAMARAMA
GENE LOVES JEZEBEL
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