

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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BEING CAMPY

Web series Camp Wannakiki focuses on local drag queens.
PR photo



18

MAKING MOVES

The 27th annual Dance for Life took place this weekend.
Photo by Kat Fitzgerald



17

PALM LEADER

Out restaurateur Bruce Bozzi Jr. oversees all the country's Palm spots.
PR photo



20

Fifty years ago, there were riots at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. It was a year of massive protests and fighting back against institutions, and the gay community joined in mainstream protests—and started to fight back against police harassment.

1968

See **pages 4-10** for personal stories, and a look back at the 1968 raid on The Trip gay bar.

NICO SANTOS

WCT talks with out gay 'Crazy Rich Asians' actor

PAGE 16



Nico Santos in Crazy Rich Asians.
Photo by Warner Bros. Pictures

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WCT reviews Nightmares and Nightcaps.
Photo by Cole Simon

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



SAM, I AM

Singer Sam Smith (left) recently put on a thrilling show in Chicago.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

PIZZA MY HEART



Among Longacre's offerings are Detroit-style pizzas (above).
Photo by Andrew Davis

KRISTIAN VALUES

Windy City Times talks with Kristian Bush of the top country band Sugarland.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

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Chicago's Stonewall: The Trip Raid in 1968

BY MARIE J. KUDA

The following essay by Marie J. Kuda was written for Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Movement, edited by Tracy Baim, published in 2008 by Agate. Kuda died in 2016. A collection of her essays will be published this fall, edited by Baim.

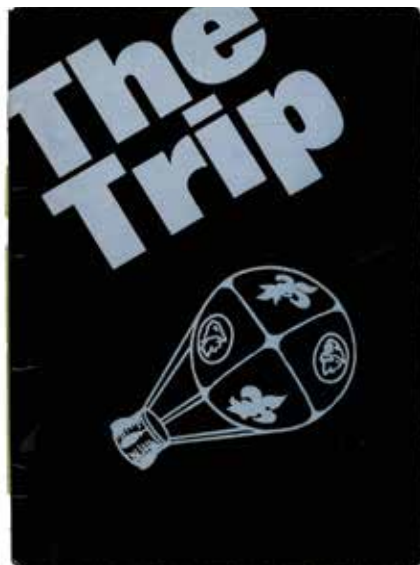
In the 21st century, "Stonewall" is the accepted buzzword for the beginning of the gay liberation movement in the United States. It conjures up a vision of bar-raiding Greenwich Village cops terrorized inside the Stonewall Inn by a bunch of angry queens outside, tossing rocks, bottles, a Molotov cocktail and shouts reminiscent of Network ('I'm not going to take this anymore!').

But in Chicago, the events of that June day in 1969 barely made a ripple. The riot was not immediate national news. A few local gay papers existed around the country, but there wasn't any real national gay press. When word from New York finally reached here, it was recorded in July's Mattachine Midwest Newsletter with the same emphasis as was given to the item on vigilante residents of the borough of Queens who, in a campaign against homosexuals reportedly frequenting a neighborhood park, had cut down dozens of its trees. According to the writer, William B. Kelley, "The New York Times ran at least three days of stories, one editorial and one letter on the subject. They were against cutting the trees."

Chicago gays chose to challenge the status quo in the courts instead of the streets. In a city coming out of 1968 with a nationwide reputation for police brutality, discretion was indeed the better part of valor. The Trip case, challenging bar closings, went to the Illinois Supreme Court; the case of Mattachine Midwest Newsletter editor David Stienecker involved defending him against charges brought by an officer who arrested gays in tearooms (public washrooms). While slower and more low-key than Stonewall, these two cases led Chicago gays to become proactive instead of reactive in their fight against oppression and discrimination.

The Trip case

Chicago's equivalent to Stonewall began 40 years ago with a police bust at The Trip, a gay-owned restaurant-bar complex at 27 E. Ohio St. The Trip had a main-floor restaurant, a second-floor cabaret and a third-floor playroom with pool table and pinball games. At midday, because of its location just west of North Michigan Avenue, the restaurant catered to luncheon crowds of shoppers, often featuring women's fashion shows. The area was undergoing an upswing; a few gritty hotels with questionable clientele remained, but new upscale businesses were mediating the fringes of adjacent Rush Street nightlife. On the borderline, The Trip became quite gay after the dinner hour, and on Sundays it operated as a private club.



Menu for The Trip, a bar and restaurant that was raided by the police in the 1960s.

Courtesy of M. Kuda Archives

One Sunday in January 1968, police raided The Trip, arresting 13 patrons on charges of public indecency and soliciting for prostitution. A plainclothes officer had gained entry by using a membership card obtained illegally during an unrelated arrest and made the charges after observing members dancing together as same-sex couples.

When the case came to court in March, attorney Ralla Klepak defended, and charges against patrons and management were dismissed. The Mattachine Midwest Newsletter, reporting on the incident, saw it as an illustration of further harassment by police, noting that dancing was not illegal per se and that the ACLU would welcome an opportunity for a test case. (In 1970, The Trip would become one of the first venues to have same-sex dancing, even before Chicago Gay Liberation picketed bars for that right.)

A second raid in May 1968 by two plainclothesmen resulted in the arrests of one patron and one employee; but, more significantly, the local liquor authorities issued an emergency closing order pending appeal on the revocation of The Trip's liquor license. This was common practice in Chicago and a kiss of death for gay bars. If they appealed the order (the appellate process could drag on for months) they had to remain closed pending a decision; meanwhile their clientele moved on and they were effectively put out of business. The Trip had barely been open a year, the bad publicity from the earlier raid had ruined its luncheon business, and owners Dean Kolberg and Ralf Johnston were not about to see their investment tank.

The Trip hired attorney Elmer Gertz to mount a case against the License Appeal Commission of Chicago after it upheld the license revocation. The Mattachine Midwest Newsletter reported that

no gay bar had previously challenged being shut down before The Trip case. It took a significant amount of time for the case to wend its way to the Illinois Supreme Court. The final decision (a complete reversal) was in *Johnkol, Inc. v. License Appeal Commission of Chicago*, 42 Ill. 2d 377, 247 N.E.2d 901 (1969).

Meanwhile, even though closed during 1968, The Trip hosted a variety of movement events. The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO), a coordinating group made up of delegates from 26 organizations, met there for its third annual nationwide conference, just days before the Democratic National Convention riots. Mattachine Midwest also held its monthly public meetings there while the business was closed.

Mattachine Midwest was an independent corporation created in 1965 after years of failure to sustain local chapters of the West Coast-headquartered organizations Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis. The impetus for the new organization was a particularly brutal raid on the Fun Lounge, a rather sleazy suburban bar that packed in a queer clientele on weekends. The Chicago Tribune led off the report in its April 26, 1964, edition with a headline indicating eight teachers had been seized in a 'vice raid' that also netted 95 other men and six women. The article listed names, addresses and occupations of those arrested (a common practice of the time) along with asides that 'many of the men carried powder puffs and lipsticks' and that a quantity of 'freshly shipped' marijuana had been seized. Subsequently there were reports of job losses and a rumored suicide.

Although The Trip had been allowed to reopen, the police still visited; in 1971 a patron was arrested on the old-standby charge of public indecency, but the charge was dismissed. The owners became overly protective of their business, allegedly refusing to call police when a Mattachine officer was robbed at gunpoint while at a meeting with an out-of-state activist on the third floor. In a 1972 on-site interview with the owners, Chicago Today columnist Barbara Ettorre noted the bar was full, with men from all walks of life, all ages, every manner of dress. The bar's management told her that weekends were "crowded wall-to-wall" and that they had a uniformed Andy Frain company usher to check IDs. They were going to make certain none of their patrons would be subject to arrest.

Chicago in 1968

In 1968, Chicago was going through critical times, well beyond the constant harassment of the gay community. In addition to reports on bar raids and park arrests, Mattachine Midwest's referral service received many calls from draft resisters; the anti-Vietnam War movement was well under way. Gays could not serve if identified when drafted: few wanted to go, but no one wanted to be branded with a stigma that would affect their economic and social lives.

After Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in April 1968, Chicago's West Side erupted in four days of anguished riots and looting. The police and National Guard were called out; the notorious 'shoot to kill' order was given. Then Bobby Kennedy, seen as the Democrats' likely candidate for

president, was murdered. The Democratic Party's nominating convention was to be held in Chicago that August. Anti-war activists, a variety of New Left groups, old-line hippies, Yippies, and others were calling for people to come to Chicago and stage demonstrations at the convention site. Abe Peck, now self-described as 'hippie-rad editor turned journalism professor,' tried to dissuade misguided flower children from coming to the city, warning them in his counterculture newspaper The Seed about the potential for violence here.

In addition, many civil-rights groups (Black, women's, gay) had been infiltrated by the FBI's COINTELPRO, a counterintelligence program whose goal was to disrupt, disorganize and cause internal dissension in an effort to neutralize a group's activities. The program originated in the Cold War anti-communist 1950s and perfected its 'dirty tricks' down through the Nixon administration. Its informants planted derogatory stories (they had been responsible for labeling former Illinois Gov. Adlai Stevenson 'gay' during his bid for a presidential nomination); they used anonymous letters and surveillance, embedded 'moles,' opened mail, blackmailed, and by other devious means invaded the rights of U.S. citizens.

Chicago police also had their covert group, the Red Squad. This group in various incarnations had its origin all the way back in the days following the Haymarket labor riot of 1886 in which seven policemen were killed and dozens injured. The objects of the squad's covert activities switched over the years from anarchists, to communists, to any left-leaning organizations of the civil rights era.

In the early 1970s when attorney Rick Guttman of the Alliance to End Repression (of which Mattachine Midwest was a member) was about to challenge the Red Squad in court on constitutional grounds, the squad reportedly destroyed thousands of files. Activist John Chester, who in 1972 was the first open gay on the Alliance's Steering Committee, reports that he 'replaced a woman who was a Red Squad spy.' Historians have speculated many of the threats that Mayor Richard J. Daley said (after the convention protests) had prompted him to order the police and National Guard to clamp down on demonstrators were 'planted' by one of the embedded groups (COINTELPRO or the Red Squad) and then reported by the other as fact.

Red Squad records are sealed at the Chicago History Museum (until 2012), but when finally disbanded, the squad was reported to have accumulated files on more than 250,000 individuals and 14,000 organizations. As part of the settlement of the suit against the Red Squad, it was learned that the squad had also obtained information at the first gay political convention, called in Chicago in February 1972 to develop demands for a gay plank to be presented at the major party conventions.

The 1968 NACHO convention at The Trip was held Aug. 11 through 18. Activists from around the country converged and passed a 'Homo sexual Bill of Rights.' One item demanded a national policy that had been law in Illinois since 1961, that sexual acts by consenting adults in private would not be held to be criminal. A motion by

Turn to page 6



Gary Chichester (right) and Jerry Doyle in drag in 1967 at the Aragon Ballroom. Photo courtesy of Chichester

A LOOK AT 1968 Gary Chichester on being gay back in the day

In this special issue devoted to 1968, Windy City Times asked various individuals to reflect on what they were doing that year. Their thoughts are published on the next few pages.
BY GARY CHICHESTER

The year 1968 was a year of contradictions and conflict. The antiwar movement was at its peak. The assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy affected everyone's mindset. The turbulence of the times was about to come to the forefront on many levels.

Being gay during this period was very underground. Most of the gay bars, although oppressive, served as "safe" places to gather. Any contact between individuals was frowned upon by the management. Sam's, located at the corner of Clark and Division Streets, and was popular among those that ventured out to meet others. The room was dark with a square bar set in the middle. The managers sat at two opposite corners to watch that the clientele would keep their hands above the bar and, of course, no one was allowed to show affection of any kind.

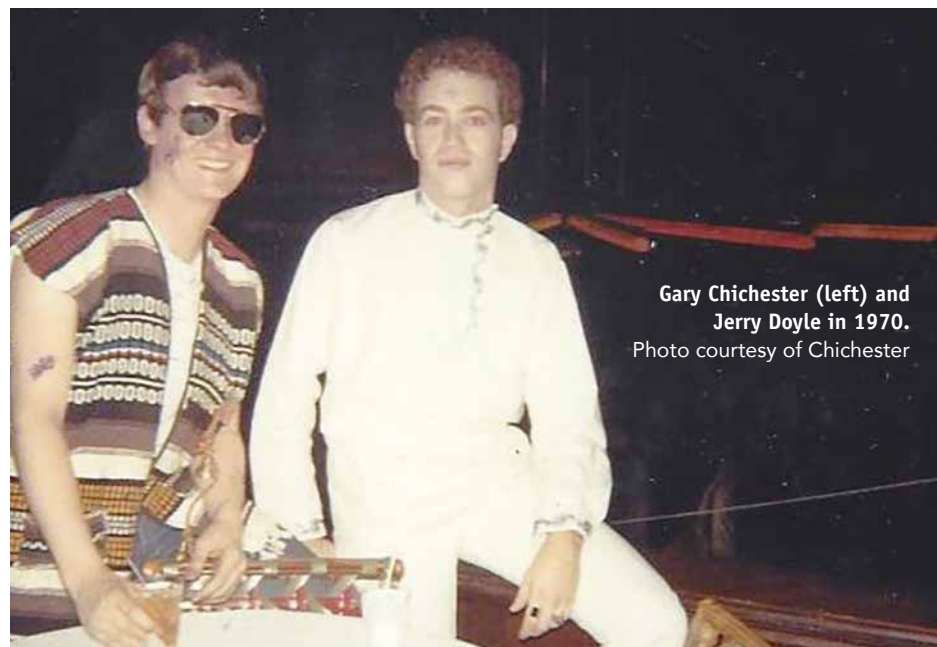
Other bars of the time located near Clark and Diversey included Shari's, Ruthie's and The Chesterfield. Roby Landers held court at the Chesterfield with her popular drag show. As the city prepared for the infamous 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC), any bars that featured drag was harassed, raided and finally closed. Other than the Halloween balls, drag did not return to the city for several years.

I found trying to find any community information depended mostly upon finding a copy of the Mattachine Midwest newsletter or the "underground" newspaper, The Seed. Word of mouth seemed to work the best.

During the 1968 DNC, demonstrators took over the city. A protest was staged in Lincoln Park across the street from the popular gay bar of the time, the Inner Circle. Amid the police riot and the tear gas, protestors from the park would take a break and head for the IC for a beverage. Poet,

Allen Ginsberg and some of the "soon to be" Chicago 7 were seen there.

The politics of the time helped drive the activism that led to the Stonewall Riots and the beginning of gay liberation the following year. Times were changing!



Gary Chichester (left) and Jerry Doyle in 1970. Photo courtesy of Chichester

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RAID from page 4

pioneering activist Franklin E. Kameny made 'Gay Is Good' the slogan of the movement.

Meanwhile, the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the MOBE) and other protest groups were arriving daily. On Wednesday, Aug. 21, the MOBE failed in its attempt to get an injunction against the city in U.S. District Court to preclude the refusal of permits for a variety of activities, and the ban against sleeping in the parks.

Late Thursday, Aug. 22, on Wells Street in the Old Town area just west of Lincoln Park, two young runaways were being pursued by police. One, Jerome Johnson, a 17-year-old Native American from South Dakota, allegedly produced a handgun and was shot and killed by Youth Officer John Manley of the Damen Avenue District. An April 1970 article by Ron Dorfman in the Chicago Journalism Review reported it as 'the only fatality remotely connected with the Democratic National Convention of 1968 ... touching off the first angry rally in the park the week before the convention.' Word spread quickly and a memorial march was held.

After the rally on Sunday, Aug. 25, as poet Allen Ginsberg and a group of gays were 'omming' peacefully in Lincoln Park past the 11 p.m. curfew, police weighed in with batons swinging. The Chicago Tribune Magazine later called this the 'beginning' of the convention riots, the first large-scale police-public confrontation.

