

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Looking at trans murders in the U.S.



TRANS



TRAGEDIES

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Top row, left to right: Antash'a English; Tonya Harvey; Vicky Gutierrez. Headline left: Sasha Garden. Headline right: Zakaria Fry. All photos courtesy of Human Rights Campaign



WHOOPI GOLDBERG

Talks LGBTs, upcoming show. PR photo by Timothy White

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OUTSPOKEN!

Event to mark fourth anniversary. Photo of Kim Hunt and Art Johnston courtesy of Sidetrack



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VAL CAMILLETTI

Esteemed businesswoman dies. Photo by Hal Baim

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SANDRA MARQUEZ

Set to co-host ALTA Awards. PR photo



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THE BATTLE WITHIN:

Cis and Trans Women, WE GET ALONG? CAN WE GET ALONG?

A PERSONAL ESSAY BY TRACY BAIM

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BY PAULA VOGEL
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MASTER CLASS

BY TERENCE MCNALLY
TIMELINE THEATRE @ STAGE 773
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 24

IT'S ONLY A PLAY

BY TERENCE MCNALLY
PRIDE FILMS AND PLAYS
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 8

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE & MURDER

MUSIC BY STEVEN LUTVAK
LYRICS BY ROBERT L. FREEDMAN
AND STEVEN LUTVAK
BOOK BY ROBERT L. FREEDMAN
PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 8

POSEIDON! AN UPSIDE DOWN MUSICAL

BOOK & LYRICS BY DAVID CERDA
WITH CHERYL SNODGRASS
MUSIC BY DAVID CERDA & SCOTT LAMBERTY
HELL IN A HANDBAG @ THE EDGE THEATER
FRIDAY MARCH 29

NEXT TO NORMAL

BOOK & LYRICS BY BRIAN YORKEY
MUSIC BY TOM KITT
DIRECTED BY DAVID CROMER
WRITERS THEATRE
WEDNESDAY MAY 8

WIG OUT!

BY TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY
STEBBENWOLF THEATRE
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BY PETER PARNELL
ABOUT FACE THEATRE @ THEATRE WIT
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Above: Windy City Times reviews Leave Me Alone.
Photo by David Hagen

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



LIVING LIKE A KING

Billie Jean King (left) was in Chicago to watch her World TeamTennis squad in action.

Photo from World TeamTennis 2018

'BOUNCE' BACK



Windy City Times checks out the fare at Bounce Sporting Club's rooftop, which includes lobster rolls (above).

Photo by Andrew Davis

'FACE' TIME

Bent Nights looks at shows by Pink Avalanche, Blacker Face and Roy Kinsey.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Robin Roberts, Justin Theroux and Pat Benatar.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

This Week's Featured Properties



Centered on an open steel stairwell with a shimmering three-story water feature running against a subway slate backdrop, the residence is reminiscent of a Parisian garden court with an abundance of natural light reflecting off an array of stones, metals, woods, and glass – all artfully integrated into every inch of its construction.

1457 W. Addison St.
\$2,190,000



With an enormous suburban-sized yard perfect for tented parties, pick-up soccer games, or a simple breakfast coffee, this grand estate comprising 5+ lots on one of the city's most prized historic blocks proves you can have it all in the city – right across from the park and lake. Driveway and 3+ car garage.

530 W. Hawthorne Pl.
\$3,795,000



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820 W. Wolfram St. #F
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3400 N. Lake Shore Dr. #6A
\$615,000



Warm and inviting 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom pre-war co-op tastefully updated and beautifully maintained by its architect-owner, retaining the original integrity of its design with large and gracious rooms.

3750 N. Lake Shore Dr. #7F
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Anti-war activists to mark 50th anniversary of DNC event with protest

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

The Chicago Committee Against War & Racism (CCAWR) held a press conference July 24 at the General John Logan Statue in Grant Park to announce an upcoming protest against war and police violence.

The Aug. 25 protest will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the now infamous 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. It will take place at noon in Richard J. Daley Plaza and move

recent trip to Afghanistan the people there told her they did not want American soldiers to be sent to their country anymore.

Erskine said she is a 20-year Air Force veteran and Chicago Public School (CPS) mother who wants to see JROTC programs removed from the mostly Black and Latinx population CPS high schools because she was recruited out of that program into the military. She said this program is detrimental to minority students. Erskine also spoke about the militarization on the home front



From left: Vincent Emanuele, Natasha Erskine, Steve de la Rosa, Steven Flowers, Rich Whitney, Vicki Cervantes and Kathy Kelly.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

through the city to the Logan Statue, the site of the most notable protest during the convention.

CCAWR recently reformed after being dormant for several years. The group previously organized the 10,000 person march on Lake Shore Drive at the start of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Among the speakers were CCAWR member Andy Thayer, Voices for Creative Non-Violence member Kathy Kelly, Chicago Veterans for Peace Deputy Coordinator Natasha Erskine, La Voz de los de Abajo member and Honduras Solidarity Network in North America Co-Coordinator Vicki Cervantes, Marine Corps Iraq War veteran Vincent Emanuele and Illinois Green Party Co-Chair and CCAWR Founder Rich Whitney.

Thayer spoke about the origins of CCAWR and the parallels between the Vietnam War era and today, including the police response to protests and how then Mayor Richard J. Daley and current Mayor Rahm Emanuel respond to progressive movements.

"We are living in a city that is reeling from the violence of police officers and a country where our resources that could be helping the people are deprived because we are spending as much on war as almost the rest of the world combined," said Thayer.

Kelly, who has spent much of her life fighting on behalf of non-violent causes, said that on her

in police departments across the country.

Cervantes said the current refugee crisis on the southern border is directly related to the U.S. government's intervention into the political process with military force across South and Central America and Mexico for many years.

Emanuele spoke about America's continued bombing of seven countries since 9/11—Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, Syria and Somalia. He said that what then President Bush started was expanded into other countries with increased drone strikes by then-President Obama and it shows no sign of ending with President Trump, who has spoken out against both North Korea and Iran in recent months. Emanuele added that these actions are a part of a larger problem: empire-building and militarism.

Whitney explained that this upcoming CCAWR protest will carry on the message that the protests began 50 years ago, adding that these current wars and bombing campaigns are illegal, according to the Kellogg-Briand Pack, the Nuremberg Charter and the United Nations Charter.

Thayer said the protests in 1968 were a watershed moment because it convinced the anti-war movement that neither major party would bring about peace, the people would have to rely on their own efforts to stop the Vietnam War, adding that this is also true today.

GUEST COLUMN: MISHEA' DAVINAE'S CHRONICLES

BY MISHEA' DAVINAE'



Venus

Someone kidnapped me, took me from my home planet and placed me on earth.

At 10 years of age, I was learning to do things on my own, with no guidance, no structure, and no one to hold my hand.

I remember vaguely, back on my home planet a woman that offered these things to me. The last thing I remember from this woman is her lips saying, I love you and I'll see you again.

My dreams are the only place I can find her, and when I awake, I wish I could fall back into slumber. That's not how life works here on earth. Everyone has these things called jobs, and I'm not sure why but on earth my form attracts a lot of anxious and rude men.

I was told because of the pigment in my skin, that there are extra challenges I must face. That statement was told to me by a woman that said she had been on earth for 67 years. I laugh at her. She says she is getting old, but on my home planet, she is merely a teen, still learning the greatness of the surface to the world around her.

"I woke up and there the lady was again. This time I ran to her, I begged her to wrap her arms around me and never let me go. I told her the only time I feel life is worth living is in my dreams."

I've noticed that on this planet and the in this particular location, the people here do not value life. When I look on the box that shows many images, I always hear of how they kill one another, steal from one another, and hate their own kind. They treat each other as if they are not one of the same because they may look different. Whenever I go outside, there's men, staring like I'm a full-course meal.

Females here are jealous folks. The people whose home I was placed in don't care if I was here or not.

One day, I had that dream again. You know, the one with the woman. When I saw her this time, my thoughts were linked to my dream and I said, hey! You! And she turned around gracefully, like an angel, and my tone calmed. "What did I do to be put in a place where no one cares about one another? Is this a punishment? Because no one cares about me, either," I said in a despairing tone.

Before she could respond, I woke up and it was time to go to school. I couldn't help but to think about my dream all day at school, but Melinda had a great way of bringing me back to reality. Class got out and Melinda had thrown me on the floor and humiliated me in front of the entire class. She began to say horrible things about a mom I never knew, my clothes and how they smelled. We were both sent to the principal's office. When I looked up my uncle was there to get me. I never wanted to be back on my home planet more than when I saw him. He picked me up and we went home. I knew at this moment that I didn't want to be punished, and I thought to myself that I must do something before he decided to give me the treatment he normally does. He told me to go into the bathroom and get undressed and he will be in shortly. I did as he told me, as always. Something about this was time was different, my walls were closing in, and I did not want to see my uncle open that door. So, I opened the mirror and took a bottle, and gulped down every last pill.

I woke up and there the lady was again. This time I ran to her, I begged her to wrap her arms around me and never let me go. I told her the only time I feel life is worth living is in my dreams. She grabbed me by the shoulders and looked me in my eyes and said, "My child, I am always with you but someone else needs you more than you ever know! It may be hard right now, but you must trust your heart. It is not our time to be together, for you are not finished with your job on earth. You be the silver lining through the dark cloud. Now wake up my sweet, you're not done yet."

Mishea' Davinae' is a determined mother of a beautiful little girl. She holds her self expectations high and keeps her mind focused; she has overcome many obstacles including youth homelessness. Never giving up and always up for a challenge, Mishea' would like to introduce the world to more than just the surface of her community. Be sure to fasten your seat belts and enjoy the ride of Mishea' Davinae's Chronicles.

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Business owner Val Camilletti dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Val's halla Records store owner Val Camilletti, 78, died July 24 at the British Home in Brookfield, Illinois, of complications from breast cancer. She was a resident of Cicero at the time of her death.

Camilletti was born Nov. 12, 1939, in Chicago and grew up on the West Side. She graduated from Austin High School and soon after started working at Continental Bank. It was during this time that Camilletti realized she was bisexual and

(who consulted Camilletti about his new music), B-52s' frontman Fred Schneider, and the late actor and Oak Park native John Mahoney.

A number of years ago, Camilletti wrote a weekly column for the Wednesday Journal, VOYEUR. She was an Animal Care League of Oak Park board member and donor, Sounds of Joy choral group in Oak Park board member and volunteered for Women in Music and Lavender Bouquet. Camilletti donated to many worthy causes, including the Lyric Opera, Howard Brown Health, sev-



Val Camilletti.
Photo by Hal Baim

came out to a few close friends. Camilletti left the bank and started working at the Chicago offices of Capitol Records in the promotions department in 1962.

Five years later, Camilletti left Capitol Records to manage a chain of stores, NMC Discount Records, in Oak Park, Illinois. She bought the flagship store in 1972 on South Blvd. and renamed it Val's halla Records. The name paid homage to her now-deceased dog Halla, a white German shepherd, and the Norse mythology's warrior heaven. She moved locations about 12 years ago to 239 Harrison St. in Oak Park.

Camilletti held release parties for artists over the years. Among the celebrities who came to her store were Flat Five (she championed them to everyone who came through the store), John Prine

eral HIV/AIDS organizations, the Make a Wish Foundation and Live to Sing/Sing to Live chorus (people impacted by breast cancer).

Camilletti is survived by her cat, Soot, and many chosen family members. She was preceded in death by her Italian immigrant parents Norma Mary and Quinto Camilletti. Camilletti was among the many entries on the Chicago Gay History website and said in the interview that she spoke Italian before English at home.

"Many people may be surprised to learn that up until three weeks ago, every Thursday, for nearly 30 years, Val drove our golf cart at the local forest preserve course or met me at a golf dome in winter," said longtime friend and golf partner Amy Shropshire. "We would analyze each other's swings and solve the world's problems at our

post-game lunch. Such is the way great friendships are made, and now my heart is broken by her loss. There will never be another like her."

"She had the gift of gab," said Val's halla Records Store Manager Shayne Blakeley. "Val always wanted things to be synchronized and come full circle around the anniversary of her ownership of the store. When we moved locations, she insisted that the last day at the old store had to fall on the store's anniversary. Our present location is a mile away from where she grew up and that is why they moved the store to Harrison Street. That is when the pattern clicked and everything came full circle. When I got the news of her death I called my own mom and told her I lost a parent. She was more than a boss, she was family to me and many others. Val was a font of knowledge and the store was a free mental health clinic because of her. I hope to continue that legacy."

"Val did not just impart us with her musical expertise, she also gave us her kindness, generosity and a warmth that made the world sing," said friend, customer and former Oak Park Village Trustee member Ray Johnson.

"Val taught me about music, queer culture and community even before I realized that I was already part of them," said friend and customer Crispin Torres. "I was so inspired that a woman could own and run a business in the music community and hold down any argument with the bro-iest of audiophiles. It is sad that we still do not see enough women, queer and trans, POC-owned business in this industry. This is a huge loss but I hope that it only inspires folks to keep fighting for space. I know I will. Rest in power."

"We have lost a great friend and woman who has been enabling those of us who cannot get enough music in our collections," said WXRT's

Terri Hemmert in a Facebook post. "There are a lot of us music nerds that can talk for hours about our favorite songs, but Val was even more. She was a friend and mentor to countless people. She supported musicians, venues and kids that were crazy enough to want to work at a record store. I was one of those kids. I found her and her marvelous store when I was still in college. We quickly became friends, and the next year after I graduated I moved to Oak Park, because I was determined to work at WGLD, which I did. That year I could not afford to buy Christmas presents for my family so Val hired me to work in the evenings. I was able to give my parents and siblings records for Christmas and they were thrilled.

"We both got cancer around the same time and became our own support group. A lot of people did not even know she was sick. She showed up at the shop every day until last week when things went bad. I am just glad she lived large these last two years. Even last fall, we were meeting every Monday night at the Hideout for the Flat Five's residency. They showed up yesterday to serenade her. She was unresponsive but I know she heard every marvelous note. She loved music but she loved us even more. We were her family. My love goes out to everyone who knew her. Listen to some music. She would want you to."

The store held a 46th-anniversary sale and featured live music performances July 28-29. This event was a celebration of Camilletti's life. Another memorial service is in the planning stages, details TBA.

See a video interview with Camilletti on Tracy Baim's Chicago Gay History Project website at <https://www.chicagogayhistory.com/biography.html?id=6>.

More than 200 groups join ACLU adoption letter

More than 200 national, state and local civil-rights, religious and child-welfare organizations joined the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in a letter to members of Congress today opposing legislation that would authorize discrimination in the child-welfare system.

The Aderholt amendment to the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill for FY 2019 would allow child-welfare agencies receiving taxpayer funds to choose which families and children to serve regarding adoption and foster-care services.

Not only would the amendment severely decrease the already limited pool of eligible families, but it also would put the 46 states and the District of Columbia who enforce non-discrimination laws in jeopardy of losing 15 percent of their federal funding for child-welfare services.

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee recently adopted the amendment, which U.S. Rep. Robert Aderhold (R-Alabama) sponsored.

The letter's signatories include the American Psychological Association, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, Bend

the Arc; Jewish Action, Child Welfare League of America, Family Equality Council, Interfaith Alliance, Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal, NAACP, National Association of Social Workers and the National Education Association, among many others. Local organizations Center on Halsted and Equality Illinois also joined the letter.

Anti-violence activists to march Aug. 2

Anti-violence activists are planning to shut down Lake Shore Drive on Chicago's North Side on Thursday, Aug. 2—almost a month after Rev. Michael Pfleger and thousands of activists shut down the Dan Ryan Expressway, WGNTV.com reported.

The community activists are organizing a march to Wrigley Field at 4 p.m. On that day, the Chicago Cubs have a 7:05 p.m. home game against the San Diego Padres.

On July 7, thousands of anti-violence protesters marched along the Dan Ryan, shutting down traffic.

The WGN-TV item is at <https://wgntv.com/2018/07/23/activists-planning-to-shut-down-lake-shore-drive-and-march-to-wrigley-field/>.

Attorney Gloria Allred raises rights issues at LAGBAC event

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Speaking at Sidetrack on July 26, Los Angeles-based attorney Gloria Allred recalled that, since she has argued a number of cases on behalf of LGBT clients, she's frequently been asked by men if she's a lesbian.

Not one to mince words, Allred's answer is always the same: "Are you the alternative?"