The David Stienecker case

David Stienecker had come to Chicago originally from the small town of Climax, Mich. In the mid-1960s he met Bill Kelley and Ira Jones, who were active in Mattachine Midwest; they prevailed upon him to join the organization. In 1966, Stienecker heard New York activist Craig Rodwell speak at an MM public meeting. Rodwell was a native Chicagoan who would return to New York and later open Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, the country's first gay bookstore. Stienecker said he was 'blown away by his frankness and activism' and they had a brief affair; Stienecker followed Rodwell to New York.

On Wed., Aug. 28, 1968, Stienecker, still in New York, watched the fateful televised report of the police beating demonstrators across from the Conrad Hilton Hotel, convention headquarters. He returned to Chicago in December to find Mattachine Midwest embroiled in a variety of actions to ward off increasing police harassment. President Jim Bradford and attorney Renee Hanover were meeting with police commanders in attempts to mitigate the violence. Stienecker became editor of the MM Newsletter and joined in reporting and pursuing the issues.

Throughout 1969, activism also continued around the trial of those charged during convention week: the 'Chicago Seven,' as they became known after Black Panther Bobby Seale was bound, gagged, and subsequently removed from court for protesting the legitimacy of the trial. When U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Foran characterized the convention riots as 'a freaking fag revolution,' Chicago gay activists printed up buttons with the phrase. MM and its officers individually wrote protest letters to the mainstream press.

The number of entrapment arrests escalated in the parks and tearooms. 'You have to remember that at this time in Chicago the only way you heard about things was by word of mouth,' Stienecker told John Poling in 2002 during an interview for Poling's thesis on Mattachine Midwest. The organization's answering service and newsletter were the only game in town. Members and the gay grapevine reported on the increased police activities.



David Stienecker in 2008.
Photo by Tracy Baim

Stienecker thought that one zealous officer with a reputation for physical violence merited particular attention and that the community should be warned against him: 'It wasn't a matter of hearing about one incident, but rather hearing almost weekly about another Officer Manley entrapment that finally made us realize this was serious and something had to be done. People's lives were at stake, not necessarily physically, but every other way. ... I think there was something seriously wrong with Manley, but I'm not sure what it was. I wanted to get under his skin and we all wanted these incidents to stop.'

Draft resistance and the anti-war movement had also been increasing in intensity. A popular film comedy, *The Gay Deceivers*, centered on two straight guys passing as gay to avoid the draft. It didn't sit too well with gays for whom this was a critical issue.

But when Stienecker wrote about Manley in the September 1969 MM Newsletter, he titled his article "A Gay Deceiver, or Is He?" Describing Manley and his arrest techniques, Stienecker suggested that he enjoyed his work too much, and posited that it would be a great way for a closeted cop to get his rocks off and still come out smelling like a rose. The article mistakenly used 'Charles' instead of 'John' as the officer's name. In the October 1969 issue Stienecker ran a correction, with a brief follow-up and a photograph of Sgt.

John Manley.

In early 1970, a newly formed gay group at the University of Chicago learned that Sgt. Manley was scheduled to speak Feb. 25 on 'Youthful Offenders' to the Women's Bar Association of Illinois. In the Feb. 6 issue of the Chicago Maroon and a concurrent Gay Liberation Newsletter, Step May, Nancy Garwood, and Bill Dry signed an article calling for a picket and leafleting of the WBAI protesting Manley's appearance. May and Garwood were later 'outed' to their parents in anonymous letters with a veiled warning about messing with a Chicago police officer. (Dry was not a UC student and would go on to be a founder of Gay Liberation at Northwestern University.) On the day of the demonstration when they saw Manley in person at the WBAI picket, one UC student, Alice Leiner, recognized him as having attended a planning meeting and passing himself off as an out-of-town gay activist named Mandrenas.

On the morning of Feb. 7, 1970, Manley himself showed up at David Stienecker's third-floor apartment with a warrant for his arrest on the charge of 'criminal defamation' (hapter 38, Section 27-1, Illinois Revised Statutes, since repealed). Stienecker told Poling: 'I wasn't sure if I was going to go to jail or be taken for a ride and beaten up. (That was not uncommon in those days.) So, yes, I was scared.'

Perhaps validating his earlier assessment of Manley, Stienecker also said the cop 'insisted on watching me dress in the bathroom.' (In a later Chicago Journalism Review article, 'Mattachine editor arrested,' Ron Dorfman noted that the warrant for Stienecker's arrest had been issued in October 1969, shortly after the second Manley article had appeared.) Stienecker told Poling that although Manley suggested he just plead guilty and the judge would give him 'a slap on the wrist,' he insisted on calling an attorney: 'I mention this because it shows the attitude of the cops at the time. They never believed a gay person would fight a charge.'

The March 1970 MM Newsletter headlined Stienecker's arrest, railed against Manley's contempt for freedom of the press, and noted this was 'the first case ... in which an official of a homophile organization has been arrested for writing an article.' MM President Bradford wrote that he regarded Stienecker's arrest as a sign of Mattachine Midwest's effectiveness in the fight against police abuse. Both the MM and UC-CGL newsletters called for any information on Manley,

urging anyone willing to testify to come forward. Attorney Renee Hanover represented Stienecker, and the case was eventually dropped because the prosecution hadn't made a case and Manley failed to make three court dates.

As their trial dragged through federal court, one of the Chicago Seven and other activist leaders, including Stienecker, were asked to speak at a rally at the Logan Monument in Grant Park. In its coverage of the event, the Chicago Tribune devoted a couple of paragraphs to Stienecker. His employer, World Book Encyclopedia, had seen the item, and a couple of months later he was fired (an investigation indicated, because he was gay). Stienecker wanted to sue 'but the ACLU didn't think we had a good case because I quickly got a better job. I would also have to involve gay people [from World Book] who were very closeted, and it would have ruined their lives.'

Conclusion

It would be naive to conclude that these two cases (The Trip's and Stienecker's) on their own changed the treatment of gays in Chicago overnight. But they certainly gave notice for the first time, to the city and the police, that it wasn't going to be the same old, same old anymore.

More importantly, disparate gays alone, and in groups, understood that they too could stand up and fight for their rights. By mid-year there were gay groups on all the major college campuses in the area. New organizations (CGA, IGLA, IGRTF) began polling and political action. Lesbian and gay newsletters popped up everywhere. Former members of MM dispersed throughout the new organizations. Instead of just the Mattachine referral hotline there were now directories, newspapers, clinics, a lesbian center with a bookstore and library, social service organizations from Rogers Park to Hyde Park Beckman House and Gay Horizons, and a gay community center on West Elm Street.

In 1971, the president of the Chicago Gay Alliance presented the Judiciary Committee of the City Council with its first demand that amendments be added to existing housing and employment laws to include 'sexual orientation' in the list of prohibited forms of discrimination. In just a few years, with the old guard as midwives, a citywide community had been born.

—With research contributions by William B. Kelley
Note: This piece originally ran in *Windy City Times* in 2008.

Women's Journalism Hall of Fame inducts five

The first five inductees into the Chicago Women's Journalism Hall of Fame have been announced by the Association for Women Journalists of Chicago.

The late journalism and advocacy icon Ida B. Wells (1862–1931) was among the inductees. She was an investigative journalist and anti-lynching activist who spent her life fighting for civil rights and women's voting rights.

Windy City Times co-founder and Publisher Tracy Baim, along with her late mother Joy Dar-



Ida B. Wells.

row, were also inducted. Darrow, who died in 1996, worked at a range of newspapers, including as a reporter for the Chicago Tribune in the 1960s, and was a managing editor for the Chicago Defender.

Laura Washington, a longtime journalist for

multiple outlets including the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Reporter, was also inducted, as was Ellen Warren, a former Chicago Tribune columnist who worked at two other Chicago newspapers during her distinguished career.

Amy Guth, president of the Association for Women Journalists, said in a statement to media reporter Robert Feder: "In an era when the work done by journalists is more important than ever in our country, and when women are suddenly making space to have public conversations that we've had to have behind closed doors for too long, it's important to recognize and honor the outstanding work women have been doing in the field of journalism all along that has made a significant impact on the industry and the city."