Allred, who has handled a number of high-profile cases in the last several decades, came to Chicago in support of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) Foundation's 14th Annual Lawyers for Diversity Midsummer BBQ. She recounted a number of anecdotes about her work on LGBT cases, as well as discussing her thoughts on President Donald Trump, U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, *Roe v. Wade* and the

Equal Rights Amendment.

Among her clients was a lesbian couple who went to a Los Angeles restaurant to celebrate a special occasion, and were ejected from booths intended for couples. That case, and the ensuing publicity, was "the first time people saw women on TV who were lesbian, demanding their rights," Allred said, noting that the case set a precedent for discrimination cases.

She recalled fighting anti-LGBT discrimination at a time when business owners felt emboldened enough to take out newspaper ads defending why they were not treating their LGBT clientele equally.

"In those days, people were very proud of what they thought was their right to discriminate," Allred said.

She had a run-in with Trump several years back



Gloria Allred.
Photo by Matt Simonette

when she defended a woman in the Miss Canada Universe pageant who was told the contest was only open to cisgender women.

Trump, who owned the Miss Universe pageant, taunted Allred in the media, by saying she'd probably "love to see what's under my pants."

Allred shot back, "I don't have a magnifying glass strong enough to see something so small."

Jokes about the president aside, Allred expressed her alarm over Kavanaugh's nomination, especially as it relates to the potential for overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Decades ago, before that decision was handed down, Allred received a "back-alley" abortion, an incident she discussed July 26, and has subsequently been active in reproductive-rights.

"I never want another woman to have to go through that," she said.

Allred also praised Illinois' recent ratification

of the Equal Rights Amendment; it was the 37th state to do so.

"We are going to continue that battle to get the 38th state and get that deadline [for ratification by the states] removed," she said.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Marie Burke was honored at the July 26 event, especially for her work in helping to found the Special Olympics in 1968. In her remarks, she noted the similarities in progress made by the disability- and LGBT-rights movements.

"It's not that long ago that your community, and children and adults with intellectual differences, were [both communities who were] forgotten, ignored and pushed to the sidelines," she said.

LAGBAC Foundation President Jeremy Gottschalk introduced Allred and Burke.

Panel on LGBTQI+ persecution Aug. 16

The All Aboard USA Committee of Rainbow Railroad will hold a public event on Thursday, Aug. 16, at 6:30 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., entitled "If Not US, Who?: The Struggle of LGBTQI+ Refugees and Asylum-Seekers."

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Illinois) will open the event and invite a panel of experts to share their perspectives on the challenges facing LGBTQ throughout the world and what the Chicago community can do to help. Community Activism Law Alliance Founder & Executive Director Lam Ho will moderate the event.

Panelists will include American Immigration Lawyers Association Board of Governors Director Mike Jarecki, Chicago & Midwest Human Rights Watch Director Chicago & Midwest Human Rights Watch Director Jackie Kaplan Perkins, Rainbow Railroad U.S. Development Officer Eduardo Hernandez, and Center on Halsted Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator Joanna Thompson.

Event sponsors include Center on Halsted, Windy City Times, Rainbow Railroad and the Chicago chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Tickets are \$10 each; visit <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/if-not-us-who-tickets-47916204658>.

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Donald Strzepek
Proprietor, community member

The violence never stops: 16 trans murders already in 2018

BY MOLLY SPRAYREGEN

Christa Leigh Steele-Knudslie was the first known transgender person to be killed in 2018. The 42-year-old was arguing with her husband, Mark Steel-Knudslie, when he stabbed and beat her to death. Christa was the founder of the Miss Trans America and Miss Trans New England pageants. Her friend, Justin, told NBC News that she wanted trans women to be seen as beautiful.

Since her murder, at least 15 more trans people have been killed in the United States. The latest were Sasha Garden, 27, of Orlando, Florida, and Diamond Stephens, 39, of Meridian, Mississippi.

We are in the midst of a crisis. Transgender people, especially trans women of color, are at an extremely high risk of violence. Last year, the Human Rights Campaign reported a record number of violence-based deaths of trans people: 28. The violence is not relenting.

Through an examination of data and conversations with experts, this investigative feature explores the threats trans and gender nonconforming people face every day. It investigates the motivations behind this violence and the identities of the perpetrators and the victims. It examines the cultural norms that have allowed so many trans people to live in danger for so long, and it addresses the information we still don't have. Finally, it acknowledges that change isn't possible overnight, but it is possible.

The Seeds of Violence

Why are trans people at such high risk of violence? There is no single answer, but experts say the seeds of this violence lie within the cultural and systemic devaluation of transgender lives and bodies.

"Ultimately, there aren't enough people that value and respect the humanity of other folks, especially trans folks and especially trans women of color," said Angelica D'Souza, the LGBTQ & Hate Crime Victim Specialist with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. "At the end of the day, you're not going to perpetrate violence against somebody that you value as a person. That's the fundamental problem."

This lack of value our culture has for trans people is perpetuated through the basic rights we regularly deny them—like jobs, housing and healthcare.

The unemployment rate for trans respondents to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey was 15%, compared to a then 5% unemployment rate for the general U.S. population. In addition, 29% of respondents were living in poverty, compared to 12% of the general U.S. population, and 23% experienced housing discrimination within a year of the survey while 30% said they have been homeless at some point in their lives.

The survey also showed that 33% of respondents who visited a doctor within a year of the survey had a negative experience due to being

transgender, and 23% did not visit a doctor when they needed to due to fear of mistreatment. In 2015, the Movement Advancement Project found that 15% of trans people earn less than \$10,000 per year.

The continuous denial of basic rights for trans people not only maintains the stigma surrounding them, but it also physically places them in more danger by blocking their access to safe places to work, live and sleep. Twenty six percent of those who experienced homelessness within a year of the survey did not go to a shelter due to fear of mistreatment based on their gender identity, and 70% of those who sought refuge at a shelter said they were mistreated because they were transgender.

Lisa Gilmore, a licensed clinical professional counselor who focuses on LGBTQ-specific anti-violence, works from the theory that "the more



Left to right: Angelica D'Souza, the LGBTQ & Hate Crime Victim Specialist with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office; licensed clinical professional counselor Lisa Gilmore; Brave Space Alliance executive director LaSaia Wade.

PR photos of D'Souza and Wade; Gilmore photo by Hal Baim

social stigma somebody faces, the higher their vulnerability to violence and the lower their access to safety is. If we don't provide people with shelter and safety they are going to be more vulnerable to more severe violence and death," she said.

Trans people seeking refuge from an abusive partner or who are kicked out of their homes often have nowhere to turn. "They end up on the street or staying in the relationship," Gilmore said. "They're going to be at a higher risk for violence. When you're out and about all the time and doing what you have to do to survive, you are at risk for violence, you are at risk for people thinking you are less than somehow, therefore it is easier."

LaSaia Wade, founder and executive director of

Brave Space Alliance, the first Black-led, trans-led, LGBTQ center on Chicago's South Side, believes people's discomfort with her Black, transgender body is a projection of their discomfort with their own bodies.

"What is it about my body that makes you so uncomfortable about your body?" Wade asked. "Is it because I'm living my truth and you're not living your truth? People don't want to look in their own mirror."

Wade believes people are afraid of being true to themselves. "People don't want to sit with that these days. That is not only killing my people, but it's killing everyone else. It's killing people left and right and it's sure as hell fucking up this country."

Types of Violence

Trans people are at risk of many types of vio-

lence, but intimate partner violence (IPV) is one huge issue the community faces. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 54% of respondents experienced IPV, with 24% having experienced severe physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner. This is 6% higher than the general U.S. population. Additionally, the 2016 National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Intimate Partner Violence Report found that "Transgender women were 2.5 times more likely to be stalked, 2.5 times more likely to experience financial violence, and 2 times more likely to experience online harassment within IPV, compared to survivors who were not transgender women."

Even with IPV, though, anti-transgender bias can be involved. "I don't think violence against

trans women is anything other than bias motivated," said D'Souza. "Because even when there are instances of domestic violence, from the folks that I've worked with I've heard things like, 'I outed him,' 'He got violent because people found out about who I was and that was unacceptable to him.' Or, 'no one was supposed to find out about me.' Or it's about toxic masculinity and it's about patriarchy and it's about all of those things and at the end of the day it often is because of this person's identity in one way or another."

According to Forge, a national transgender anti-violence organization, there are many abuse tactics used specifically against trans people in instances of intimate partner violence, such as threatening to out someone, hiding or throwing away hormones, and belittling their identity by telling them they are not a "real" woman or man. Additionally, what makes trans victims of IPV so vulnerable is their lack of access to services that could save them from their situation as well as the common fear of involving law enforcement.

In the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 22% of people who visited a domestic violence shelter, a domestic violence program, or a rape crisis center at which the staff knew they were transgender were mistreated.

Forty seven percent of respondents to the sur-

vey also reported being sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. Trans people who have been homeless, those with disabilities, and those who have participated in sex work reported sexual assaults in even higher numbers.

PART TWO

What We Know: Who are the Victims?

Trans people of all genders are at risk of violence, but the combination of rampant transphobia, sexism and racism puts trans women of color in the most danger.

According to the 2017 A Time to Act report by the Human Rights Campaign and Trans People of Color Coalition, trans women are four times as

likely to be the victims of homicide compared to the general population of women in the United States. Between 2013 and 2017, HRC and TPOCC have recorded 102 acts of fatal violence against transgender people. At least 88 of the victims were trans women and at least 87 of the victims were people of color.

According to the National Association of Anti-Violence Programs, violence against trans women of color is getting worse. The number of homicides of trans women of color has grown steadily over the past five years, from 12 hate violence homicides in 2013 to 22 in 2017 (though some reports are as high as 28).

Who are the perpetrators?

There are too many perpetrators of violence against trans people to name, too much data acknowledging the presence of attackers in the workplace, in public places, at home, in jails, in immigration detention centers. Trans people are attacked by police, by loved ones, and by strangers. Perpetrators of this violence are everywhere.

Tools of violence

The A Time to Act report found that of the 102 transgender homicides between 2013 and 2017, 61 of the victims died from gunshot wounds.

The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that, while 3% of overall respondents had been attacked with a gun in the past year, trans women of color were four times more likely to be attacked with a gun than other trans people. Those working in the underground economy were more than three times as likely to be the victims of gun violence and those with their only source of income being from the underground economy were more than five times as likely to have been attacked with a gun.

What We Don't Know

According to Naomi Goldberg, the Policy & Research Director at the Movement Advancement Project, there is no national government-sponsored survey that includes a question relating to trans people and their experiences.

While the FBI began collecting hate crime statistics in 2013, Angelica D'Souza, the LGBTQ & Hate Crime Victim Specialist with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, said it is based only on data from states who are willing to report it. Beyond that, bad experiences with police and other law enforcement means many trans people likely do not report crimes committed against them at all. Fifty seven percent of respondents to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey said they would not be comfortable seeking help from the police.

"So much of the big systems-level response is based around reporting to law enforcement or reporting to victims services," said Gilmore. "So first of all, do you even feel like you can report it? Do you, as a transgender person, a transgender woman, recognize that these systems and laws also should be things that you have access to, that you have a right to support from, and a right for those places to be accountable to providing you with safety?"

"Do you even think that based on your past experiences with other service providers or law enforcements or courts? Medical providers? What are all these reasons why you might not or why

you might? And then how do those people respond to you? Do they mark it and indicate what kind of violence it is? Do they let you tell them what the violence is? Do they let you tell them how you identify? Does someone automatically put you in the category of male because they assume that you were assigned male at birth? If you say, I'm a woman, do they mark you as a woman or do they make a note that you're a transgender woman? Who knows? So yes, how do we get the data?"

Gilmore said the only way data is currently being collected is by organizations doing victims services who have created their own way to collect it and make it available. "So we're not getting a uniform way of collecting that data. It's hard to try to extrapolate, to say okay if we got 300 reports of violence against transgender women this past year what does that mean in terms of percentage? Well, we don't know. We don't know what to compare it to."

Additionally, standard domestic violence studies and surveys may not include a place for victims to identify themselves as anything other than male or female, which makes it very difficult to know whether trans women are included in stats about women on the whole. For example, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey put out by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control breaks down all of their data by whether violence is happening to a man or a woman. The word transgender does not appear in their 2015 report.

PART THREE

The Services Trans People Don't Have

"You can't talk about violence against trans women and not talk about having decreased access to mental health services and decreased access to substance abuse services and decreased access to medical services and assault on immigrants," said Angelica D'Souza of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. "It's all interwoven, and if you're somebody who is amongst the most that society marginalizes, you're even further excluded from services."

There is a massive need for more LGBTQ-affirming services, for more shelters, legal, and health services to provide gender-affirming support. "It's unacceptable that the places that in our society we have said are the places that are supposed to help survivors of violence often are places where LGBTQ people experience victimization again in forms of either discrimination or verbal violence or physical violence and sexual violence," said Gilmore.

She added some of the most important work she does is with organizations around policies for how their staff and volunteers work with LGBTQ people—essentially teaching them how to serve anyone who is not a cisgender woman. Most systems currently in place have been designed to exclusively keep cisgender women safe and do not have policies in place to help anyone else.

Even services that may be available to victims beyond cisgender women may not give the appearance that they are welcoming, said D'Souza. The Chicago Battered Women's Network, for example, alienates those who do not identify as women just by its name. And on the website of



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Turn to page 10

Murders of Transgender and GNC People in U.S., 2018

Source: Human Rights Campaign

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>



Christa Leigh Steele-Knudslie, 42, was found dead in her home on January 5 in North Adams, Massachusetts. Steele-Knudslie organized and produced the Miss Trans New England and other pageants, and was loved and known by many in both the local and national trans community.



Vicky Gutierrez, 33, a transgender woman from Honduras was stabbed and had her body set ablaze inside her Los Angeles home on January 10. Friends described her as “a young trans Latina immigrant woman whose warm smile would give anyone comfort.”



Tonya Harvey, 35, was fatally shot on February 6 in Buffalo, New York. A friend of Harvey’s expressed her condolences on Facebook, writing: “I knew her since I started transitioning, she was so sweet and loving.” Police have confirmed they are looking into the incident as a possible hate crime.



Celine Walker, 36, was fatally shot in a hotel room on February 4 in Jacksonville, Florida. It was not known for several days that Walker was trans because local police claimed to not refer to victims as transgender. Investigators are still looking for a suspect in her death.



Phylcia Mitchell, 45, was shot and killed outside her home on February 23 in Cleveland, Ohio. On April 10, Cleveland.com reported that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Gary Sanders. Sanders was charged with aggravated murder in Mitchell’s death. Her longtime partner, Shane Mitchell, described her as “funny and kind” and that “everyone loved her.”



Zakaria Fry, 28, went missing in New Mexico in mid-January. Her body was later found 40 miles outside of Albuquerque on February 19. Albuquerque Police arrested and charged Charles Spiess with two open counts of murder. Fry’s loved ones shared condolences on Facebook with one friend saying: “You were my older sister. You took care of me and loved me like family. I’ll forever love you. I’m sorry.”



Amia Tyrae Berryman, 28, was fatally shot at a local motel on March 26 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Few details are known about the crime, and police report they have no suspects or persons of interest at this time.



Sasha Wall, 29, a transgender woman of color, was fatally shot on April 1 in Chesterfield County, South Carolina. The FBI is assisting with local investigators, and are analyzing phone records and collecting DNA evidence. Donovan Dunlap, a friend of Wall’s, expressed condolences on Facebook, writing, “I will miss you my beautiful sister. I cannot sleep, I hope they find who did this.”

TRANS MURDERS from page 9

the National Domestic Violence Hotline, it calls itself “the vital link to safety for women, men, children, and families affected by domestic violence.” Where does that leave trans and gender nonconforming people?

“There’s a huge lack of competent care in the behavioral health and mental health fields,” said D’Souza, “Even from folks that are LGBT affirming. Someone’s whole life is not just that they’re trans. People are whole people, so there’s definitely a need for more competent and more affirming services, but there are definitely efforts underway that need support, that need money. Shit costs money, and without it it’s hard to have a reach, but the folks who are doing the work are doing a lot of work with little money.”

Regarding the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs 2016 Intimate Partner Violence Report, Emily Waters, NCAVP’s Senior Manager of National Research and Policy, emphasized the need for community support and resources. “Rather than primarily focusing on prosecution of intimate partner violence as a “violent crime,” as it is currently being framed by [U.S. Attorney General] Jeff Sessions, the Department of Justice should support and devote resources to LGBTQ organizations and groups that are working to address IPV from within the community,” she said.