A LOOK AT 1968

Mark Sherkow looks back

BY MARK SHERKOW

In 1968, I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, in a masters degree program in international relations. I was new to the city and was living in Hyde Park. I had known, in some way, that I was gay since I was 8 years old, but had not come out yet and had not had any gay experiences other than “fooling around” with a couple of fellow students when I was 13 years old. But I was very ready to come out; in fact, I think I spent more time thinking about that in 1968 than I did studying for my classes.

I did not know how to meet gay people. I had never heard of gay bars. There were no gay organizations of any kind that I was aware of. So my first gay experience, in August of 1969, happened because of a roommate ad I saw on the bulletin board in my graduate dormitory. Down below the

I went there once or twice with a gay friend of mine in 1969, after I had come out.

One bar that I went to in 1970 was in Forest Park called Adrons. Supposedly it was a straight bar during the day but gay at night. I went there several times in the evening and there was nothing “straight” about it. On weekends it got a good sized-crowd. This bar later became Nutbush City Limits. By 1970 there were a fair number of gay bars in Chicago, but Adrons was one that had been around awhile and had this “straight by day but gay at night” thing going.

I also remember that after I had come out in 1969, while still living in Hyde Park, I went to a meeting of a gay consciousness-raising group. These were modeled after similar groups that women held during the Women’s Liberation Movement. I remember that it was a small group that had both men and women there. (One of those



Mark Sherkow in the late 1960s, when he was in college.
Photo courtesy of Sherkow

hand-written ad someone had scrawled, “Watch out—this guy’s a fag.” I called the guy and we talked; he lived in a building down the block, and he mentioned that there was only one bed in the apartment. I did not visit him then, but I wrote down his phone number and eventually called him back. We met at a coffee shop and talked for awhile before I went to his apartment. He told me that he was the one who wrote—on his own ad, in different handwriting—the message “This guy’s a fag.”

Another way that guys met in 1968, that I found out about later, was through roommate ads in the Chicago daily newspapers. The ad would not talk about being gay, but any ad about a male looking for a male roommate was suspect.

After I came out in 1969 I heard about bars in Chicago that were either gay bars or were gay bars only at night. Kitty Sheons was a bar in the Rush Street area that supposedly required guys to wear coats and ties. Supposedly there was a bar called Town and Country in one of the hotels downtown—I think maybe the Palmer House—that gays frequented during the cocktail hour, after work. In Hyde Park, Smedlies was supposedly a bar that gay men frequented. The Eagle was a restaurant in Hyde Park that gay men went to;

men I would meet a few years later, in the Chicago Men’s Gathering, and we would remain friends until he finally left Chicago).

By 1970, I finally found out about the gay bars on the North Side. The first gay bar I went to was the Annex on Clark Street, across and down the block from the Century Theater, which at that time was an old-style movie theater—one big theater, no stores—that showed a different old film every night. I soon moved to the north side, to a studio apartment on Dayton Avenue south of Webster—and started going to the bars—the Annex, Shari’s (which had a cute bartender named Pepin Pena, now co-owner of Sidetrack) and the Gold Coast at 501 N. Clark St. Then one day in 1971, in one of the bars, was a flyer announcing SCHISM!—Chicago Gay Liberation (which I had never heard of) was splitting into two groups. One would concentrate on political action and the other was going to rent a house near Division and Wells streets, and was going to be known as the Chicago Gay Alliance (CGA). A planning meeting for the CGA was announced, and I went to that meeting—and felt at home. I had found what would become and continues to be my community, as a gay man in Chicago, from 1971 to this day in 2018.

This Week’s Featured Properties



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A LOOK AT 1968

Jim Flint reflects

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

Jim Flint arrived in the city in 1965 and for the next few years worked as a bartender at several establishments including the Chesterfield, 2831 N. Clark St., and the Annex, 2865 N. Clark St. By 1968, Clark and Division had become the place to be for gay nightlife, with half a dozen gay taverns nearby. Flint by that year was tending bar at one of the most popular gay establishments in the area, Sam's, 1205 N. Clark St.

He was first arrested in 1965 in a raid at the Annex, so by 1968, he was no stranger to police harassment. Flint recalled, "Raids were terrible all through the 1960s. Sometimes the police would hit two or three bars a night. I think overall I was arrested 15 times, usually for being the keeper of a disorderly house or for soliciting for prostitution. All the charges were false, of course. If the police saw a man touching another man, they would arrest both of them for public indecency. But in all those arrests, never once was I found guilty. I remember one time I was arrested the police officer said, 'I can't believe there's an Irish queer' and I told him, 'Yes I'm Irish and I'm gay.'"

Flint was working at Sam's and living nearby during the riots following the April 4, 1968, assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"The riots lasted about four nights," he re-

called. "There were National Guardsmen on the street. I lived at 1100 North LaSalle on the first floor. I was so scared. There was looting and violence. No one knew what was going to happen. Molotov cocktails were being thrown on the street. I nailed wire over my first floor windows so no one could throw a bomb inside. I had some friends over and we just ended up playing cards because we couldn't go out. We even had to play them on the floor and crawl around inside my apartment because we were afraid to stand up in case a stray bullet came through a window."

The violence was a prelude to the rioting that came four months later, during the Democratic National Convention.

Flint said, "One Monday night in August of the same year, police officers came into Sam's to collect their monthly donation. A few days later, the police came in and said we had to close. I said, 'What do you mean we have to close? You got your money.' They said that the order came from downtown; the gay bars had to close during the convention."

Mayor Richard J. Daley was determined to clean up the city for the convention, Flint added. "So we had to close for the duration. I think we were actually closed for a week."

During those tumultuous days in late August 1968, the country and the entire world were



Jim Flint (right, with Richie Saunders) as Felicia at a "turnabout" at Chesterfield bar, circa 1965. Photo courtesy of Flint

From 1966 to 1970

Name shakedown victims

Following is the list of establishments named Saturday by a special federal grand jury as being victims of the alleged police shakedown racket from 1966 to 1970. Some of the places are now out of business.

Aggie's Gold Coast Lounge, 201 N. Clark. Alfie's, 900 N. Rush.

Barnaby's, 7 W. Tooker Pl. Baron Lounge, 629 N. Clark. Baton Lounge, 430 N. Clark. Bently's, 640 N. State. Bowery, 1504 N. Wells. Buddy's Fun House, 1117 N. Dearborn. Bunny Inn, 1148 N. Clark. Burke's, 105 W. Division. B-29, 715 N. Clark.

Cabaret, 930 N. Rush. Cousins, 166 E. Superior. Croydon Circle Lounge, 616 N. Rush.

East Inn, 206 E. Superior. Erin Club, 701 N. Clark.

Filling Station, 12 W. Maple.

Gap, 2 W. Division. Gin Mill, (also known as Jay's), 1021 N. Rush. G. C.'s (also known as Gerry's Club and Gold Coast), 2265 N. Lincoln.

Haig, 800 N. Dearborn. Hennessy's, 12 W. Elm. Hungry I, 1343 N. Wells.

If Ands or Burs, 5 W. Superior. Imprint, 235 E. Ontario. Inner Circle, 1842-1844 N. Wells.

Irish Mike's, 644 N. State.

King's Ransom, 20 E. Chicago.

Liberty Inn, 661 N. Clark.

Midas Touch, 1520 N. Wells. Mother's, 26 W. Division. Mr. Jones, 53 E. Chicago. My Place, 11 E. Delaware.

New Jamie's, 1110 N. Clark. New Twist Lounge, 612 N. Clark. Normandy, 744 N. Rush.

Orange Tree, 1166 N. State. Oxford Pub, 2261 1/2-2263 N. Lincoln.

Pokey, 833 N. Clark.

Queens Paradise, 620 N. Clark.

Rush Over, 900 N. Rush. Rush Up, 907 N. Rush.

Sammy's 1205, 1205 N. Clark. She-Nannigan's, 16 W. Division. Spartan Room, 1117 N. Dearborn. Spirit of 76, 20 W. Division. Store, 1036-1038 N. State. Stork Lounge, 59 E. Walton.

Together, 61 W. Hubbard. Tony's Cellar, 909 N. Rush. Twist Lounge, 637 N. Clark.

Upstairs Queen, 19 E. Chestnut.

Wagon Wheel (also known as The Hayride), 1401 N. Clark.

Chicago Sun-Times coverage of the 1973 Chicago Police corruption trial, including references to The Baton and other locations.

Courtesy of M. Kuda Archives

shocked at the hatred and violence that erupted on the city's streets and the brutality displayed by the Chicago Police Department. The gay community would not ultimately be a source of shame for Daley, who wanted to showcase the glory of Chicago during the convention; rather, his own police force would.

Shortly thereafter Sam's closed for good. The closure of the bar had nothing to do with the violence or with police harassment; the building had been slated for demolition as part of the property needed for the Sandburg Village development. After the closing, Flint began bartending at the Normandy Inn, 744 N. Rush St., also owned by the Fleischmann brothers, the proprietors of Sam's. "The Normandy was where I started twirling the baton full time at the bar. It was so much fun. Being behind the bar was my stage."

However, Flint's career at the Normandy was relatively short-lived.

"I asked the Fleischmann brothers for a raise

at the Normandy because we were only making \$55 a week," he recalled. "Of course, we got most of our money in tips. I thought I deserved more money. Like earlier at Sam's, I was the setup man. I always had the highest ring on my register. I was doing the training, the ordering, and the decorating. I spent money for the holiday decorations out of my own pocket. Two of the three owners wanted to give me a raise, but not the third, so I decided that was it."

Flint decided to open his own bar. Although the Baton opened in March of 1969, the wheels were set in motion several months before. When the Baton was first opened, it was at 430 N. Clark Street, in the commercial space just south of its current location at 436 N. Clark.

"The place was cheap," Flint recalled. "The gentleman [Julius Friedman] who I was going to rent the space from was a friend of the Fleischmann brothers, the owners of the Normandy. When my old bosses heard about me looking at the space,

they called the landlord and asked why he was renting to me. They said, 'You know he's one of our bartenders. He's going to try and take our business.' And Mr. Friedman said, 'He has the right to make it just like you and I did.' And he ended up renting the space to me."

For the past 49 years, the Baton Show Lounge has been known as one of the leading female impersonation bars in the country, but Flint said that wasn't part of his original business plan, adding, "I wasn't thinking about opening a drag bar. I figured I was just going to open a regular old tavern. But it was so shady down here in the River North area at the time that nobody would come down here. So I figured to get people to come down, we'd have a drag show. We got 16 beer cases and a piece of plywood and a spotlight and we did the show. The drag shows were popular from the start and, from there, it just took off."

The neighborhood has gone through enormous changes in the past decades. "The first year down here almost every night there was a fistfight with the winos and the rough street people. One night coming in to work, a guy pulled a gun on me so I hit him with my bag and ran inside. It was very rough down here back then. Eventually the Gold Coast and the Bistro moved in, then New Flight, and many others."

In less than five years and throughout the '70s, the River North area became the popular neighborhood for gay bars.

When asked about the changes he has seen in the community in the past 50 years Flint reflected, "In those days many of us were closeted and the social conditions weren't as good. Maybe it was because of feeling people were against us, or maybe not, but we were more unified than we are today. We looked after each other. We had to do that if we were going to survive. We let one another know about bar raids and where the police were headed. We banded together and that was why things changed."

A LOOK AT 1968

Ralla Klepak, on the LGBT community

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

Despite the unbounded sexism of the early '60s, Ralla Klepak started her law practice in 1964. Driven by a passion for social justice, Klepak soon fell in love with her job. As a strong believer in the ethical core of the legal system, the young lawyer was unnerved to see the law abused by those in the business of hurting LGBT people and denying them their civil rights.

"In Chicago in 1968, this harassment came from the political machine of Mayor Richard J. Daley [1902-1976] combined with the power of the Catholic Church," Klepak explained. "Raids were frequent, and often being arrested in a raid meant that often a person's name, home address, and employer were published in the newspaper. People lost their jobs; families were torn apart, just terrible things. The charges might be disorderly conduct or public indecency, and this was if a person was simply in the bar."

Klepak at the time was a powerhouse lawyer for the community, holding the distinction of hav-



Jim Flint and Ralla Klepak at Flint's 77th-birthday party in July.

Photo by Hal Baim

ing never lost a criminal case. She represented hundreds of gay clients in entrapment and public indecency trials, and had the charges dropped time and again.

"The raids themselves were selective as well as cruel," she said. "Sometimes police took everyone, other times they took pleasure in picking and choosing who was going to be taken to headquarters. I know people who jumped out of windows at the police station, risking broken bones rather than to be processed. The Lincoln Baths, Lou Gage's, the Lost and Found, the Chesterfield—so many places were raided. Another cruel aspect was that some of the officers enjoyed taking arrested transgender people and cross-dressers and putting them in cells with the toughest looking guys. The next morning they would be ushered into the courtroom in heels, with their beard showing, make-up smudged, and wig askew. There was such cruelty in the process, an intentional humiliation, like some awful kind of sport."

Klepak added that entrapment was another issue in 1968, recalling that, "Police officers like [John] Manley loved to 'round up' gays at cruising areas [such as the lakefront, forest preserves and Lincoln Park Conservatory], entrapping people and making false arrests. The vice squads were not enforcing the law; they were abusing it. They were hunting and harassing."

Another underhanded practice by police at the time was to "take a bar's license right off the wall" during a raid, Klepak said. The bar might not be technically shuttered, but without that piece of paper, alcohol could not be served. In 1968, when the gay bar The Trip, 27 E. Ohio St., was illegally raided and the bar's liquor license was confiscated, Klepak took the case all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court, arguing that without due process of law a license cannot be revoked while in the process of review. The Trip case was an enormous early victory for the community.

One individual whom Klepak represented was then-bartender Jim Flint. If Flint had been found guilty in a raid where he was clearly being presented as "the sacrificial lamb" he never would have been issued a liquor license, and could never have opened the Baton Show Lounge, which he eventually did in 1969.

During this period, Klepak also owned the LGBT bar Togetherness, 61 W. Hubbard St., a nightclub focused on bringing together all races and both men and women in the community. It was also very trans-inclusive and featured one of the best drag shows in Chicago.

"I wanted to have a place that was elegant and that included everyone," Klepak said. "I wanted a place where people could dress up or not, but a place where people could feel good about themselves. The main thing about my place was that I demanded people treat others with respect."

At the time, bars were key in the development of the gay community and were more than merely

places to have a few cocktails. Klepak explained, "In 1968, being gay was considered a mental illness as well as being illegal and a sin. But the most debilitating thing about being gay during that period was the isolation. Bars helped with that. People didn't necessarily come to bars to drink. They came to the bars to be themselves, to be respected as themselves, and to come together with others like themselves. Bars were social centers."

Klepak cited humor as an important tool the community used to bond and to survive during the era, adding, "Something I always remember from this period was that, in defiance of this oppression, the community developed and exercised a wonderful sense of fun and campy humor. We were silly and kept laughing in spite of the outside threats. Laughter was a very important means of survival in the midst of the harassment."

Recalling where the community was 50 years ago and comparing it to where we are today, Klepak expressed astonishment at the miraculous gains. She credits community leaders, like the late attorney and activist Bill Kelley, with orchestrating a plan for bettering the lives of the LGBT people in Chicago, but added that it was the community working together that changed things.

"We've achieved what we have through the unification of community, the power of community, the power of votes, and a sense of purpose," Klepak said. "We made the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Everyone was welcome in the tent, but we never lost track that the tent was the important thing."


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A LOOK AT 1968

How 1968 changed me forever

BY NICK PATRICCA

In 1968, I was living on the South Side of Chicago at 67th and Paxton streets, right off Jackson Park, and I was working on my Ph.D. in philosophical theology at the University of Chicago (UChicago).