Gilmore agrees. “There’s very little prevention resources for anti-LGBTQ violence that I know of,” she said. “Most of the resources for victimization have to do with responding after victimization has already occurred. Most of the resources are built around these systems that broader society has set up that are about punishing and criminalizing and giving victims band aids and support and just get away from that person who is violent towards you.”

The Services Trans People Do Have—in Chicago

Brave Space Alliance is the first Black-led, trans-led LGBTQ community center on the South Side of Chicago. According to LaSaia Wade, many trans victims of violence come to BSA for help. While BSA is not equipped to assist directly, they maintain a network of partnerships to domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and housing initiatives, all of which have undergone BSA’s training in how to provide affirming services for trans people.

“We actually listen to what people need,” Wade said, “and have that discussion with homeless shelters and push them to be politically aware of what’s happening in the world.”

BSA helps trans people with leadership development, access to jobs, and community,

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with the goal of creating a brave space where trans and queer people feel empowered to use their voices and speak out. For those on the West Side, Wade suggests Project Vida, and on the North Side, Howard Brown Health and its Broadway Youth Center.

Also on the West Side, Reyna Ortiz and her team do outreach work and programs through the TaskForce Prevention and Community Services. The Center on Halsted also has transgender services, as does Chicago House, through their TransLife and TransSafe programs.

Stopping the Violence

"Reducing violence is simpler than we think," said Wade. "Education." Educating people can happen in all sorts of ways. She emphasizes the need to educate people both beyond the LGBTQ community and within it—because discrimination happens within the community as well. The most productive conversations Wade has, she said, are with young people, who have not yet been "tainted" with prejudice. "If we start with our youth before any and everything," she said, "We don't have to worry about anything."

While we do need laws to change and we do need better policies, keeping trans people safe means doing more than that. It means fundamentally reshaping the way our culture views the transgender community. It means giving trans people access to jobs, healthcare and housing. It means honoring their pronouns and giving them representation in media as three-dimensional people who are more than their gender identities. It means raising children with a greater awareness of gender fluidity and teaching them not to hate what is different. Erasing a stigma that is so deeply embedded in society cannot happen overnight, but it must happen.

Wade acknowledges there has been some progress. "We're being seen in spaces we've never been seen," she said. "I am an ED. I have the chance to go into these spaces and push political knowledge. Most LGBT ED's are white or make \$100,000 and above. So what does it look like when we have the same power? We might not have the same money, but what does it look like when we have the same power, saying yes or no in these physical spaces we normally do not have access to?"

Wade encourages more open and honest conversations in all communities about what people need to be their best and fullest selves. This, she believes, will begin to open the door for acceptance. "If the darkest, blackest trans woman is free," she says, "Everyone is free."

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Murders of Transgender and GNC People in U.S., 2018

Source: Human Rights Campaign

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>

Karla Patricia Flores-Pavón, 26, was found choked to death in her apartment in Dallas, Texas, on May 9. Dallas Police arrested 24-year-old Jimmy Eugene Johnson III on May 17, charging him with Flores-Pavón's murder. "It hurts a lot, you were a good-hearted person. Sister, fly high. We will remember you with love. Your beautiful smile will stay with us," a friend posted on her Facebook page.



Nino Fortson, 36, was fatally shot in Atlanta on May 13. City police were nearby executing a traffic stop and rushed to the scene, but Fortson later died at the hospital, said transgender advocate Monica Roberts.



Gigi Pierce, 28, was fatally shot on May 21 in Portland, Oregon. When officers arrived they tried to administer aid, but Pierce died at the scene. Police investigators say they believe that Pierce was shot during an altercation with Sophia Adler, who has been charged with Pierce's murder, according to KGW-TV.

PHOTO NOT
AVAILABLE

Antash'a English, 38, was fatally injured in drive-by shooting in Jacksonville, Florida on June 1. On her Facebook page, English described herself as an "independent" transgender woman who "thrives on being the best person" she can be. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office has declared an active murder investigation and asks anyone with information to contact their office.



Cathalina Christina James, 24, was fatally shot in Jacksonville, Florida, on June 24. In an interview with First Coast News, James' mother described her daughter as having a "big and bold" personality, saying she loved to dance and travel. James is the third transgender woman murdered and the fourth shot in the Florida city this year.



Keisha Wells, 58, was found dead with a gunshot wound to her abdomen in the parking lot of an apartment complex on June 24, according to Cleveland.com. A longtime friend of Wells described her as "the nicest person ever" but also a "tough cookie."

PHOTO NOT
AVAILABLE

Sasha Garden, 27, was found dead with signs of trauma in Orlando, Florida, early July 19. Originally from Wisconsin, Garden is remembered by loved ones as a "firecracker" who "didn't hold anything back." Friend and local transgender activist Mulan Montrese Williams recalls that Garden was a talented and aspiring hair stylist and had been saving money to fund her transition.



Diamond Stephens, 39, was found shot to death on June 18 in Meridian, Mississippi. In interviews with a local television station, family members said that Stephens had an "incredible personality." As is too often the case in the reporting of anti-transgender violence, Stephens was originally misgendered in local police statements and media reports, which delayed our awareness of this deadly incident.



ESSAY

The Battle Within: Cis and Trans Women, Can We Get Along?

BY TRACY BAIM

This is the essay I never wanted to write.

The focus of this piece is the women's community, but I could easily write an essay about how gay men also have treated the transgender community badly. Some have called for them to be ousted from the rainbow, and others have disowned friends who were once fun-loving "drag queens" who now identify as women. And of course, some cisgender straight people can be pretty awful, too.

I have fears, wading into what has been a decades-long struggle to both cover and live within a community that is divided, by a small number of people, on a core issue of who belongs in certain spaces, who gets to self-identify, and even who gets to be on the rainbow flag. This is about the cisgender and transgender divide.

Divisions in our community have always existed—sexism, racism, classism, etc. In the 1970s, transgender activist Sylvia Rivera was ostracized by lesbians at New York pride. Sandy Stone, considered the founder of transgender studies, faced bias from some cisgender women while a collective member at the Olivia Records women's music label—she was eventually forced out.

But this essay is about the recent and ancient battles between some cisgender lesbians (and non-lesbian women) and the transgender community. This year has seen an upsurge in intensity: At London and Baltimore pride parades, anti-trans literature was handed out and signs carried. At San Francisco's Dyke March, a group of cisgender women say they were physically assaulted by trans allies apparently upset with their signs decrying lesbian erasure (and one sign protesting puberty blocker side effects on kids). Even those without signs were targeted.

There are so many overlapping issues that it's difficult to separate legitimate concerns from the clear transphobia.

On the transgender side, no organizations or movement leaders have voiced anti-lesbian or anti-cisgender sentiment. Yes, some individuals, speaking for themselves, have issued threats of violence. On the cisgender side, unfortunately there have been a few feminist leaders (I am not naming names here) who have a media presence, especially in England, who have made horrendous anti-trans statements. And some cisgender lesbians do not accept transgender women as women, denying their very existence. While they may not view this the same way they view a violent threat, imagine what we think when someone says lesbians do not have a right to exist? That is a form of threat, too. It is a stage in the building of oppression that can lead to violence and murder.

But I also think even the most benign differ-



Tracy Baim.
Photo by Hal Baim

ences get escalated and lumped all together, and there is even guilt and de-platforming by association. The "TERF" (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists) label is probably too over-used and therefore loses its impact. But there are also very appropriate times TERF should be used. Also, it does demean the word feminist to include it in a phrase that is anti-feminist in its very nature. Some cisgender lesbians get swooped under the label TERF merely for discussing trans issues in a way that is not 100% in line with current orthodoxy—even though the orthodoxy has changed over time, and especially over generations.

I know there are many examples of people who have evolved on this issue. People who were once anti-transgender, or transphobic. Their evolution is due in large part to the patience and educational support of transgender people.

Beginnings

But let me begin at my own beginning on this issue.

I am a native Chicagoan, but I went away for four years to Des Moines, Iowa, from 1980–84, to attend Drake University. I was very out as a lesbian on campus, and during my sophomore year I started to be on panels both on and off campus. On one such panel, I was with two other women, and they were partners. One was a transgender woman. They explained to the audience that sexual orientation was separate from gender identity (they probably used a different phrase back then), and from that point on, it was really easy for me to understand this difference.

I am grateful that I learned this young, because it has made doing my job as an LGBTQ journalist and publisher so much easier. From very early on, even when Chicago's out transgender community was very small, we have had an inclusive approach at the papers I have published. We had transgender columnists and writers almost from the start, and we had what I believe was the first Intersex columnist in any publication in the 1990s.

Changing language and community

The terms we use in this debate have changed. We have not always had the word "cisgender" to apply to non-transgender people, and in fact much of our modern language continues to evolve. For some cisgender lesbians, they loathe the word because when it first came into wide-

spread use, it was often used as a slur or a negative. It has grown on me, and I do use it, but I understand the painful ways it has been wielded, too.

Among other phrases that have changed: what was "sex change" is now "gender confirmation." Just as the words and phrases we use to describe sexual orientation have evolved (we don't use "homosexual" anymore), so too have words to describe transgender. I remember in the 1980s when some older women told me they just liked the word gay and never called themselves lesbians. Gender fluid, gender non-conforming (GNC) and gender expansive are all relatively new phrases. There are also now a myriad of gender pronouns. There are changes in how we discuss things such as pregnancy, parenthood and medical care to be more inclusive. Trans men can get pregnant, for example. Inclusion shouldn't be seen as erasure. The word queer has become more prominent be-

"I believe transgender women are women. I believe gender is complex, related to genetics, epigenetics, society and so much we do not yet understand. To try to police gender is to unnecessarily divide us in the same way that people used to say (and some still do) that lesbians were not 'real' women."

cause it allows for so much more fluidity.

And one massive difference from the 1970s and 1980s is that transgender and GNC people are coming out at ever-younger ages. In my 20s, most transgender people would come out well after college, and some even into their 40s and 50s. Caitlyn Jenner coming out in her 60s was a more common occurrence for transgender people decades ago. These days, families are experiencing this with children as young as three. Our gender identity starts becoming clear much younger than our sexual orientation. And yes, some people's identity is fluid, and changes over the course of their lifetimes.

This is not a column that will deal with the complex issues of young people and gender, or the medical and psychological issues that their families and professionals should be allowed to examine privately. [See Brynn Tannehill's Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Trans* (But Were Afraid to Ask).]

It should never be for society to decide what is right for a family or their children. Some of the literature being handed out at pride and posted online is disgusting, claiming to know what is right for a child. They forget how people still want to imprison us, and kill us, for who we love.

How dare anyone claim to know what is best for someone else related to gender. Remember a core tenet of the women's movement: Our bodies, ourselves.

Fear and loathing

There are a couple things to break down a bit here.

First, it is a big deal whether someone comes out as transgender or GNC at age 5 vs. age 55. Their transitions will be entirely different. It means the 55-year-old experienced life for 55 years in one way, and now the world might see them another. If they grew up as outwardly male identified, of course they had male privilege and that affects someone both externally and internally. We should never deny that, and those who lived a life of such privilege should work to understand that as they live their new life. But there is no admittance test to womanhood, no certificate someone can achieve to be that "perfect" woman. After all, there are plenty of cisgender women who are not feminist.

Second, there is this fear in the cisgender lesbian community that butch lesbians are being hijacked in some way, that we are "losing" our butches to the trans community. This ties into the theme that lesbian spaces are disappearing.

I don't want to ignore these fears, because I know I hear this with heartfelt passion from people I have known for many years. So let me try to address these fears as someone who has a catbird seat to this movement, in a city like Chicago with so many options for LGBTQ people.

On the issue of butches: We as a cisgender community would be very selfish to think that anyone "belongs" to us. On the flip side, it is also wrong to tell a butch she should transition. If someone identified as a trans man, or wants to be non-binary or GNC, how is it any of our business to tell them they can't fulfill their own destiny? There is no social contagion happening—being transgender is not a fad. Remember when lesbians were seen as "stealing" straight women away from men? Maybe not all remained lesbian, but that was their life to lead, not ours. This would be like people who said to us growing up that we should be straight, that it's our duty to serve men, to have babies in a heterosexual context, and we were betraying our gender by not following the traditional path.

As with the extremely small percentage of LGB people who may change course in their life to be heterosexual, in the case of the small percentage (estimated at 1–4%, often influenced by discrimination people have faced, or bad medical outcomes) of those who de-transition, we should not then use those rare examples to determine the possibilities of the rest of the transgender community. How can it be right for someone else to dictate their path?

In the case of youth who are dealing with this issue, some become suicidal if they are not allowed to pursue their transition. If their doctors approve, so should we.

All of the above has nothing to do with the disappearance of lesbian-only spaces. Yes, most women's music festivals have gone away, as have women's bookstores, newspapers and bars. It's not because of the rise of the transgender movement, although many would blame the trans com-

munity. But long before certain women's festivals and events stopped, most other festivals closed down. Only a very few festivals, bookstores and bars remain in the entire country.

Yet, there are more open lesbians in the U.S. than there have ever been in history. There are more open celebrities and media people, including nightly on MSNBC with Rachel Maddow, daily with Ellen DeGeneres, not to mention Wanda Sykes and thousands more. Younger women may be more fluid or queer in their definitions, but they are coming out like never before (Janelle Monae, Tessa Thompson, etc.).

So why the disappearing act of certain parts of lesbian culture? We must not scapegoat the trans and GNC people for this. If cisgender lesbians wanted the bars, bookstores, festivals and newspapers to still be around—and if they attended and supported those the same way they did in the 1970s and 1980s—they would still be here. I have promoted concerts with some legends of women's music—but a lot of their fans just did not show up the way they used to.

People change, cultures change, the music we like changes, and the way we socialize and communicate changes. This newspaper will not be around forever, and neither will even the most successful gay male bars. The "blame" is just on generational change.

I can tell you where the lesbians are in Chicago. Most of them are just living their everyday lives working, going to school, raising kids, caring for aging parents, helping ailing partners and friends, volunteering, hosting house parties, pampering their pets, and doing typical life things. We have been assimilated, for the most part, especially as we age.

And then, as always, there is a subset that parties like it's 1999. There are two full-time lesbian bars in the Chicago area (Spyners Pub and Forest View Lounge). There are also great women-owned all-gender bars including The Closet and Big Chicks. But there are also dozens of party promoters hosting events across the city and suburbs. In June alone there were probably 30 events specifically targeting lesbian, bisexual and femme-identified women. Yes, they included transgender women, too. If cisgender lesbians want places to socialize in Chicago, there are a myriad of choices. Or we do like we always had for generations: we can build it ourselves, in more inclusive ways than the past.

Another important change is that lesbian-identified cisgender women now feel far more comfortable socializing at mainstream clubs, at gay male bars, and with their work colleagues. Bars overall are hurting because of social media and competition from so many other entertainment options. That's just another generational change.

Defining womanhood

Finally, separating all of the above complex issues out, there is a cosmic disconnect on the issue of who is a woman. At its core, this debate comes down to the fact that some cisgender women do not consider transgender women to be women. And more specifically, some cisgender lesbians do not think that transgender women can be lesbians.

This can be among the most frustrating and personal of debates. There is the larger social is-

sue, then there is the personal issue of relationships. No one, of course, should ever tell anyone who they should date or have sex with. Even when a white gay man says "I would never date a Black person" or "Asian" etc., we may say they are racist, but it's not for anyone else to say who someone should date. Some of the online comments about forcing cisgender lesbians to have sex with transgender lesbians are damaging aberrations to these debates. It is a red herring and I urge people not to go down that rabbit hole in debates. The issue is that it is transphobic to say you would not date a whole category of people based on their status—it is not about forcing an individual to have sex with any one person. Sometimes the argument is that "real" women are those who menstruate or can give birth. What about the many cisgender women who can't menstruate or have children? Are they not women?

But there is a heartbreaking part to this. A recent survey showed that almost 90 percent of respondents would not date a transgender person. I hope with visibility and education, with more media representation including TV shows such as Pose, we can change minds and hearts.

I believe transgender women are women. I believe gender is complex, related to genetics, epigenetics, society and so much we do not yet understand. To try to police gender is to unnecessarily divide us in the same way that people used to say (and some still do) that lesbians were not "real" women.

Sure, the experience of a transgender woman who comes out at 35 or 65 is not the same as a woman who was raised female from birth. But what about someone who has been raised as female since age 5 or 15? Who are we to say what the "perfect" age is to include someone or not?