Living in a basement apartment for \$50 per month, including all utilities, I was experiencing the rapid change of this South Side area from comfortable white and Black middle class to mostly poorer Blacks. The Southmoor Hotel, at 67th and Stony Island, had lost a few of its letters and all of its inhabitants, and was taken over by the Blackstone Rangers. I walked to the University of Chicago through Jackson Park, getting picked up by the police for suspected drug-pushing ("Why else would a white man be walking through Jackson Park?") until they got used to me taking this path to the University.

While working with women dancers on the South Side—who created dance theater around the themes of liberation of women—I joined the first gay consciousness group formed at UChicago. I came to women's lib through philosophy and through women's lib I came to gay lib. Although I knew I was QUEER from the moment I was a zygote, I never systematically pursued the philosophical 'meaning' of my sexuality until women's liberation.

When the Democratic National Convention came to town, I was already working for Eugene McCarthy, and really did not want to see Hubert

Humphrey nominated. I had had it with conventional mainstream politics.

I participated in two demonstrations during the convention: one in Grant Park, where I met Jean Genet and Allen Ginsberg and came to understand the power of the word to provoke social transformation and the tremendous solidarity of the sisterhood of poets and artists working together for justice; the other was where the Chicago police and the National Guard boxed us into the LaSalle Street canyon, ordered us to disperse with all ways blocked and then tear-gassed us. *That* demonstration ended forever my participation in demonstrations. I am so allergic to tear gas I would have done anything to get away and that was a feeling I never wanted to experience again.

During the convention I attended a production of Genet's *The Maids*, which pushed me decisively into developing my poetry into works of art for the theater.

When Humphrey was nominated, I decided not to vote in the general election—a big mistake on my part that I have never repeated.

The year 1968 convinced me that I had to leave the South Side and move north to be part of a larger artistic and gay community. In 1970, I moved to Halsted Street, rented a two-story building with a storefront on the first floor and an apartment on the second. The storefront became a bookstore dedicated to women and the liberation of women; the apartment became a collective dedicated to grass roots neighborhood



Nick Patricca.

Photo by David Zak

work for social justice.

On the North Side of Chicago, I participated in the first gay community center set up by Gary Chichester, and in the very first Gay Pride Parade. I also continued my work organizing community around the issue of healthcare—begun with Erik Kast on the South Side—now with the gay men and women medical students who would form the Howard Brown Health Clinic (now Howard Brown Health).

For me, women's lib and gay lib are part of human liberation. The year 1968 taught me the power of the arts, the necessity of grassroots organization, and that solidarity and unity are essential to all movements for the liberation of the human body and spirit.

Hallquist becomes first trans governor nominee

Vermont made history Aug. 14 as former energy-company executive Christine Hallquist won the Democratic primary for governor—becoming the nation's first openly transgender person to ever win a major party's nomination for that office.

If she wins in November, she'd be the country's first transgender governor.

Hallquist defeated three Democratic opponents—including 14-year-old Ethan Son-nenborn, who was able to run because of a loophole in the state's constitution, NPR noted.

Several pro-LGBT groups lauded the victory. In a press release, National Center for Transgender Equality Action Fund Director of External Relations Raffi Freedman-Gurspan said that Hallquist's "victory is just one example of the progress we're still able to make in these trying times—a heartening reminder that even in a time when the federal government is attacking transgender people, our community is making great strides."

LGBTQ Victory Fund President/CEO Annise Parker said in a separate statement, "Christine's victory is a defining moment in the movement for trans equality and is especially remarkable given how few out trans elected officials there are at any level of government."

Also in Vermont, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders also won the Democratic nomination for Senate, although he again plans to decline it to run as an independent.

The NPR item is at <https://www.npr.org/2018/08/14/638708321/vermont-democrats-make-history-by-nominating-transgender-woman-for-governor>.



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Panel examines issues with LGBTQI+ refugees, asylum-seekers

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Rainbow Railroad All Aboard USA Committee member Bruce Koff welcomed a packed house to a panel discussion, "If Not US, Who?: The Struggle of LGBTQI+ Refugees and Asylum-Seekers," Aug. 16 at Center on Halsted (The Center).

Rainbow Railroad, founded in Canada, is the only organization dedicated to rescuing LGBTQI+ individuals facing persecution in their home countries and bringing them to safety. According to Koff, the need is urgent; situations for refugees and asylum seekers are worsening in many places around the world.

Ahead of the panel discussion, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Chicago) spoke about putting things into a wider context of what is happening politically in this country. He said that there is a battle for the soul of the U.S. and the only way to change things for the better is by Democrats gaining control of Congress in November.

Community Activism Law Alliance Founder and Executive Director Lam Ho moderated a panel that included Rainbow Railroad U.S. Development Officer Eduardo Hernandez; American Immi-

gration Lawyers Association Board of Governors member and immigration attorney Mike Jarecki; The Center's Racial Equity and Inclusion Director Dr. Joanna Thompson; and trans asylum grantee Gabrielle, who prefers not to use her last name.

Hernandez likened Rainbow Railroad's mission to that of the Underground Railroad prior to the Civil War. The organization provides resources, information, safe transit and supportive networks to people around the world.

Jarecki spoke about the issues refugees and asylum seekers face when entering the U.S. and the complicated steps they have to take to potentially gain legal status. He said that more than 70 countries criminalize homosexuality, and many LGBTQI+ people are fleeing from those places. Jarecki explained that, instead of rolling out the red carpet, U.S. Department of Homeland Security treats refugees and asylum seekers like criminals by putting them in detention centers. He said that, as of March 2018, the Chicago asylum office has 21,947 applications pending.

Thompson said the Center is the "red carpet" for those seeking a safe space to get free behavioral health and counseling assistance as well



Congressman Mike Quigley.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

as information, and participate in fun activities with other LGBTQI+ people.

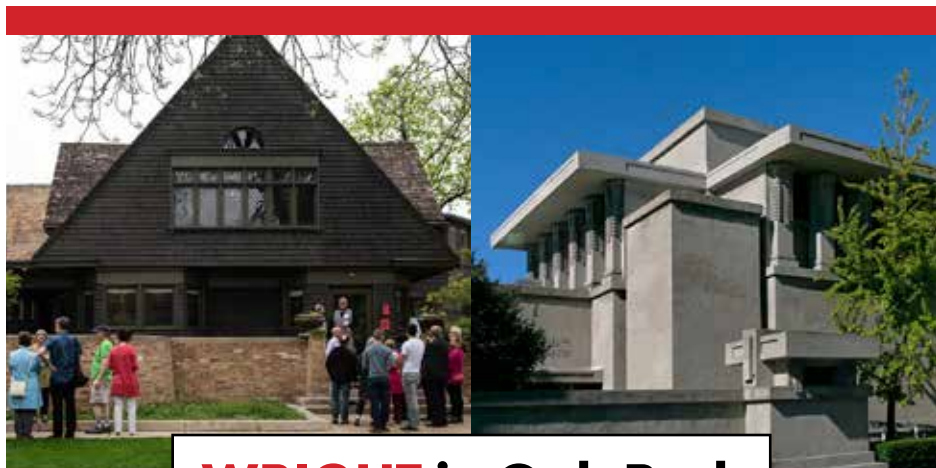
Gabrielle recalled that, when she arrived in Chicago, it was hard for her to trust people due to the rejection and violence she faced in her home country. She said that the process was very complicated and that took five nerve-racking years to gain asylum, which was approved in June 2018.

When Ho queried the panel on ways to help, Jarecki said people who speak other languages or who can provide temporary housing can make a big difference. Gabrielle added that providing the necessary information so people like her can be successful in navigating the immigration process is very important.

During the Q&A session, a gay man from Nigeria who is in the asylum seeking process spoke about his journey to Chicago as well as the horrific things that happened to him in his home country. He said that in Nigeria anyone who is accused of being LGBTQI+ is imprisoned for 14 years and family members and friends who do not tell the authorities are also put in prison for 10 years.