There are so many ways each of us gets to be the person we are. My experience as a cisgender white middle-class woman from Chicago is very different from so many of my friends and other lesbians across the U.S. and the world. Each of us has had a unique path, some who have experienced violence from men, from women or from those who are nonbinary. The experiences we have shape us, and sometimes shape us in very negative ways. But that does mean we all must work to make sure horrible experiences do not shape us when we view an entire community, including the transgender community.

Gender constructs

The gender construct is something cisgender lesbians and feminists of the 1960s and 1970s fought hard against. Androgyny was the thing. Women fought against horrible stereotypes and limited life paths. Sometimes I hear from cisgender lesbians that they do not understand why some transgender women have so bought into the stereotypes of what a woman is. Well, to put it in basic terms, it's because they don't have the luxury of casually walking in a society that might kill them if they don't.

There's no perfect solution on this, it's almost lose-lose in terms of dress and behavior. There is no one right way to be a woman. Transgender and GNC people also face much of the same violence cisgender women face. Women of color who live in poverty, regardless of cisgender or

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ESSAY from page 13

transgender, face harsh realities of the police and prison system, and violence targeting them every day. They have little in common with either Caitlyn Jenner or Jane Fonda.

Even though we are so different, I still believe the commonalities are larger. Sure, I may loathe the women who are apologists for a failing GOP and White House. But they are women, and they do face sexism. I would never say they are not women, even if I hate them. What I hope for is a day when our LGBTQ community, and cisgender people in particular, don't use gender status as a way to separate us. Just because there are trans or cis people you disagree and fight with does not mean they are not the gender they are living. And any one transgender or cisgender person does not represent us all, including those who resort to name-calling and violent threats.

If I took the negative approach some do, I would have left this community a long time ago and probably not identified as lesbian. Some of the worst damage we have done is to ourselves, and I have experienced this among cisgender lesbians. Most of my friends are cisgender lesbians, but I also have many in that same group who I have vehemently disagreed with (on a myriad of issues). I wouldn't say they are not women—or lesbians—because of those disagreements or even fights.

I would ask the same of the entire community. We may not like everyone we encounter with the LGBTQIAA rainbow, but people who self-identify as a part of our community have a right to be there. Once we start to say who belongs or not, we know the next step is we are all at risk.

Claiming history, building futures

A tricky nuance here is the need for both the transgender community and the cisgender community to "claim" their own. This applies to current lives, where there have been butch lesbians who have been questioned why they don't identify as trans, and it also applies to history,

where communities are trying to counter the vast erasure of our lives. This can be contested ground between those claiming an ancestor as a butch lesbian, while others view them as transgender. In fact, some may have lived at one point as a lesbian and later as what we now call transgender. With so little documentation of the past, there will be disputes. But let's not let those minor skirmishes define our current communities.

My final comment is this: I know hundreds of people on both sides of this divide. I love them as friends and allies. I know that those friends who

build on this progress.

If we truly believe in the equality of a people, that means that separate is not equal. If we think having separate public spaces for cisgender women is okay, then we think separate is equal. (This has nothing to do with private spaces.) We all came to our gender or nonbinary status from different paths. To acknowledge difference is a strength.

We need to all understand that transgender women, regardless of any physical characteristics, are women, full stop. We all just have dif-

"We need to all understand that transgender women, regardless of any physical characteristics, are women, full stop. We all just have different paths to womanhood. Even though some cisgender women may have seen and experienced the vitriol of some transgender people, and the same holds true of transgender people experiencing bias from cisgender people, it does not represent the whole, any more than one conservative white gay Republican represents all gay men."

ferent paths to womanhood. Even though some cisgender women may have seen and experienced the vitriol of some transgender people, and the same holds true of transgender people experiencing bias from cisgender people, it does not represent the whole, any more than one conservative white gay Republican represents all gay men.

are cisgender are generally very pro-transgender equality, and have advocated and fought for transgender inclusion in our movement. There is a final hurdle we need to help push them over or through—and we should allow people to evolve, and we must, because that is the basis of activism and advocacy. Our work is never finished. I also know there are some cisgender people who will never come around; but I am optimistic that the wealth of information and coming out stories of transgender people, and of transgender lesbians, have been a wonderful counter to the earlier days of a few brave souls carrying the weight of the transgender movement. There has been a big shift in the past decade, and I believe we can

ferent paths to womanhood. Even though some cisgender women may have seen and experienced the vitriol of some transgender people, and the same holds true of transgender people experiencing bias from cisgender people, it does not represent the whole, any more than one conservative white gay Republican represents all gay men.

Kate Sosin, a former reporter for Windy City Times, wrote this in an essay Aug. 7, 2013: "What could be useful is a more complicated discussion on our myriad identities, the privileges each of us—including trans people of all identities—carry. It is helpful to hold all of us to better ways of being in community so that identity-exclusive spaces are less necessary in the future. ... Gender

is a set of rules, not a set of anatomy. Any associations we have that link our traumas to the bodies of other people, are our own to process. No one's body is wrong. What is wrong is a society that devalues all kinds of women and condones violence against them."

My true dream is that we reset the debate on cisgender vs. transgender. We must move past the contentious early days of debate, and realize that we all had and have a lot to learn about how our marginalization can bring us together. And we as a community have more to gain by working together than fighting one another on social media and at pride parades.

This circular battle is wrenching and untenable. People are being threatened and even friendships are at risk. It's like watching family members fight, or battles between outsiders. No one wins when the cannons are facing inside the room.

Riki Wilchins writes in *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*, "I have begun speaking simply of gender as a name for that system that punishes bodies for how they look, who they love, or how they feel—for the size or color or shape of their skin. I do this not to collapse our differences, but to emphasize our connections."

The LGBTQIAA community is so grand because it is so inclusive. We use one acronym because gender is the real problem—the system that says women should not vote, or work, or have body autonomy, that says gay men can't be feminine or passive, that is all about gender. Gender bias is the thing that really hurts queer women, trans people and queers of any stripe.


Can we all get along? For the most part, we actually do. For the small percentage in our communities that are continuing this battle, I urge you to gather in person to get to know one another. I love you all, I have friends across this divide, and I know we can all move forward so much faster when we row our oars together.

Tracy Baim is publisher and co-founder of Windy City Times. She has been covering the LGBTQIAA community since 1984.

LOST

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Federal family planning resource access in peril

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL) voiced its concern the week of July 22 for proposed changes to Title X, the nation's only federal family planning program, by the Trump administration.

Created in 1965, Title X ensures that low-income Americans have access to family-planning resources. But the changes could potentially eviscerate the program's effectiveness, said PPIL officials, who noted that Title X providers would in the future be prevented from making referrals to providers that could provide safe abortion services. Additional alterations include dropping a requirement that Title X providers provide resources allowing assistance in obtaining all approved birth control and family-planning resources.

Changes also redefine "low-income" to include persons whose employer's insurance does not cover birth control and family planning services, but does not stipulate additional financial resources for Title X providers.

The changes effectively create a "gag rule" on resources and a financially imperiling situation for Title X that can have a devastating impact for Illinoisans, added PPIL officials.

"More than 100,000 people in Illinois rely on Title X for their healthcare coverage," said Julie Lynn, PPIL's manager of external affairs. "There are 95 Title X providers and Planned Parenthood makes up 18 percent of those providers, but we see 42 percent of the patients. That number is similar to the nationwide number as well in terms of the number of patients Planned Parenthood sees in relation to other Title X providers."

Lynn added that Planned Parenthood is the only Title X providers in six Central Illinois counties.

"The people who rely on Title X for their care won't have anywhere else to go," she said. "... No one should be denied access to healthcare because of where they live."

In answering critics this past May, the Trump administration bristled at the gag-rule label, but the law stipulates that providers may not "perform, promote, refer for, or support, abortion as a method of family planning, nor take any other affirmative action to assist a patient secure such an abortion."

The only exception is if a pregnant woman clearly states that she has already decided upon an abortion. Providers can direct provide her with a list of providers but, according to the rule, "The

list shall not identify the providers who provide abortions as such."

A public comment period on the proposed changes is scheduled to end July 31, and PPIL has been encouraging its supporters to weigh in on the matter.

"People can post comments to show their opposition for this rule, because [the Department of Health and Human Services] will need to respond to those, and the more comments, the better,"

Lurie study seeks LGBTQ youth

Lurie Children's Hospital and Northwestern University are partnering with IL DCFS to learn more about LGBTQ youth in DCFS care.

The study is ALLIED (Advancements Leading to LGBTQ Improved Experiences in DCFS), and the current project aims to understand the perceptions of adolescents in foster care regarding an assessment of gender identity and sexual orientation within the child welfare system.

They are recruiting self-identified LGBTQ youth 12 years or older who are in the custody and guardianship of Illinois DCFS for one-on-one interviews (in-person or by phone) lasting approximately 90 minutes each.

Food and travel reimbursement will be provided for those who meet in-person, and all eligible youth will receive a \$25 for participating.

Lynn noted. "We want to eliminate this policy entirely but in the immediate time, we want to delay it from taking effect. That means that HHS needs to hear from everyone about the impact that this would have on them and their lives."

Comments can be submitted at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/01/2018-11673/compliance-with-statutory-program-integrity-requirements>.

The study conductors will travel throughout the state to meet youth at locations of safety and convenience for them.

Interested persons should call Elizabeth at 312-227-2595.

Architecture Center to open at new site

Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), formerly known as Chicago Architecture Foundation, announced that it will open at its new location at 111 E. Wacker Dr. on Aug. 31.

The new site will be directly across the street from the CAF River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady Cruises. With the opening of the new Center brings news that never-before-experienced walking tours will launch from the Center's new location starting Aug. 1.

See Architecture.org.

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viewpoints



**Mark
ZUBRO**

Our lives do depend on it

I've heard whispers of hopelessness, rising in some quarters to a clamor of despair.

Despair? Not an option. I certainly sympathize, but I definitely disagree with those who see despair as our only option in light of their fears about what the orange monster and his willing minions have done and could still do to us and our country.

No question these are frightening times, but that does not mean we have to live in fear.

My perspective is twofold: historical and personal. I remember sitting in our living room those horrible days in November 1963. My mother in tears on the couch as we watched his funeral. I remember looking out the windows of our dorm in St. Louis after Martin Luther King was murdered. We wondered if St. Louis would burn as so many cities were in flames that night. I remember turning off the television after Bobby gave his victory speech in June of that year. Then waking up in our apartment the next morning with the neighbor's television blaring with the horrible news of his death. I remember waking up on that day in November 1968 and realizing Nixon would be our president.

I remember being a frightened gay teenager in the 1960s, and a closeted gay teacher in the 1970s. In the 1980s working for LGBTQ rights, and then becoming president of the teachers' union in my school district for the last twenty years that I taught, and for the last twenty-nine years publishing very political novels and short stories.

letters

Safety stance

Dear Editor,

As we approach a significant milestone date here in Boystown/Lake View, we would like to share the following information with the community to recognize and thank all the persons involved in the hope of maintaining the momentum.

Nearly five years ago—at the Aug. 7, 2013 CAPS meeting held at the police station, after three months of citizens raising valid safety concerns—the police department and others implemented a dramatic and sustained improvement. We were hopeful the improvement would be continued but also concerned the efforts might wane in time. We are very pleased to announce that, after nearly five years, the dramatic improvement has not only been sustained, but has also been bolstered and fine tuned like a well-oiled machine. This is a remarkable achievement we must not allow to subside.

The safety we now enjoy on Halsted Street is the

I know, we all know, the horrors our community has been through for millennia. The 1950s when few of us dared use our real names if we were organizing or speaking out. People lost their jobs then and still could now in many jurisdictions in this country. We all know how in the 1980s the administration laughed at us and let us die.

Did that stop us from fighting? No.

The African-American community? Remember, from Dred Scott in the 1850s to Brown vs. Board of Education in the 1950s, they lost most if not all of their court fights; including the infamous *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that declared separate was equal.

A century or more of Jim Crow, did those years of horror stop the African-American community? No.

The horrors of a Holocaust are imprinted, or should be imprinted, on all of our memories. Should those memories stop us now or galvanize us? I chose galvanize.

Did any of us expect the current horror of taking children away from parents and putting them in camps? Maybe not in the specific, but are these people capable of such horrors and far worse? Of course.

Are things awful? Yes. Could they get worse? Yes.

So, do we sit and wallow in despair or do we fight?

In the book *The Fellowship of the Ring* this bit of dialogue takes place as Frodo faces the horror of what is happening and what is to come.

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf. "And so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

I agree with this.

In my life I've been fighting since I was a teenager. I marched in the 1960s for Civil Rights and against the War. I worked on political campaigns. Then kept working for all these decades: LGBTQ groups, unions, writers' organizations, on and on.

best we have seen in 14 years, in our opinion. This was not accomplished by only one person or group of people, but by the coordination of many groups/persons working together to make this happen. Cooperation, mutual respect and communication are key. This is what makes a neighborhood a real community and a great place to live safely. We would like to thank the following for their contributions to this achievement:

1) The Chicago Police Department is a responsive, "in-touch" and efficient organization that works not only harder but smarter. Captain Kane and Sergeant Levine regularly can be seen together and with other officers on their bikes not only along Halsted, but also the alleys and down side streets. This is very effective as it keeps the criminals off balance as they never know when a posse of police will silently come around the corner and see them. Also the police presence in many squad cars is very important. The results have been truly remarkable.

2) The NorthHalsted Merchants Association for paying the cost of enhanced security who work with

Did we lose a lot? Yes. Did we win a bunch? Yes. Was it perfect? No. That didn't mean we stopped fighting.

And it's the same with the political situation now. I'm talking about the fight and never giving up.

Did we win some big ones? Sure. Nixon left in the middle of Watergate. Mandela went on to become President of South Africa. The Berlin wall fell peacefully. We won in court on marriage equality. Who among us could have predicted those would happen?

Crying, "It's too late, it's hopeless, all we have left is despair," strikes me as pointless. Despair strikes me as a luxury. Giving up and what? Crawling into a hole while the world collapses around us? That's not my style.

So as always, it's back to the fight. It has always been thus. I suspect long after I'm gone, it will continue to be so. Because we/I have not triumphed in vast glory with our side in wild cheering enthusiasm at final victories, I'm going to surrender now? No.

I'm here to suggest that the real triumphs lie in knowing we are doing the right thing, the very best we can. That we are trying to make the world a better place for others and ourselves.

I call it militant kindness. And we've got to be far better organized than they are.

Yes, they're going to continue to throw nonsense at us. They always do. And they will lie and continue to do so. That will not stop me.

And they'll tell us to be civil as they perpetrate atrocities. That will not stop me.

What do we do? We get up and fight again the next day. We can. We must. To be true to ourselves and to make the world a better place, do we really have a choice?

I don't.

Sometimes it is as simple and as powerful as voting.

So, yes, we continue to march, and fight, and confront them peacefully at restaurants and every chance we get, and vote in November.

the police to keep us all safe. We thank Ramesh, Chad, Stu, Eric, Dusty and others.

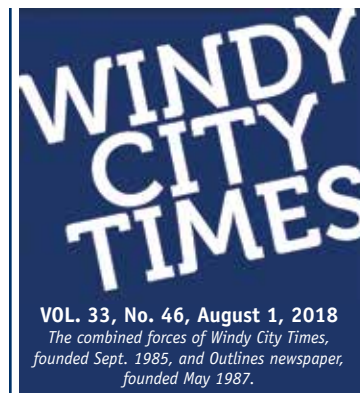
3) The bar/club owners/managers/staff do their part by working with the above mentioned organizations to stop crime by keeping watch and communicating with police/enhanced security when needed.

4) The enhanced security paid for by the NorthHalsted Merchants Association are top notch and highly professional/highly motivated. They do a great job.

5) Ald. Tom Tunney and Ald. James Cappleman for their efforts are thanked, especially for the addition of a special "entertainment district" unit and officers. This team dedicated only to Halsted street has greatly increased police visibility.

Together, the above groups and individuals have accomplished something that could not have been done alone.

As citizens/residents, we all have a role to play as well. As neighborhood watchers, we have seen how so few victims are willing to file a police report and



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That's 'Wife'

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WCT reviews *The Hero's Wife*.

Photo of Alex Fisher by Anthony Aicardi

THEATER

Latinx theater artists, front and center: The ALTA Awards

BY AMELIA OROZCO

If art critics can sense pain and joy from the drips of a Jackson Pollock and can feel anguish and bliss from the blunt strokes of a Picasso, then surely theater critics can grasp the intended message in a 90-minute play. But Latinx artists say that is not always the case, and that their work is often reviewed through a critical but uninformed lens.

In response to the problem, Chicago's Latinx artists are taking control of their own critical narratives: The Alliance of Latinx Theater Artists of Chicago (ALTA) will hold the First Annual ALTA Awards, taking place on October 8, 2018 at Victory Gardens.

No longer waiting to be recognized

"The awards are intentionally for and by Latinx people," said actor and ALTA membership director Hannah Gomez (she/her/hers). "Historically, Latinx artists and companies have been neglected, ignored, or misunderstood by the majority of publications, awarding bodies, and theater institutions; these awards seek to shift the balance of power in the pursuit of equity.

"ALTA has always been dedicated to giving the Latinx talent in Chicago more tools to succeed in this exceedingly harsh and biased industry," she said.

Gomez isn't waiting for change to take hold on its own. "We are no longer waiting to be recognized," she said.

Lauding artists invisible at the Jeffs

Currently, the Chicago's theater awards behemoth is the 50-year-old Jeff Committee. Since its founding in 1968, Jeff Committee membership has skewed predominantly white and older. Chicago's Black Theater Alliance Awards are in their 20th year or recognizing Black Excellence in theater. Other awards organizations—the Orgies, TimeOut's Chicago Theater Awards—have come and gone over the years.

The inaugural ALTA Awards will be hosted by Steppenwolf Ensemble member and Northwestern University theater professor Sandra Marquez, an acclaimed veteran of Chicago theater also known for her television roles in *Empire*, *Chicago Med*, *Boss* and *Chicago Justice*, among others. 16th Street Theatre Artistic Associate Miguel Nunez will co-host the awards with Marquez.

Some of the ALTA award categories don't even exist to the Jeff Awards—these include Art as Activism, Stage Management and Casting Direction. Other ALTA categories are Outstanding Play, Musical, Director of a Play, Fight Choreography, Costume Design and Sound Design. Any Latinx-identified theater maker or creator in Chicagoland can be nominated whether they are ALTA members or not.

ALTA has been garnering nominations from the public for months. The final list of nominees will be announced in coming weeks.

Seeing the whale and 'willfully' missing the point

You don't have to look far to find examples of Gomez' assertion that Latinx works can be misunderstood by mainstream critics. Take, for example, some of the critical reactions to Kristiana Rae Colon's *Tilikum*, which closed July 29 at the Victory Gardens.

ALTA member Lucas Garcia (they/them/theirs) points to the Chicago Tribune's review of *Tilikum*, which surmised the piece was about a captive orca and made no mention of Colon's driving metaphor (which was literally spelled out in the program): *Tilikum*'s story was a commentary on the impact of mass incarceration of Black men and the legacy of slavery. To Garcia, the Trib's failure to note Colon's overarching metaphor "seemed almost willfully done."

"When you work so hard to put (a show) together and a professional theater critic misconstrues the message, it can be confusing. When the fog of confusion lifts, frustration sets in,"

they said.

When critics dismiss or misinterpret Latinx works, the impact is real. Gomez and Garcia point out that negative or uninformed press can help marginalize the work—leading to a lack of recognition for its creators, writers, producers, stage managers and its actors.

Critics, Gomez added, impact both theatergoers and theater artists. While the ALTA awards can help diminish that impact, Garcia hopes for a time when Latinx works are truly, consistently "seen," and when—instead of dismissing work—reviewers provoke a conversation that continues long after the curtains have closed.

Breaking institutional barriers

When Garcia moved to Chicago from New Mexico, they found ALTA a "godsend." Garcia came here with no connections—after contacting ALTA, they found themselves among 240 other artists with a passion for Latinx work.

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ALTA Awards co-hosts Miguel Nunez and Sandra Marquez. PR photos

THEATER REVIEW

Linda

Playwright: Penelope Skinner
At: Steep Theatre Company,
1115 W. Berwyn Ave.
Tickets: \$27-\$38; SteepTheatre.com;
773-649-3186
Runs through: Aug. 18

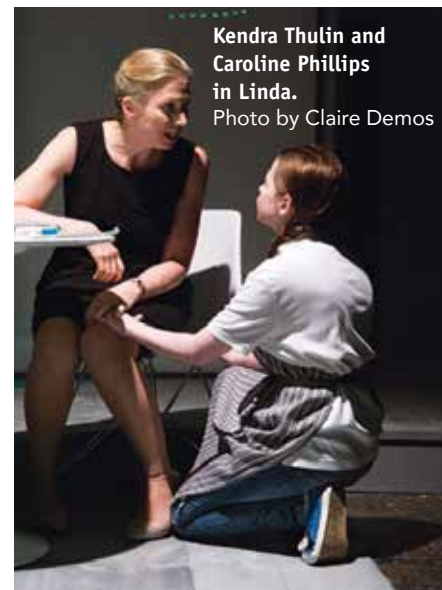
BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's a starring role for an AARP-eligible actress in Penelope Skinner's 2015 play, currently making its regional premiere at Steep Theatre, but only if a female artist of sufficient stature can be found whom audiences will welcome in a role harkening to sexist stereotypes dating back nearly a century.

Our heroine is Swan Cosmetics senior executive Linda Wilde, whose "True Beauty" marketing campaign targeting the over-fifty demographic

has earned millions for her employers and now spurs her to freely boast of her happiness at being, herself, 55 years old. So unwavering is her faith in this manifesto that, despite the savvy presumably accumulated by successful self-made careerists, she remains oblivious to warning signs of discontent encroaching on her privileged status. These include a pop-musician husband who hides behind his laptop screen, a reclusive adult daughter who swaddles herself in a skunk-costume jumpsuit and a teen stepdaughter rehearsing a gender-nonconforming monologue for her theater academy audition. Let's not forget, either, the workplace threat posed by an ambitious (and significantly younger) subordinate and a foofy old boss who professes to "know a few things about women."

Linda isn't the first mortal undone by illusions of invincibility, but the very accomplishments bestowed on her by author Skinner serve to undermine her claim to be an innocent victim of ageism. We cannot help but wonder why someone



THEATER REVIEW

The Hero's Wife

Playwright: Aline Lathrop
At: 16th Street Theatre, 6420 16th St., Berwyn
Ticket: \$22; <http://16thstreettheater.org>
Runs through: Aug. 18

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

There's no lack of plays exploring the fallout of war—particularly that on veterans haunted by PTSD. With *The Hero's Wife*, playwright Aline Lathrop tells one such story with brutal impact.

The 85-minute two-hander forces the audience to contemplate the price of heroism, and the intersection of heroism and barbarity. Regarding the story of Cam and Karyssa, Lathrop also asks the audience to ponder the culpability of war heroes who return home only to put their loved ones in peril.

When he is awake, former Navy SEAL Cam (Aaron Christensen) is deeply in love with Karyssa (Alex

Fisher). Their passion borders on obsession, their mutual devotion shrouding the air like a thick fog that almost chokes out the outside world. But as Cam's increasingly disturbing nightmares make clear, something poisonous is slithering through this love story. Cam isn't the same man he was before deploying for special ops duty in Iraq. The plot centers on Karyssa's struggle to understand (and survive) the changes in the man she loves.

Directed by Ann Filmer and Miguel Nunez, the tension on stage tightens like a vise as each scene flows to the next. That tension is amplified exponentially by the breathtaking intimacy and violence design (by Victor Bayona and Rick Gilbert, of R&D Choreography). At one point, Cam twines himself around Karyssa's limbs to create an impossibly intricate yoga pose. Fisher and Christensen make it look effortless, while also radiating that love that inextricably binds them. That kind of sublime closeness makes the violent side side of their relationship all the more vivid. When Cam puts Karyssa in a chokehold and delivers a closed-fist punch to the face, it's realistic

enough to make you gasp.

Christensen and Fisher make it clear that there's denial and fear on both sides. When in the throes of a nightmare, Cam screams in Arabic. He beats Karyssa until her skin is livid with sunsets of bruises. He remembers nothing in the morning. Or does he? When Karyssa confronts Cam with a partial recounting (she leaves out the beatings) of what transpires in his sleep, he's not entirely surprised. There are things, he says ominously, that she must never see or hear. She must leave the room during his nightmares. If he ever harms her, she must shoot him.

Christensen makes Cam's vulnerability and destructive machismo readily apparent. The only thing that excites him more than Karyssa is popping off automatic rounds in a forest preserve and destroying entire civilizations in video games. He sees PTSD as a disease of the weak and therapy a tool for fools.

As Karyssa, Fisher is believably in love and in denial. She's certain she can handle Cam on her own, going so far as learn Arabic so she can ask

with this much to lose would consent to quickie sex with a capricious young desk-jockey—in the office storeroom, yet—and then allow him to photograph it on his smartphone. Has this parent learned nothing about social media from her daughter's crippling depression after an on-line betrayal in high school, a mere ten years earlier?

So what does it mean when women of all ages are doomed to failure and dissatisfaction, when men are portrayed as fantasy objects enslaved by their hormones and even conniving bitches protest the price of eternal vigilance? Steep Theatre director Robin Witt and a cast led by Kendra Thulin strive valiantly to put a feminist spin on the familiar powerful-women-behaving-badly tropes, but if it's true—as Janis Joplin lamented in "Women Is Losers"—that "men always seem to end up on top," Skinner makes an unintentional case for women ensuring their own place on the bottom.

him questions while the nightmares have hold. That's the weak part of the plot—it's tough to imagine someone as smart, tough and loving as Karyssa would jeopardize her life for months. Her repeated attempts to confront Cam alone, in the wee hours of the night, never seem entirely plausible. Sure, she urges him to go to therapy. But when he resists, she doesn't insist. As written, Karyssa seems more likely to move out than she is to take on Cam's violence all by herself.

That aside, *The Hero's Wife* is directed to skin-prickling impact. It's fascinating and frightening and difficult to turn away from, even when you realize that Cam and Karyssa are hurtling toward a potentially violent end that neither is equipped to stop.

CRITICS' PICKS

New China Festival, Silk Road Rising. Aug 4-18. The three-week fest features three staged readings, beginning Aug. 4 with Ruoxin Xu's *Speaking As Then*, a family drama set in China on (Chinese) New Year's Eve. Week two is Gao Xingjian's *Dialogue & Rebuttal* (Aug. 11-12). Closing weekend brings Stan Lai's *Sand on a Distant Star* (Aug. 18-19). Tickets are super-cheap (\$10 each!), so get there! CES

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, Red Theater Chicago at the South Shore Cultural Center, Aug. 7-10. Red Theater's Jeff award-winning production of Kristoffer Diaz' scathing social commentary on the contradictory world of pro wrestling returns to the ring for five performances only. MSB

Everybody, Brown Paper Box Company at the Pride Arts Buena, through Aug. 12. Branden Jacobs-Jenkins deconstructs 1495's hit *Mortality Play* to answer the question of what, in our increasingly complex race/gender-inclusive universe, we can take with us into the afterlife. MSB

—By Barnidge and Sullivan

THEATER REVIEW

Leave Me Alone

Playwright: Paul Michael Thomson
At: The Heartland Studio,
7016 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: \$15; TheStoryTheatre.org
Runs through: Aug. 12

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

A current of excitement ran through Heartland Studio on *Leave Me Alone's* opening night.

This world premiere is the inaugural production of The Story Theatre, a company whose mission is "to pose questions, rather than supply answers." Playwright Paul Michael Thomson is a founding member, as well as a produced playwright and Chicago actor. His contemporary take on Chekhov's *Ivanov* poses fascinating questions about mental health, queer identity and modern politics. If only Thomson had taken

those questions one step further, and not relied on passion to see him through.

The program supplies Ivanov's plot summary, but it's unnecessary to anyone with a passing familiarity with Chekhov's work. There's debt. Heartbreak. Dissatisfaction with life in general. And vodka. In *Leave Me Alone*, Nik Ivanov (Sean Gallagher) is a state representative up for reelection, stuck in an unhappy marriage to Anna (Brenna Walsh), whose Mormon family disowned her. Nik can't leave her because she's dying: in the original play, of tuberculosis, and in this adaptation, of an unnamed disease. Not only is Nik deeply in debt, but he's interested in his lender's 20-year-old son (Jordan Dell Harris)—very interested.

Thomson and I both love Chekhov's gallows humor, reliable archetypes and deep philosophies behind everyday mundanity. *Leave Me Alone* is Thomson's baby, and it shows in every gentle music cue, stolen kiss and hidden gun that will inevitably fire. Thomson and director

Matt Bowdren take Nik's emotional struggles seriously, even including resources for suicide prevention on the back of the program. Thomson's intelligent writing is on full display in one-on-one scenes between Anna and her compassionate doctor (Ayanna Briá Bakari), as well as Nik and his secret lover. Thoughtful Chekhovian details abound.

Sadly, these strengths can't overcome the play's considerable weaknesses. Nik's uncle-in-law (Michael Kingston) is a bombastic baby-boomer stereotype who's so over-the-top, he's distracting. Also, for a play whose tagline is "like ... Ivanov, but gayer," Nik's journey as a closeted queer man feels remarkably flat, only fully present in his scenes with his lover. Instead of Chekhov's famous character asides, Thomson uses quotes about love and death delivered to the audience, which completely detract from the story. *Leave Me Alone* has many true moments, but feels like a second draft—almost but not quite ready for prime time.



Samuel Martin
and Chris Taylor in
Defacing Michael
Jackson.
Photo by Emily
Schwartz

THEATER REVIEW

Defacing Michael Jackson

Playwright: Aurin Squire

At: Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 773-327-5252;

Stage773.com; \$40

Runs through: Aug. 12

BY KERRY REID

When Michael Jackson's album *Thriller* came out in 1982, it became a cultural touchstone. When Jackson died in 2009 after years of tabloid gossip and accusations of sexual abuse (he was acquitted in court), it was the *Thriller*-era Michael—who dominated MTV and reimagined the music video with the title track—many chose to remember.

That Michael is also at the heart of Aurin Squire's *Defacing Michael Jackson*, in which a group of Black kids in Opa-locka, Florida (Squire's hometown), form a Michael Jackson fan club in 1984. This mostly consists of going to the home of Obadiah (or "Obie"), the only one whose family has a VCR, and watching the *Thriller* video several times a week. When a white kid moves into the neighborhood who also loves Jackson—and whose father has the means to help the club realize its dream of putting up a public mural of the superstar—it sets in play a series of shifting loyalties and confrontations. Crossover appeal can't serve as a cure-all for white privilege.

Squire's play started out as a one-act, and the grimmer second act in this Flying Elephant Pro-

ductions staging by Alexis J. Roston feels like it loses some steam by the end. But the four members of the cast—especially Christopher Taylor as Obie and Jory (JoJo) Pender as Frenchy, the president of the fan club—do lovely work embodying much younger people who are on the cusp of figuring out who they really are, for better or worse.

From Obie's initial praise of 1984 as "the year of the eternal future," the foursome deals with sexual awakening, class envy, colorism (relatively privileged Obie is described as "high yellow," while Frenchy's darker complexion earns her abuse) and other thorny issues. Not all of these get the attention they arguably deserve—particularly what's going on with Jack (Sam Martin), the white kid in the group. (His real name is Wesley, but the others rename him, a la "Cracker Jack.") He carries damage from his father, including the poison of racist ideas.

There's also the casual cruelty the kids show toward club members Red and Yellow—twins cunningly played by Eldridge Shannon III with just a shift in headgear. The latter is a delinquent and the former is called "retarded" because he stutters.

As the mural takes shape over the course of the show, it's clear that it can't cover up the growing problems in a town that, by 2004, had the highest violent crime rate of any U.S. city. The hope that Jackson's success represents for the kids will soon be overshadowed by AIDS and crack and the ceaseless grind of racial oppression. But Squire also reminds us of the sheer joy amid the heartbreaks of finding—for one brief point in time—people who love what you love and want to rock with you.

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PHOTO: Todd Rosenberg/Alice Klock

SPOTLIGHT

At the Drury Lane, the stage is steaming with Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*—a torrid tale of a closeted gay man mourning the death of his beloved while his wife smolders with frustration. Director Marcia Milgrom Dodge's arsenal includes a killer cast (Matt DeCaro as Big Daddy, the patriarch of a deeply damaged Southern family; Anthony Bowden as his tormented son Brick and Genevieve Angelson as Maggie the Cat, Brick's sexually relentless wife). The Deep South drama is heightened by the haunting, atmospheric vocals of Donita



Lynn. All through, it's a sizzler. It runs through Aug. 26 at Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace. \$43- \$58. DruryLaneTheatre.com.