Among the event sponsors were The Center, Rainbow Railroad, American Immigration Lawyers Association Chicago Chapter, Heartland Alliance Human Care and Windy City Times.

See <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Trans-woman-from-Ecuador-speaks-about-asylum-life-in-Chicago/63696.html> for more on Gabrielle's story.



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viewpoints


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Chicago ordinance recognizes 'chosen family'

Employers and their workers have now spent a year with Chicago's paid sick time law and the sky has not fallen.

Despite some employer opposition to the ordinances that went into effect in Chicago and Cook County last July, there has been no widespread flight of retailers, restaurants and other places of business that now must allow all of their workers to earn and take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones. This anniversary also came on the heels of Pride Month, and the broad family definition that is

written into the laws warrants its own special celebration, particularly in light of the persistent chipping away of federal protections for LGBTQ+ people under the current administration.

The paid sick-time ordinances were developed with input from advocacy groups like Women Employed and Pride Action Tank and clearly recognize the diversity of Chicago's families by allowing workers to use it to care for themselves, a blood relative, or someone with whom they have the equivalent of a family relationship. That could include foster children, stepparents, domestic partners, or any chosen family member.

A chosen family member is someone who you consider to be family or whose relationship to you is like a family member, but is not related through marriage or blood. The presence of close, chosen families is often the difference between surviving and thriving for LGBTQ+ individuals whose relationships with blood family members may not be stable or exist at all. The Center for American Progress found that, forty-two percent of LGBT individuals take time off from work to care for chosen family members, compared to the thirty-one percent of non-LGBT individuals.

The 1 million Chicagoans who gathered at the Pride Parade this year gave a clear indication of the many LGBTQ people who have chosen Chicago as the place to work and raise their families. This underscores how important it is that the city's paid sick time law acknowledge the needs of this population.

This inclusivity also extends to the reasons for leave covered by the law, which include illness, doctor's visits, care for victims of domestic or sexual violence, and public-health emergency situations like school closures.

Paid sick time for all working people is a common-sense policy that consumers, workers and families want and deserve. Despite this, scores of Cook County suburbs are opting out of giving this basic right to those who work in their communities, with one suburb doubling down on that decision just last week. Only 27 percent of low-paid workers have access to paid sick days, which means people employed in industries like retail, hospitality, and food service are still forced to weigh their health against coming into work and serving the public. Workers and consumers alike deserve more than that impossible choice, which is why we continue to advocate for a statewide law to close these gaps.

Visit SickTimeChicago.org to learn which towns have opted in to implementing paid sick time for their workers and find out how you can use the time off you've earned to care for the people you love—including the families you've chosen. If you'd like to schedule a know your rights training for your staff or clients, email Pride Action Tank at prideactiontank@aidschicago.org.

Melissa Josephs is the director of Equal Opportunity Policy, Women Employed. Kim L. Hunt is the executive director of Pride Action Tank.

Letters to the editor:

As you are

Dear Editor,

The Biden Foundation has launched "As You Are," a family and community acceptance campaign to raise awareness of the importance of family acceptance in the lives of LGBTQ young people.

Despite unprecedented gains in legal protections by the LGBTQ community over the last decade, LGBTQ youth continue to be among the most at-risk youth populations in America. Specifically, LGBTQ young people are disproportionately more likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to experience homelessness, suffer from depression, and experience suicidal

ideation.

Research shows that family rejection significantly contributes to negative outcomes. Rejecting behavior is not limited to a parent disowning or kicking out their child; it can also include subjecting young people to "conversion therapy," blocking their access to LGBTQ friends and networks, or keeping a young person's LGBTQ identity "secret." In contrast, supporting LGBTQ youth, affirming their identity, and advocating for equal treatment can prevent many of these outcomes and set LGBTQ youth on a positive trajectory.

"I'm so proud to announce the Biden Foundation has launched this campaign," Vice President Joe Biden said. "We'll use our resources to highlight the harms of family rejection—and lift up research, best practices, and personal stories to powerfully show

the significant value of family acceptance."

The "As You Are" campaign is collecting personal stories—from LGBTQ youth, parents, siblings, educators, social service providers, coaches and others—to help educate the broader public about the critical importance of affirming, accepting, and supporting our LGBTQ young people, and the harms these youth face when their families and communities reject them. Because stories like these have incredible power, the Foundation will share these narratives with the hope that they will serve to inspire, to create communities, to heal families, and to change the broader culture to ensure a bright future for all LGBTQ young people.

See BidenFoundation.org.

Biden Foundation

**Send columns or letters to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.**



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'Pose' star at Hydrate.



Hat's entertainment

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WCT reviews the chapeau-centered production *Crowns*.

Photo by Basil Clunie

BIC concert features current, future attractions

More than 15,000 people packed into Millennium Park Aug. 13 for a free, live teaser of coming attractions (and one currently playing attraction) of Broadway in Chicago's (BIC's) 2018-19 season. The event's hosts were local ABC reporter Janet Davies and Santino Fontana, star of the upcoming, Broadway-bound musicalization of the 1982 movie *Tootsie*.

Tootsie numbers were absent, but a stellar crew of performers previewed a dozen musicals ranging from iconic war horses ("Memory," the song of feline fading beauty central to the 37-year-old *Cats*; "Miracle of Miracles," from *Fiddler on the*

Roof) to new-to-Chicago tunes (the soaring anthem "Me and the Sky," from *Come From Away*; Willy Wonka's "Pure Imagination," from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*).

The 90-minute show at the Pritzker Pavilion closed with the winners of Broadway in Chicago's Illinois High School Musical Theatre Awards joining Ben Levi Ross (in *Dear Evan Hansen*) in "You Will Be Heard," a number that speaks to the feelings of invisibility and self-doubt that plagues us all on our worst days.

For information about the upcoming season, visit BroadwayinChicago.com.



Cast members from "Falsettos," opening May 28, 2019, at the Oriental Theatre.

Photo by Elider DiPaula



Above: Heartbreak Hotel's Takesha Meshe Kizart, Geno Henderson, Katherine Lee Bourne and Zach Lentino (from left). Below: Noah Weinberg as Willy Wonka sings "Pure Imagination" from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, opening Oct. 2 at the Oriental Theatre.

Photos by Elider DiPaula



THEATER REVIEW

Crowns

Playwright: Regina Taylor
At: Noyes Cultural Arts Center,
 927 Noyes St., Evanston
Tickets: \$15-25; 847-866-5915 or
 FJTheatre.com
Runs through: Aug. 26

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Black women wear hats. The practice of adorning one's head is both Biblical and rooted in African tradition.

As the women of *Crowns* explain to the audience, hats are a culture all their own. Hats are a way to express themselves, to stand out in a world that seeks to oppress, to praise the God that made us all. Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre's uplifting production of Regina Taylor's play beautifully intersperses spoken word, gospel music

and a rich, vibrant color palette to give the audience a rollicking, emotional education on Black women and the culture of a hat.

Troubled teen Yolanda (Asia Jackson) reluctantly moves to her grandmother's house in small-town South Carolina after an unspeakable tragedy in her home city of Brooklyn. Yolanda has a hat, but it's far from the "crowns" proudly sported by her grandmother, Shaw (Mardra Thomas). The teen keeps her late brother's baseball cap, with a stiff red brim, clipped to the loop of her baggy jeans. In contrast, Mother Shaw and the women of her church sport colorful, sparkling headwear every Sunday. As they dress to face the outside world, they take Yolanda through a wedding, a funeral, a baptism—and the hats they wear along the way.

Crowns is at once simple and elaborate, with only a keyboard, percussion and the cast's divine voices. Each actress has a chair and a hat rack, and they enact whole lives against a colorful painted backdrop festooned with portraits

Mardra Thomas and Robin Beaman in *Crowns*.

Photo by Basil Clunie



of real-life local women posing with their own crowns. The effect is a marvelous visual and auditory feast, a tribute to the resilience of Black women who've progressed from slavery to sharecropping to living in a society that still doesn't treat them right.