Caption: Photo by Brett Beiner Photography

Gavin Lawrence (left) and Jim DeVita in the American Players Theatre's *Blood Knot*.
Photo courtesy of the venue



American Players Theatre: World-class theater in Wisconsin

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Spring Green, Wisconsin—American Players Theatre celebrates its 40th anniversary next year. It's among North America's best destination theaters, set in the truly bucolic rolling hills of southeast Wisconsin, and it's an easy three-and-a-half-hour drive away. Even so, American Players Theatre remains undiscovered by many astute Chicago theatergoers who boast about visiting Canada's Stratford and Shaw festivals. I'm here to tell you folks: Go (relatively) local!

Located 40 miles due west of Madison, American Players Theatre (APT) is set on a hill near the south bank of the Wisconsin River, about one mile from Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Taliesin estate and artists' colony. You'll keep company with wild turkey, deer, chipmunks, hummingbirds and maybe a genuine Wisconsin badger. (I spotted one recently.)

Spring Green itself is two miles away across the river. With fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, it still has true small-town charm unlike the too-crowded bustle of Stratford or the picture-postcard look of Niagara-on-the-Lake (home, respectively, to the Stratford and Shaw festivals). Downtown Spring Green has no parking meters and only one stoplight, but it does have several farm-to-table restaurants, a first-class bookstore (Arcadia), a couple of decent bar-and-grill joints (The Shed, Freddy Valentine's) and two old-fashioned general merchandise stores (Nina's and Spring Green General Store).

The 2018 APT season offers nine productions in rotating repertory, presented in the 1,089-seat outdoor Up-the-Hill Theatre and the indoor, air-conditioned, 201-seat Touchstone Theatre (where performances continue through mid-November). Matinees are only on weekends (Friday-Sunday),

so visitors have days free to check out the Frank Lloyd Wright architecture; enjoy the wide, shallow and warm Wisconsin River (canoe, tube, fish and/or swim); or visit local artists and artisans or nearby Tower Hill State Park.

APT has a resident core company of 13 actors, some of whom have been with APT for over 20 years. Other actors are brought in each season, as well as guest directors, designers, composers, etc., although many have returned to APT time and time again. Several core company actors have worked in Chicago during the winter, while Chicago directors and designers frequently are found at APT (among them, designers Kevin Depinet and Jesse Klug and composers Joe Cerqua, Victoria DeIorio and Andrew Hansen).

Outdoors at the Up-the-Hill Theatre

James Bohnen, founder of Chicago's Remy Bumppo Theatre and owner of Spring Green's Arcadia Books, has directed a sparkling *As You Like It* (through Oct. 7) which breathes fresh energy—especially comic energy—into the familiar classic and features a female Jaques. (“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”) The stage is open at the back so the real Wisconsin woods represent the play's Arden Forest locale. Bohnen sets it in the 1870s, a good excuse for gorgeous patterned costumes featuring buttons, bows and bustles, and for elaborate hair pieces and moustaches.

Another Chicago director, William Brown, has conquered George Farquhar's 18th-century comedy, *The Recruiting Officer* (through Sept. 29), a witty take on social and sexual mores of the early 1700s, and once the most popular play in the English language. Like the play itself, Brown's production is thoughtful and robust, although the women seem far worthier than the men. At

least the hero, Captain Plume (Nathan Burger, who will be at Writers Theatre in the fall), proves to be less a bounder than he pretends to be. This production, too, is handsome and elaborate in its costumes and props.

APT artistic director Brenda DeVita has staged Garson Kanin's familiar 1946 *Born Yesterday* (through Sept. 22), a political comedy that's liberal and democratic in a general sort-of way. But who'd a thunk it still would have immediate relevance? Up in Wisconsin—the red state that handed Trump his Presidency—the audience burst into spontaneous applause at two lines: “Sometimes selfishness gets to be an organized force, even a government, and then it's called fascism,” followed moments later by “A world full of ignorant people is too dangerous to live in.” Theater still engages people and triggers reactions. No wonder authoritarian governments fear it . . . and Trump knows he's not welcome at the

LATINX from page 17

ALTA members access to “free resources, whether you have formal training or not,” said Gomez. Those resources include access to a database of Latinx artists, discounted theater tickets, networking and professional development events and free advertising on ALTA's website. There are no dues to join ALTA. The group's big-picture goal: Breaking down institutional barriers that can marginalize work by Latinx artists.

The all-volunteer ALTA organization was co-founded in 2010 by Tanya Saracho, once a Chicago playwright (*Enfrescada*, *Fade*) and now a showrunner in Los Angeles heading up Starz' acclaimed *Vida* and writing for programs including

annual Kennedy Center Honors for the performing arts. You'll enjoy Colleen Madden's dumb-blonde Billie Dawn.

Indoors at the Touchstone Theatre

Chicago-based director Ron OJ Parsons has staged Athol Fugard's 1961 drama, *Blood Knot*, (through Sept. 28). This very powerful two-man play concerns Black half-brothers in South Africa at the height of apartheid—with one brother light-skinned enough to pass for white. They live together in a shack in a Black township. Traditionally, the light-skinned brother has been played by a white actor (Fugard himself originated the role), and so it is at APT, with Jim DeVita and Gavin Lawrence providing tour-de-force performances, filled with nuance, humor, rivalry and intense caring. It makes clear the social disaster, injustice and human pain of Apartheid although it isn't specifically about that terrible system.

Finally, I saw an extremely engaging production of Eugene Ionesco's absurdist comedy *Exit the King*, (through Sept. 27) about a long-reigning monarch who confronts his imminent death with denial, hubris and half-madness. Veteran core company actor James Ridge is agile, feral, peremptory, absurd and—ultimately—all too aware of his impending farewell in a dazzling acting display, capably supported by a wry and dry cast. Tim Ocel directed.

Spring Green offers accommodations at several motels (Spring Valley Inn is the best), country B&Bs and one full-service resort, the House on the Rock Resort. It's pricier than other accommodations (although reasonable by big city standards) but sports a gorgeous, undulating 27-hole golf course, outdoor and indoor pools, tennis courts, racquetball, a good fitness center, free parking and enormous two-room suites (some with extra sofa beds) with views. A free shuttle takes guests on the five-minute drive to/from APT.

Warnings: Wisconsin nights can be chilly (bring a jacket/sweatshirt) and the woods have mosquitoes, for which APT supplies complimentary bug spray. Also: AT&T mobile doesn't work in Spring Green.

Upcoming productions include George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House* (Aug. 3-Oct. 5), *Measure for Measure* (Aug. 10-Oct. 6), *Our Country's Good* (Aug. 15-Oct. 7) and *Engaging Shaw* (Oct. 25-Nov. 18). For more information, go to AmericanPlayers.org.

How to Get Away With Murder. ALTA's co-founder is actor/director Ricardo Gutierrez, the Executive Artistic Director of Teatro Vista who is known for his work with *Nosotros*, an organization that supports Latino entertainment artists in the Los Angeles area, and The Canterbury Theatre in Indiana.

“ALTA is a landing place, a way to face geographic and economic challenges that may keep Latinx artists from forming a coherent group,” Garcia said. The awards, they added, will hopefully help address those challenges.

For more information on ALTA membership, events, the ALTA Awards and other resources, visit ALTACHicago.org.

Berwyn arts initiative, out alderwoman celebrate new mural

On July 26, the Berwyn Public Arts Initiative (BPAI) unveiled the latest in its series of public murals—this one commissioned from internationally acclaimed muralist Merlot for the downtown Depot District in out Berwyn Ald. Jeanine Reardon's Third Ward.

In collaboration with Berwyn Arts and Music (BAM), the BPAI is commissioning public art works throughout the city, with the goal of creating community, celebrating the power of art and revitalizing Berwyn's business districts. The newest piece at O'Brien the Cleaner Inc., a 50-year-old family-owned business at 6915 W. Stanley Ave.

Reardon—who is married to Berwyn Unity Lutheran pastor Julie Boleyn and moved to Berwyn about a decade ago—was among those who spoke at the dedication, addressing the power of public art and Berwyn's welcoming atmosphere. "I moved here because my wife was hired to be a pastor here. It was a huge deal, because it wasn't a huge deal. People just accepted us," Reardon

said.

While BPAI leader Norman Alexandroff (who spearheaded efforts to create Chicago's Wabash Arts Corridor) and the BPAI board are commissioning art in public spaces throughout Berwyn, Reardon has donated her city council expense account to creating public art at a neglected train underpass on Oak Park Avenue.

BPAI's leadership includes Alexandroff, Rob Kowalski, Berwyn Development Corporation Board Member/Dwellings Real Estate owner/skydiving enthusiast Melissa Kowalski; School District 100 Board Member/Solace Divorce Mediation owner Jen Mitchell; and BAM Founder and Outta Space owner Aaron Mitchell.

In addition to Berwyn, Merlot's art can be found in Hong Kong, Denmark, Chicago and Bloomingdale.

For more info about the BPAI, visit BerwynPublicArtsInitiative.org.

Photos and text by Catey Sullivan



Berwyn Historical Society board member Thomas Stebbins and his husband, Second Ward Ald. Jose Ramirez; Berwyn Development Corporation Executive Director Dave Hulseberg, Third Ward Ald. Jeanine Reardon and out District 100 School Board member Julia McAleer-Forte.

Photo by Catey Sullivan



Backed by members of the Berwyn Public Arts Initiative, Third Ward Ald. Jeanine Reardon addresses the crowd.

Photo by Catey Sullivan



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COMEDY

Sampson McCormick returning to Chicago

BY ASHLEY COLLINS

Sampson McCormick will be returning to Chicago this week to perform his trademark stand-up for fans.

McCormick started his career in Washington, D.C., where he said his first stand-up set was in third grade. "I've always been creative, I've always loved characters, I genuinely love people and I love looking at people and telling those stories," he told Windy City Times during a recent telephone interview.

McCormick already began his career in comedy even before he graduated from Maryland's Bowie State University, where he studied broadcast journalism, theater, drama/cultural media and public relations.

He has been involved in theater and the arts, as he continued to perform his craft some of his home performances were in coffee shops and gas stations. As one of the first African-American, openly gay male comics, McCormick has made appearances at the White House, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Broadway, The Comedy Store in Hollywood and other venues.

McCormick's comedy has tackled serious matters, including race, politics, homophobia in the church and more.

And he has certainly faced many challenges—but McCormick said he's on a mission. "I want to be able to see more of my story on the screen and when those little gay boys and girls come up behind me 10-20 years from now, I don't want them to go through what I've been through in this business," he said.

"I think being a Black gay man in comedy has definitely been one of the biggest sociology experiences I've ever had," said McCormick, who believes that "comedy" is one of the last authentic forms of communication left.

Now living in Los Angeles, McCormick continues to work on comic stand-ups and many other projects.

"It's different from singing, it's different from going out to see theater, it's different from going out to see a movie. Hopefully, there are enough young people who respect the craft enough to keep coming out and realize that it's still an art form," McCormick said.

He added that he doesn't see himself going into any other career path any time soon. In 2013, McCormick's comedy album *That B*@&! Better Be Funny* independently sold more than 7,000 copies, and first went viral on the internet. The album was later a finalist for a Grammy nomination in 2014. McCormick said that it was one of the best times during his career.

"That whole era, that whole part of my career, that whole time was just wonderful because it was another thing that whole lot of people had told me that I could not do," McCormick said.

McCormick said that, when he performs, he just doesn't show up to be a comedian—but he's al-



Sampson McCormick.
PR photo by Don Harris

ways showing up to make a statement and being a part of the LGBTQ community has taken a lot of tenacity.

"Comedy is my baby—that's my heart," he said. "I dream about comedy and in my dreams, I'm working out jokes and they say, 'Whatever you wake up thinking about every morning, that's what you're supposed to be doing.'"

Since his last performance in Chicago two years ago, McCormick said that Chicago is still one of his favorite places to visit and perform stand-up.

"Chicago is a great city," McCormick said. "There's so much history there and I really look forward to being there. I try to visit museums and different places and there are wonderful people that come out.

McCormick said his Chicago fans come in a good mood and ready to have a good time and they play some good music.

"It's a vibe and I like what we do," McCormick said.

McCormick is performing Thursday, Aug. 2, at 7 p.m. at the Bru Chicago Cafe, 1562 N. Milwaukee Ave. See <https://www.sampson-comedy.com/>.

Gay plays part of ConFest 2018

The Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists (CAATA)—dedicated to advancing the field of Asian-American theater—has announced that Chicago will host the Sixth National Asian American Theater Conference and Festival (ConFest) Aug. 13-18.

At least two of the productions included this year employ queer themes and/or companies.

Pillowtalk (which Brooklyn company Kyoung's Pacific Beat is presenting Aug. 17-18 at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave.) brings to life one night in the lives of Sam and Buck, a recently married interracial couple. Ya-Ku-Za (from Austin company GenEnCo, and which is running Aug. 16-17 at Victory Gardens) follows an ambitious young assassin's bid to become the first female member of the infamous Japanese crime syndicate. GenEnCo is devoted to work from queer people of color.

Victory Gardens Theater, Silk Road Rising and the DePaul University School of Theater are hosting ConFest.

See CAATA.net for tickets and passes.

NU teaming with Royal Conservatoire

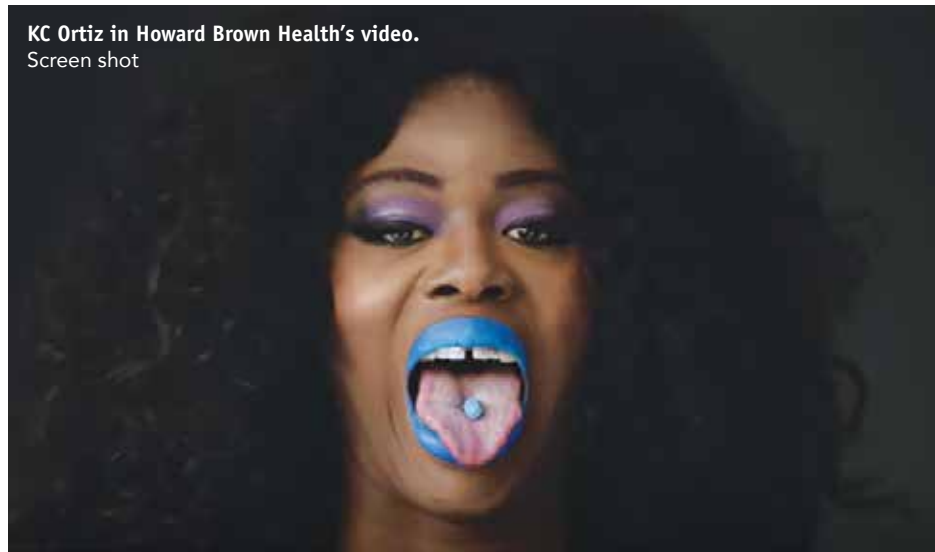
Students from Northwestern University's American Music Theatre Project (AMTP) will once again perform with students of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) in thematically linked musicals at Scotland's Edinburgh Festival Fringe Aug. 3-26. (The festival concludes Aug. 27.)

This year's collaborations—"Legacy: A Mother's Song" and "Legacy: The Book of Names"—will explore how cultural heritage travels and evolves over distance and time.

American Music Theatre Project is a member of the Northwestern Arts Circle, which brings together film, humanities, literary arts, music, theater, dance and visual arts.

More info about Edinburgh Festival Fringe is at <https://rcsedfest.co.uk/>.

KC Ortiz in Howard Brown Health's video.
Screen shot



Howard Brown unveils PrEP song, video

Howard Brown Health has unveiled a new song and music video, "Let's Talk About PrEP," to continue raising the visibility of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in the fight against HIV.

Performed by Chicago-based rapper KC Ortiz and featuring Big Dipper as well as local in-

fluencers, the song is a cover of Salt-N-Pepa's classic hit "Let's Talk About Sex."

PrEP is a once-daily medication that has been proven to be highly effective in preventing HIV transmission. When taken as directed, and used in conjunction with other safer-sex practices, PrEP allows HIV-negative individuals to take control of their health and remain that way.

The music video is at youtube.com/watch?v=JFcCYcZQelo. For more info, visit HowardBrown.org.



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MOVIES

Directing team rules over 'McQueen'

BY JERRY NUNN

The legendary Lee Alexander McQueen is the subject of the new documentary *McQueen* opening in Chicago Aug. 3.

The movie examines the trouble life of the fashion designer from his early days at Givenchy to his untimely death in 2010. Although people may not know all the reasons behind the openly gay designer's suicide, many ideas are presented in 111 minutes.

Writer/director Peter Ettedgui and co-director/producer Ian Bonhote explore McQueen's legacy by interviewing friends and family while covering his rise to fame.

Windy City Times: How did you two start working on *McQueen* in the first place?

Ian Bonhote: I was approached to direct the film. We got together and Peter wrote the narrative structure of the film. It was an intense project when we started to make it. We realized quickly that we were making the film together so it made no sense to have different roles.

Peter Ettedgui: That is why we wanted to make the film. I think both separately and together we were both profoundly moved by his story. We saw it not as a fashion film, but really as a story about the human condition.

How does someone from the modest background of *McQueen* become a global superstar fashion designer by the age of 26? There is a mystery on why he decided to end it all at the peak of his power and ability.

For us as storytellers there was terrific material to pick from, understand and transmit to an audience.

WCT: What did you find when you explored his background?

IB: What we found out is that it wasn't one single thing that pushed him over the edge. I think it was a combination. His mother was such a rock and raised him. She made him believe in himself so her death was hard on him.

The other thing is that he had created a very successful business and he didn't want to let it go. At the same time he wasn't finding the happiness with it because of the demands of the work and running the business. It was constantly too much.

PE: There was also a slow burning childhood trauma that conditioned his ability to form relationships and trust people. It was exacerbated by the isolation and loneliness that came with fame and celebrity.

Some people want one answer like a rosebud that tells them why he decided to end it all. We looked at it like a cocktail of aspects of his life.

IB: There were many reasons.

WCT: It seemed like his love life was very complicated, also.



IB: People say Lee was a romantic and he never found the right love. He had very strong relationships throughout his life, you are right. [Toward] the end of his life, there were loads of romantic flings, but nothing that anchored him.

I don't believe it was the only aspect, but I do believe a person's love life can stabilize someone.

WCT: Were there sections that didn't make it into the documentary that you wish were still in it?

PE: You have to be ruthless and lose your darlings in order to tell the story that you really want to tell.

IB: An ocean of information was available.

PE: We felt we had a very strong emotional line, which meant that certain details about his practice and how he worked fell by the wayside. We had to balance all of the elements of the story so there might be some sensational things that hit the cutting room floor, such as the sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

If you hit those things one time too many, then suddenly your movie becomes about that.

For us it was about focusing on the most important thing and how do we do that. We don't feel regret about any particular moments though, maybe in the moment when we chucked it out, but not now.

IB: After seeing the audience reacting now when we are showing the film, I don't feel we are missing anything. Everyone is feeling a rainbow of emotions now.

Read the entire interview online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



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Whoopi Goldberg gears up for Ravinia

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Comic/actress/talk-show host/EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony) winner Whoopi Goldberg will be performing at the famed Highland Park venue Ravinia on Friday, Aug. 3—and when Windy City Times asked her what she'll discuss, Goldberg did not hesitate.

"Listen, Andrew, it's going to be about me—and getting old," she said. "Chest is falling, ass is expanding, can't pass gas without fear—because everyone else is going through it. You can't push out air because you don't know what else might come with it."

"It's not the days when we were the hottest things on the block," she continued. "Suddenly, we're discovering that not only that we have to move over, but that it's a brand-new world. Peo-

ple speak in ways that we never recognize—internet stuff and trying to keep up—and we're still trying to keep up because we look in the mirror and see someone who's 25, but we're not quite.

"We're the one generation having this issue. We come from a time when an adult said, 'Shut the fuck up,' you didn't question it. But we were also free, and people were able to be out and proud—so we have a lot of thought processes that we're trying to balance.

"Some of us are 60; I don't see that when I look in the mirror. I still see the hot, young thing—but come on! It's the shift, and trying to balance what you were with what you are—and who you are.

"I've got grandkids and great-grandkids, and I'm still a weedhead. So I don't say to anyone, 'Pull your pants up' because I remember people

Whoopi Goldberg.
Photo by
Timothy White



asking me, 'Is there more to that skirt?' And you suddenly discover you become them, and you've got to have a sense of people about kids, yourself and the world. There's a lot of really rough stuff

going on."

Goldberg also stated that she yearned for something from yesteryear: "I want to go back to paper ballots. You can't hack [one of those]. It's so easy to get information; people can stay in their houses now and rip you off, and steal from your bank account."

And she had a few choice words for those who are constantly on social media (another show topic): "Stop posting pictures of your fucking food—I don't care. I don't wanna know what you did last week. I don't want to know all of your stuff. It's not important to me—but it's important to you to impress people. And then you have to say to yourself, 'Why is [that] important?' We are better than people are telling us we are.

"[The show is] a good 65 minutes of being ridiculous and funny and silly and glad to be alive."

As many of WCT's readers know, Goldberg has been a longtime ally of the LGBT community. However, there was a clarification she made regarding a past quote that seemed to say that, at one point, the LGBT community was the only group to accept her. "I think what I was trying to explain to people that gay folks understood everything I was doing because I was up in San Francisco working for years. We all live the same life: We're all trying to make a living and be ourselves. Watching all of my friends—and then this insane sickness comes along and wipes out most of the creative community. Then you have people who stopped talking about [AIDS] and pretend like it wasn't there. That's why I said [LGBTs] are the audience I will always stand for—because they stood for me."

And WCT had to ask Goldberg one last question, and it was rooted in her love of Broadway. As much as she adores Broadway productions, has there ever been one that was so bad that she left in the middle of it? "No—I could never do that to the folks on the stage," she said. "I've been at those shows but I couldn't do it to someone else. Especially because you know my face. If I got up and left ... I couldn't do it—but I've wanted to." [Laughs]

Goldberg's performance at Ravinia will begin at 8 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 3; visit <https://www.ravinia.org>.

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 blues singer and pianist **Gladys Bentley** (1907–60), by artist Ingrid Skare. Bentley was a cross-dressing, butch lesbian performer especially popular in the 1920s and 1930s New York club scene. Sometimes backed by drag queens on stage, Bentley was known for her deep voice, raunchy lyrics and flirting with women in the audience. She once told *Ebony* magazine, "It seems I was born different. At least, I always thought I was." During her heyday, Chicago was among her touring stops. At one point she was forced to carry a permit that would allow her to perform in "men's" clothing. While openly lesbian early in her career, she later changed tunes and said she was "cured," possibly in response to the huge anti-gay backlash of the McCarthy era. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladys_Bentley.

OUTspoken! continues to shine, celebrates milestone at Sidetrack

BY ROSS FORMAN

OUTspoken!, the monthly LGBTQ Storytelling Night, kicks off its fifth year on Tuesday, Aug. 7, at Sidetrack—with seven people set to hit the stage for about 10 minutes each.

About 300 have told their story at OUTspoken! over the past four years at the popular event that attracts 120-plus loyal listeners every month.

“Everyone on the team is thrilled that this event has been as successful as it has been,” said Sidetrack general manager Brad Balof, who admitted to Windy City Times that OUTspoken! is one of his favorite Sidetrack events.

The milestone edition of OUTspoken! features storytellers Alexia Jasmine, Bill Demaree, Shandee Ewert, Brian Michalski, Timothy Rey, Douglas O’Keeffe, and Larry Dean Harris. Kim L. Hunt and Art Johnston serve as emcees. David Fink is the artistic director, with Moth Grand Slam winner Archy Jamjun curating the event.

“For the first few months [of OUTspoken!], we rented the chairs people sit on in main bar because we weren’t sure what to expect,” Balof said. “Our first month, Tracy Baim was one of the speakers and I remember her enlightening story about her history with LGBTQ media/press in Chicago. The second month, Angelica Ross was one of the speakers; now, she is a featured cast member on the FX series POSE.

“OUTspoken! now has a consistently full house, many return listeners. We also work in conjunction with the Legacy Project to showcase moments and anniversaries in LGBTQ history each month.”

Fink added, “It is wonderful how many distinct LGBTQ stories we have presented. Audiences are getting larger, yet the event still feels intimate. There was a buzz in the room [for the first-ever OUTspoken!] and people all knew they were experiencing the start of something special.”

So what’s the appeal of OUTspoken!?

Multiple reasons, Balof said. “Mostly, it is a chance to participate in a shared humanity through listening to the journeys of other people,” he said. “The stories are a brief and intimate look into someone else’s existence. At the end of the day, the experiences highlight the paradox that for as much as people are different from each other, in most ways, we are the same.”

Fink added, “People share emotional journeys and connect as humans, even if the storytellers look different and have different proclivities from

most of the audience.”

One of the most popular past storytelling sessions—for Balof and others—involved longtime advocate Cleve Jones.

The audience is always very attentive, warm and welcoming,” Balof said. “Many have told a story themselves, so they know that while there sometimes is nervousness, the crowd is there, on their side, supporting the strength of the speaker to tell their truth.”

Sidetrack opens back bar during OUTspoken!, so bargoers can watch the stories on TV in HD.

In 2016, OUTspoken! participated in the Creating Change conference in Chicago, and that was really fulfilling, Balof said: “Participating in Filet of Solo, [which is a] storytelling festival, was a great honor. Also, working with Sarah Alexander to bring OUTspoken! to a young adult program in conjunction with Chicago Public Libraries was awesome.”

Balof said Sidetrack is working to make the stories available for download in the future.

Fink said he’d like to see OUTspoken! expand beyond Sidetrack, such as, to colleges with LGBTQ clubs.

“Kim and Art are amazing hosts,” Balof said. “Their shared experience and history are a joy. Their compassion for the speakers, their reverence of the importance of community created by this type of event, and their encouragement of the audience makes each month’s event memorable.

“David really guides OUTspoken!. He is one of the creators, was the original curator, and now serves as the artistic director. David’s knowledge of storytelling, his history with theater and performance, and his positive attitude are great. Archy is a phenomenal storyteller and his love for the craft of storytelling help make him an awesome curator.”

Annually, OUTspoken! presents a night of storytelling from allies of the community—and such past storytellers have included Jennifer Ould and Laura Washington, among others.

Balof said his wish list for OUTspoken! storytellers includes Billy Porter, Alexandra Billings, Neil Patrick Harris and Rosie O’Donnell.

OUTspoken! is held the first Tuesday of every month at 7-9 p.m., with doors opening at 6 p.m. For more about Sidetrack’s OUTspoken!, visit [Facebook.com/pages/OUTspoken!-LGBTQ-Stories](https://www.facebook.com/pages/OUTspoken!-LGBTQ-Stories).



Art Johnston, Kim Hunt and David Fink of OUTspoken!

Photos by Jed Dulanias

‘Pioneers & Playboys’ Aug. 10

“Pioneers & Playboys: Gay FTM’s Then & Now” will take place Friday, Aug. 10, 7-9 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

This will be a trans-focused book reading with the author, co-editor and contributor of two new trans books: *Daring To Be A Man Among Men*, and *Trans Homo...Gasp! Gay FTM & Cis Men on Sex and Love*. Speakers will include “Daring” author Brice D. Smith, Ph.D.; “Trans Homo” co-editor Pete Bailey, MS OT; and “Trans Homo” local contributor Ishmael Dickinson.

This is a free event, and no RSVP is required. For more info, visit CenterOnHalsted.org/new-events-details.cfm?ID=15449.

More than 170 to represent Chicago in Gay Games 10

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

All Chicago-area participants are invited to join Team Chicago at the opening ceremonies.

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

The group stated, “Please join us at Andersonville Brewing Company, 5402 N. Clark St., July 2, 7-9 p.m. for a send-off party. Email SweetTeamChicago@gmail.com for questions about Team Chicago or to order your Team Chicago uniform.

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

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

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

All uniforms must be ordered by July 15.

For all Team Chicago updates see: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TeamChicagoAthletics/>.

HotHouse receives \$50K grant

The Center for International Performance and Exhibition, dba HotHouse, is the recipient of a two-year \$50,000 grant from The Reva and David Logan Foundation.

The award supports HotHouse’s programming for the 2018-19 season.

HotHouse has been involved in presenting multicultural and multidisciplinary partnerships and initiatives for more than three decades. The HotHouse board intends to announce its own Capital Campaign and plans for a new facility in 2019.

See HotHouse.net.



Gay Games 10 right around the corner— with 10,000 competing

BY ROSS FORMAN

The final tally for Gay Games 10, which runs Aug. 4-12 in Paris, is impressive: 10,317 participants from 91 countries, with 36 sports, 14 cultural events, and an academic conference.

About 170 from Chicago are participating.

No doubt Gay Games founder Dr. Tom Waddell would be smiling down on France, where the gay sports world goes for gold, anchored around the Games' long-standing principles: participation, inclusion and personal best.

The Gay Games launched in San Francisco in 1982, with 1,350 competitors from more than 170 cities worldwide. Waddell, who competed in the 1968 Summer Olympics, died in 1987—at age 49.

The quadrennial Gay Games have since been held in Vancouver, New York, Amsterdam, Sydney, Chicago, Cologne and Cleveland/Akron.

The 2022 Games will be held in Hong Kong.

The host city for the 2026 Games will be announced in 2021—with early candidates being Brisbane, Brighton and Hove (UK), and Tel Aviv.

"I hope the Gay Games continues to be strong. It has a really wonderful [and] important legacy, [so] I hope people will continue to support it," said Cyd Zeigler, co-founder of Outsports.com and one of the nation's top sportswriters on LGBT topics.

"Twenty years ago, the Gay Games was it, along with just a few [one-sport] events here and there. The Gay Games at the time was the ultimate destination for LGBTQ athletes. Today, that has changed—because there are so many events."

A case in point is the annual multi-sport Sin City Shootout, held every January in Las Vegas. The annual Gay Softball World Series continues to expand, as does the Gay Super Bowl. Chicago hosts the Pride Bowl flag football tournament every June, and it continues to grow.

The Amateur Sports Alliance of North America (ASANA), organizers of the 2018 ASANA Softball World Series, an all-women event set to be played Sept. 18-22 in New Orleans, announced a recent partnership with Cloud Sports Network (CSN), the first professional streaming service dedicated to amateur sports coverage, to broadcast tournament games live in a format accessible from any internet-connected device in the world.

"It's incredible, the access that LGBTQ adults have to play recreational sports," Zeigler said. "The growth of events has been a big change [in recent years]."

Growth among out athletes seemingly expands daily. There are near-daily coming-out stories of out athletes. Bradley Kim, a safety for the Air Force Academy football team, announced in late-July via social media that he is gay.

In June, the spotlight was on professional soccer player Collin Martin, who plays for Minnesota United. He announced he is gay on the same day

that his team held its Pride night, and when Martin got into a game after coming out, the home crowd at TCF Bank Stadium gave him a standing ovation.

"The sports world is accepting us, period," Zeigler said.

"[Martin's] biggest impact will be in the city of Minneapolis and the sport of soccer, as it is with all athletes. Their biggest impact will be in the city they play in and the sport they play."

Martin follows Robbie Rogers as out, active MLS players.

Rogers, in 2013, became the first openly gay man to compete in a top North American professional sports league. Rogers retired permanently last November after a series of injuries forced him to miss the entire 2017 season.

"MLS having two openly gay players says something about the state of soccer. You can't say it's difficult to be out in Major League Soccer," Zeigler said.

"The biggest impact anyone can have is to inspire courage in someone else to come out—in their private life or publicly. It could be a linebacker in, say, the Atlanta Falcons locker room who sees and reads Collin's story, and just connects with Collin's story. But, by and large, [Martin's] biggest impact will be in his city, in his sport."

Zeigler added, "The most important impact [coming-out has for an athlete] is, on their own life. We know that people are happier and more fulfilled when they are out and able to be who they are—with their friends and family, and that extends to their co-workers and teammates."

Zeigler's site, Outsports.com, has a simple tag line: Courage is Contagious. "We know that many athletes get their courage [to come out] from reading the stories of other out athletes," he said.

In late June, the third Outsports Pride was held around New York City Pride—and more than 150 athletes from across the rainbow attended.

"This was the most successful [Outsports Pride], not just because it was the most people attending. [But rather,] the atmosphere was so inclusive, so positive. It was the most diverse group of people we've had—with more women, more people of color, more transgender than ever before."

Outsports Pride annually attracts out high school athletes, college athletes, former pros, and some who have retired from the working-world.

"Outsports Pride is a physical manifestation of the website," Zeigler said. "The part [of the website] that we are most proud of is, the stories of real people who are coming-out in sports and finding overwhelming success and building community."

At the New York event, Zeigler told of a retired gay man. "He said [Outsports Pride] was the most



Outsports Pride 2018.

Photo by Reginald Louis-Jacques, courtesy of Vox Media

inclusive LGBTQ event he has been to in years, that it was the first time he walked into an LGBTQ space and didn't feel like he should be sitting by himself in the corner. People of all ages, all genders and all races said hello to him, greeted

him, asked who he was, where he's from and his connection to sports.

"People around sports are good people; they understand community and teamwork, and they understand being welcoming to people."

'Pioneers & Playboys' Aug. 10

"Pioneers & Playboys: Gay FTM's Then & Now" will take place Friday, Aug. 10, 7-9 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

This will be a trans-focused book reading with the author, co-editor and contributor of two new trans books: *Daring To Be A Man Among Men*, and *Trans Homo...Gasp! Gay FTM & Cis Men on Sex and Love*. Speakers will include "Daring" author Brice D. Smith, Ph.D.; "Trans Homo" co-editor Pete Bailey, MS OT; and "Trans Homo" local contributor Ishmael Dickinson.

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Drag reality show on YouTube in August

Camp Wannakiki is a new drag reality show airing on YouTube starting in August.

The premise is seeing which of eight drag queens can last the week at an actual summer camp and claim the crown "Queen of Camp." The creator/producer of the show is Hamburger Mary's owner Ashley Wright.

Contestants include O'laysia (Chicago), Dominique DeGrant (Eau Claire, Wisconsin), Vajay J Snappinturtle (Madison, Wisconsin), Pagan Holladay (Milwaukee), Sylvia Nixx (Milwaukee), Alexis Bevels (Chicago), Muffy Fishbasket (Chicago) and C'est Kevvie (Chicago), along with camp counselor Dear Ruthie and camp directors Apple Brown Betty and Cherry Pi.

There will be a premiere party on Sunday,



The campers of Camp Wannakiki.

Facebook photo

August 5, at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., at 8 p.m. The event will feature special performances from some of the "campers."

The trailer is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTaJeMK7RE0&t=5s>; viewers can meet campers at <https://campwannakiki.com/#campers>.

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See HotHouse.net.



BILLY Masters

"I was gender-confused. My parents just let me grow out of it. As I look back, I knew they were frustrated. I was that kid that ran around in a T-shirt and a rubber band around his waist with no shoes on his feet because all I had was boy shoes. ... I stole a pair of Mary Janes from a best friend of mine."—**Brent Corrigan's** confession about his colorful childhood

I just went to the opening of *Head Over Heels* on Broadway. This show features the music of The Go-Go's and the story of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia. Sir Philip was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and Arcadia is a royal romp regarding romantic relations, mistaken identities, gender disguises and sheep. All I kept thinking was, "Why not just use *As You Like It*?" Alas and alack, no one asked me. If you think squishing the darlings of the '80s into a pastoral period piece from the 16th century was easy, forget it. Many songs fit effortlessly. Some required a shoehorn ... and, possibly, a speculum. A bit more finessing of the script could have helped.

As is, it feels like a work in progress. I say amp the carnival atmosphere, be even more outrageous and go full-tilt camp. If we can accept mermaids singing backup on the Island of Lesbos during Vacation, why not have them water-skiing? Use the visual we already associate with the song. Things like that could help to balance the strong message of acceptance, equality, and choice. But even in its imperfect state, the show is still oodles of fun and features fabulous songs.

As for the cast, **Rachel York** delivers classical dialogue with authority and vocal range. Kudos to the delicious **Andrew Durand** as both a leading man and lady. I couldn't help but wonder if ye olde undergarment shoppe sold Lycra boxer briefs. Since he looks so good in them, I'm not complaining. You may remember **Jeremy Kushnier** leading the Broadway cast of *Footloose* 20 years ago. Now he's the bearded father figure—and still mighty dashing. And, of course, **Peppermint** not only made history as the first transgender person in a leading role on Broadway, she also got to intone something I'm sure Sir Philip never wrote: "Thou better workest!"

I had to cut my Go-Go's festivities short in order to dash to the midnight performance of *The Boys in the Band*, which was a benefit for The Actors Fund. Since everyone involved donated time, they raised quite a pretty penny. The capacity crowd was probably the best audience the cast ever had. There's something subversive about seeing *The Boys in the Band* at a midnight show with an audience primarily made up of gay theater folk. There was a feeling of camaraderie, warmth, solidarity—and that was even before the divine **Charles Busch** took the stage to thank us for what we were doing just by buying tickets and showing up. (You're welcome.)

It is entirely possible one will never assemble as evenly talented a cast for this show ever again.



Andrew Rannells is captivating, Billy says.

Photo by Getty Images for GLAAD

There was no weak link. Those of you who follow my column, please take note of the statement I am about to make—it was almost impossible to take one's eyes off of **Andrew Rannells**. I found him positively riveting. Perhaps a tad too aggressive at times, but you know—BOLD choices. Throughout the performance, I wondered how it would be if Andrew and **Matt Bomer** switched roles. If you sit on the left side of the balcony (or in the box), you get the best view of Bomer's underwear and shower sequence. And at the end, you get a great view of Rannells and **Tuc Watkins** coupling—which was definitely worth the price of admission. Perhaps a brief bit of Bomer's briefs was captured for posterity, if not posterior. I suppose the only way to know for sure is to check out BillyMasters.com.

Brace yourself for another installment of Faye-watch. You'd think after back-to-back Oscar stints, **Miss Dunaway** would be ... well, done away with. But she's surfaced in a new Gucci campaign that perplexed one of my readers. "Is this an actual ad or an SNL skit?" Here's how Faye describes it: "The character is a busy, successful Hollywood mother who has a special relationship with her daughter, played by the lovely SoKo."

If a "special relationship" means treating her daughter as an employee, then she's right on the money. It kicks off with the two of them sitting in a limo while Faye autographs some photos—a la Mommie Dearest. She is then waited on by a coterie of staff at Gucci, while the girl is ignored. Then the duo walk through a park with the girl making sure Faye doesn't fall. Back home, Faye puts her Gucci Sylvie handbag on the table as the girl looks on enviously. They sit by the pool with Dunaway in an enormous hat. Then while wearing a baseball cap, Faye attempts to hit a tennis ball over the net! Next, the girl is playing the piano as Faye pretends to care. Finally, Faye gives the girl a purse—while wearing a turban! Then the two hug gingerly. I particularly enjoyed watching Faye in a variety of hats and turbans which seem to have the hair attached. The way she shuffles along makes her appear to be a shrunken oldster reminiscent of Grandma Yetta on *The Nanny*. You



can see this masterpiece on BillyMasters.com.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Keith in Chicago. "*Those nudes of Ryan Potter can't be real—can they?*"

Once again, I had to look someone up. Ryan Potter is best known for a variety of kiddie roles and as the voice in several Disney video games—so I am not his demographic. However, in 2012 he was one of the youngest people to come out against Prop 8 in California and support same-sex marriage. More recently, he was cast of *Teen Titans* as Beast Boy. And since you asked, he has quite a beast below the waist, as you'll see on BillyMasters.com.

When Ryan's gonna need Titan condoms, it's definitely time to end yet another column. As always, be sure to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that knows where to find the boys and the booze. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Faye is cast in a reboot of *The Nanny*! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Ballast Point Chicago; Epic's milkshake

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Looking for a nice selection of beers with some very nice culinary options? Then look no farther than **Ballast Point Chicago** (212 N. Green St.; <https://www.ballastpoint.com/location/chicago/>).

Located in the Fulton Market district, Ballast Point (part of a chain that originated in San Diego) is a nautical-themed spot that offers a 4,000-square-foot rooftop with bar and lounge seating in addition to the 250 seats for guests in the 12,000 square-foot main tap house. And there are spots with names such as Captain's Quarters and Crow's Nest.

But before you confuse this spot with a Long John Silver's, consider the elevated atmosphere—and on-site brewery. More than 40 beers are offered, in categories such as “crisp and bright” and “barrel-aged.” I opted for a rather tasty flight



Pork belly nachos at Ballast Point Chicago.
Photo by Andrew Davis

of beers—and I consumed more than I thought I would, despite me not being the biggest fan of the drink.

And as for the cuisine, Chef John Diaz (who hails from Virginia) has some tantalizing options (and he is coolly gregarious, even as my dining companion was mooning over Diaz himself). Some of the dishes are quite unexpectedly wonderful, such as the pork-belly nachos—which sound

normal, but come with goat-cheese curds and cherries. (Trust me when I say that combination works.) And the chopped kale salad features pickled onion, hominy, avocado, feta, savory granola and chipotle lime vinaigrette. Other offerings includes fried-chicken Monte Cristo and BP wings (with one variation involving sorghum BBQ).

And, as for dessert, the new frybread (with, yes, cherries) is absolutely wonderful. (By the way, these are all items from the rooftop menu—not that there's too much room to maneuver in this bustling spot.

For a more seamless guest experience, the brewpub's rooftop will allow guests to close or add to a tab previously opened on the main floor.

Be sure to top the experience with a tour—and if you can get the colorful server Dani to lead the way, your visit will end on an intriguing note, I guarantee.

By the way, Ballast Point Chicago is marking Sours of the Wench Day on Sunday, Aug. 12, so you may want to check out the scene.

An 'Epic' milkshake

Many people already crowd **Epic Burger** (various locations; <https://epicburger.com/>), but now there's an additional reason to go.

Epic is debuting five new gourmet milkshakes (\$6.99 each) with the launch of its new milkshake counters. Flavors include Strawberry Shortcake (the delicious one I tried, complete with large strawberry and pound-cake chunks on the bottom), Lemon Coconut, Nutella, Gimme S'mores and Coffee & Cream.

These drinks are the essence of indulgence.

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

Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: August's featured storytellers



Bill Demaree



Shandee Ewert



Larry Dean Harris



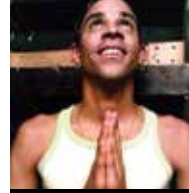
Alexia Jasmene



Brian Michalski



Douglas O'Keeffe



Timothy Rey

The August edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, August 7, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Bill Demaree** has taught writing and literature at the college level for over thirty years. He is looking forward to teaching a course in LGBTQ Lit in spring 2019. When not teaching at Elgin Community College in the western burbs, he reads everything and anything and works hard to perfect his skills as a fledgling memoirist.

—**Shandee Ewert** is a Minnesota native, a fast walker and a nacho aficionado. She has tendency to sign herself up for things late at night when her decision-making skills are tired. It's this habit that has resulted in her going skydiving, taking a burlesque class, going to grad school and telling a story at Outspoken.

—**Larry Dean Harris** is a playwright and a storyteller. His play Stage Moms was at the 2016 Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival in Provincetown and his off-Broadway musical Play it Cool earned a New York Outer Critics Circle nomination.

—**Alexia Jasmene** is a Chicago based trans actor/poet/musician/comedian who does what she can as a storyteller to change hearts and minds. She has performed at various theaters across Chicago including Picnic at American Theater Company and KinFolk The New Colony.

—**Brian Michalski** left his secure job as a kindergarten teacher to spend 22 months solo backpacking his way through 20 countries including Australia, India, Myanmar and Cuba. Since his return, he has had the pleasure to educate and inspire budding global nomads of all ages at various local organizations throughout the Chicago-land area.

—**Douglas O'Keeffe** is the co-producer and host of Inside Leather History; A Fireside Chat, an international interview series capturing for posterity the rich and valuable stories of Leather/Fetish/Kink community notables. Douglas is a long time Chicago community volunteer and writer. Douglas travels world-wide as an airline purser.

—**Timothy Rey** is a writer/ performer, arts administrator and teaching artist. He is the co-founder of the LGBTQ solo performance series SOLO HOMO, which ran from 2002-2011 in Chicago. His book of poetry and performance, LITTLE VICTORIES, was published in 2012.



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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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LETTERS from page 16

too few citizens are willing to be witnesses or even call the police when they see crime. This not only makes it more difficult for the police to do their job but it also diminishes us as a community and as people. Please think about this and let's all do our part. When you see security and police, thank them for being here and get to know them. When criminals see the interaction between residents/patrons and police/security it puts them on notice we will not tolerate crime here.

The future of the NorthHalsted Street entertainment district is very bright with the continuation of these efforts by ALL parties involved. Perhaps someday we will see an advertising campaign co-sponsored by the City of Chicago and the Association along the lines of: "Have you seen the NEW Boystown in Chicago?" heralding our safe streets and bringing in more tourism revenue.

*Ron Woods, Mark B.,
Neighborhood watch and
concerned citizens*

WERQ! CHICAGO

Friday, Sept. 21, 2018

11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Center on Halsted,
3656 N. Halsted

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LGBTQ Job Fair!

Free and open to **all members of the community,**
LGBTQ and allies.

We are seeking businesses, nonprofits and educational programs to bring a range of offerings, from entry-level to more experienced individuals. The fair is **11 a.m.-3 p.m.**, setup 9 a.m.-10 a.m. We provide 6-foot table, 2 chairs, plus a black linen.

Business table, \$95; Nonprofit or Schools table \$75
SPONSORSHIPS: \$500

DEADLINE for tables: Sept. 1, 2018.

Contact terri@windycitymediagroup.com.

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Community Services, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago House,
Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, and Out & Equal Chicagoland**

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Aug. 1

Porochista Khakpour author memoir, Sick Reading, conversation, and book-signing in conversation with Megan Stielstra 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Thursday, Aug. 2

Anti-violence protest Activists are planning to shut down Lake Shore Drive on Chicago's North Side with a march to Wrigley Field 4:00pm Lake Shore Drive **Queers Homophile Documentary Film Screening** Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria, about transgender women and drag queens who fought police harassment, and Quearborn & Perversion: An Early History of Lesbian & Gay Chicago on LGBTQ life in Chicago from 1934 to 1974. In the Atrium. Reservations required 6:30pm - 9:30pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago Tickets: <http://form.jotform.com/81494216722154>

Black LGBT comic Sampson McCormick Down to earth veteran comic has taken



'BODY' TALK Through Aug. 12

The production **Everybody is** running at The Buena, 4147 N. Broadway. Photo by Zach Dries

on race issues, homophobia and helped fight to end LGBT youth homelessness and is touring to remind the public of the beauty and necessity of diversity in comedy. \$20 7:00pm Bru Chicago Cafe (inside Speakeasy), 1562 N Milwaukee Ave., Chicago Tickets: <http://www.sampsoncomedy.com>

Chi-Town Squares First Thursdays LGBTQ Square Dance Club Dance. Tonight Bobby Poyner. All summer events are scheduled in the air-conditioned dining room. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Ebenezer Lutheran Church 1650 W Foster Chicago <http://www.chitownsquares.org>

Book Launch Party, She's Not the Type by Elaine Soloway After reading and Q&A at the museum, we'll parade to the bookstore for sales, wine, and cake. 7:00pm The Swedish American Museum Center 5211 N. Clark St. Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Friday, Aug. 3

Games We Play exhibit ongoing Highlights LGBTQ-themed board and trivia games. Through October 2018 9:00am - 5:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives and Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark St. <http://gerberhart.org>

The Sip online show Live show every Friday night, three gay men from diverse occupations and life journeys discuss everything from world headline news to pop culture from a Black LGBTQ perspective. 6:00pm - 7:00pm On line <http://goo.gl/pL7wWA>

Everybody A 2018 Pulitzer Prize finalist for drama, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Everybody* is a modern retelling of the 15th-century morality play *Everyman*. Through Aug. 12. 7:30pm The Buena,

Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway <http://BrownPaperBox.org>

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

Saturday, Aug. 4

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

Dog Day Saturday Afternoon Super Dog-Friendly Tito's Handmade Vodka will have fun doggy swag on hand to pass out to our canine customers. No cover. No dog required. People must be 21 with ID. 1:00pm - 5:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago <http://sidetrackchicago.com>

Daddy Issues queer dance party event DJs Mateo Segade, Harry Cross, Ariel Zetina. Daddy Issues Cutest International Party Brand Chicago Premiere event for any color, size, body type, gender, gender expression, and sexual orienta-

tion 10:00pm - 5:00pm The Jackhammer Complex, 6406 N. Clark

Sunday, Aug. 5

Holding the Man Based on Timothy Conigrave's celebrated memoir of the same name about real-life Australian lovers Tim Conigrave and John Caleo. Through Aug. 26 5:00pm, The Buena, 4147 N. Broadway <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Tuesday, Aug. 7

OUTspoken monthly storytelling evening OUTspoken occurs on the first Tuesday of every month, new storytellers, stories from the perspective of LGBTQ persons Doors 6pm 7:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago

Thursday, Aug. 9

LGBTQ Parenting RoundTable, Our Children series LGBTQ Parenting Moderated panel of LGBTQ parents and adult children who were raised in same-gender households will discuss issues prevalent in their own families and answer questions. The Cradle partners with Center on Halsted 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted St., <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15450>



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