Co-directors Tim Rhoze and Bria Walker have selected vivacious performers whose effect on the crowd is positively stunning. Thomas' vocals are a dead ringer for Billie Holiday, and her Mother Shaw is sensitive and devout. Jackson thoughtfully brings out Yolanda's vulnerability. Tuesday B. Perry's dance skills are unparalleled, and Qiana McNary delivers the funniest monologue of the play, themed "never touch my hat!" As the oldest character, Renee Lockette embodies wisdom and "hattitude" and Robin Beaman gives a stirring tribute to old-school evangelical churches.

No matter your place on the faith spectrum, *Crowns* will make you a believer ... in hats.

THEATER REVIEW

Nightmares and Nightcaps

Adapted by Ed Rutherford
At: Athenaeum Theatre,
 2936 N. Southport Ave.
Tickets: \$17-32;
 Athenaeum Theatre; 773-935-6875
Runs through: Sept. 15

BY KAREN TOPHAM

Let's get one thing clear from the start: Despite its thriller-ish title, *Nightmares and Nightcaps*: The Stories of John Collier, now playing at the Athenaeum in a Black Button Eyes production, is absolutely hilarious.

Collier was a British expatriate author of tales that dealt with bizarre or fantastic circumstances treated in a comic style. Director Ed Rutherford's adaptation of several of these stories captures both their darkness and their humor in a short (75-minute) evening of highly engaging theater.

The show is narrated by a man known as The Dweller (Kevin Webb). Webb is a wonderful master of ceremonies taking us through a series of unusual, *Twilight Zone*-ish tales and equally strong when taking part in them, as he does in a story about a young man seeking to buy a love potion and one about a recluse who suspects his apartment is haunted.

But as good as Webb is, the ensemble of this production, asked to play multiple roles through many stories, is just as strong. Among the stand-out members is Ellen DeSitter, as Squirrel, a young man so obsessed by his love for a huntress

that he seeks to get himself stuffed so he can become one of her trophies and be with her, and Megan DeLay as the huntress; Maiko Terazawa and Joshua Cervantez as a couple so in love with each other that they cannot bear the thought of the other dying and decide to spend 9/10 of their income on insurance; Shane Roberie and Caitlin Jackson as a couple who differ greatly on how to spend an inheritance; Kat Evans in multiple roles including the best Bird of Paradise you could want to see; and Cervantez and Lee Wichman as a screenwriter and the devil he accidentally sells his soul to.

Rutherford stages this collection with aplomb, easily moving from one story to another even though Collier's stories tend to have abrupt endings. He is aided by a strong design team, including Jeremiah Barr, who designed the set as well as some great puppets; and Liz Cooper, whose

lighting design is impeccable, especially in the screenwriter tale, where hell is conjured by a combination of wonderful illumination and brilliant sound design by Robert Hornbostel.

Collier's short stories have been adapted before as TV films and as episodes of *Twilight Zone* and similar shows, but this play lovingly re-creates several of them in a new medium and takes advantage of the immediacy of live theater to bring them to vivid, often very funny life. And when Collier is serious, as he is at times, Rutherford *et al* capture the dark twists perfectly. This is an excellent production by some talented performers, so good that you'll leave the theater wishing they could have added more of Collier's sardonic, twisted confections. But you'll be very entertained by the ones they have included: This original show easily adds to Black Button Eyes' growing reputation as one of the finest adapters of literature in Chicago.

THEATER REVIEW

Black Boy Joy

Playwright/Performers: Devin Middleton and Jordan Stafford
At: Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-697-9693;
 TheAnnoyance.com; \$10
Runs through: Sept. 27 (Thursdays only)

BY KERRY REID

This new sketch show from the comedy duo of Teen Cudi (Devin Middleton and Jordan Stafford) shares its title, *Black Boy Joy*, with a Twitter hashtag created originally by Chance the Rapper and dedicated to celebrating life as a Black man. As the two note in the press release, "Black kids rarely get to have fun."

Directed by Atra Asdou, the short sketches and songs here mostly focus on the silly-cerebral, with a sly dash of social commentary. Middleton and Stafford have an easy chemistry and an admirable ability to trust their audience to follow them into some of the twistier sketches.

These include a dialogue between two security guards trading lines about how secure their respective locations are, ranging from "My location is so secure it might get really vulnerable with a group of friends at a celebratory dinner" to "My location is so secure it saw a group of Black people in public and decided to mind its own damn business and not call the police." The two know how to draw out the pauses between lines in this piece, so it feels like a cunning mix between two bored guys at work playing a kinder gentler version of "the dozens" and a non-menacing short Pinter play.

Silly wordplay drives a few of the sketches, including one where Middleton, charged with guarding Stafford's hapless witness to a crime, goes through increasingly more tortured takes on "Snitches get stitches," such as "tattle-tellers become sadder fellers."

Most of the work here focuses on characters and relationships, rather than topicality. One exception is Stafford as HUD Secretary Ben Carson, hosting a talk show that "my doorman lovingly refers to as 'no thanks,'" with Middleton as special guest Kanye West. The latter explains his

recent comments in support of Trump by saying that he's not affiliated with any party except "the party of the easily influenced, confident and loud."

Midshow, Stafford delivers a monologue that seems to be veering into Hannah Gadsby anti-comedy territory, where he earnestly talks about having fight back against taunts from a racist kid in his high school. Suffice it to say that there's another punch coming in that story that disrupts the narrative in a brilliant fashion.

In general Stafford tends to play the more laid-back characters (his Carson lives up to his self-description of sounding "like a ghost who is slowly learning English"), while Middleton's characters exhibit more overt emotionality—from an overenthusiastic mother at a spelling bee to a murderous robot. But the real joy here comes from seeing the interplay between the two, who know how to support each other and listen. That generosity and easy confidence carries *Black Boy Joy* through even the weaker material with an abundance of spirit and smarts.

CRITICS' PICKS

Rick Stone *The Blues Man*, Black Ensemble Theater, extended through Sept. 6. This North side company's latest musical revue/history lesson recounts the tale of how two lifelong friends from the projects founded a theater company very like the one we're in. MSB

Buddy: *The Buddy Holly Story*, American Blues Theater at Stage 773, through Sept. 15. The Pro room on Belmont Avenue is smaller than what usually houses this rock-and-roll biodrama, but the intimacy generated thereby ramps up the excitement even more. MSB

The African Company Presents Richard III, Oak Park Festival Theatre. Based on the true story of an African-American theater company in 1826, playwright Carlyle Brown's drama is timely, thrilling, tragic and joyful. It is also reason for hope: When art goes up against bigotry and violence, art ultimately wins. CES

—By Sullivan and Barnidge



Matt Schutz, Shea Petersen and Andrew Garcia in *Treefall*.
Photo by Daniela Monico

THEATER REVIEW

Treefall

Author: Henry Murray

At: Trap Door Theatre, 1655 W. Cortland St.

Tickets: Exit63Theatre.com; \$15

Runs through: Sept. 2

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

It's not hard to see what drew Exit 63 Theatre and director Connor Baty to stage *Treefall*; it's a dynamic premise from author Henry Murray. It's simple and it sticks with you long after you've left the theater. All *Treefall* needs is a little more precision and deliberateness in execution to keep audiences ensnared in their bitter landscape.

In *Treefall*'s wasteland future, Earth is being fried by an unforgiving sun, and what little people have survived are scrounging for scarce water and supplies under cover of darkness. To go out in the daylight is dangerous, maybe fatal. Three boys—Flynn (Andrew Garcia), August (Shea Petersen) and Craig (Matt Schutz)—have been alone in their cabin for so long, they've resorted to mimicking (and revering) a nuclear family unit. When they encounter Bug (Kirra Silver), they have the chance to propagate their dysfunctional society, or abandon it. They could cling to the idea that the world will go back to normal, or venture out into their undeniable reality.

Deep down, *Treefall* is about social hierarchy, and what we cling to when everything else evaporates. The boys may not have food, but they have

outmoded gender roles, and they don't need anyone to force masculinity/femininity upon them, they'll do it themselves. While Flynn easily dons a necktie and air of authority to portray a father figure, August struggles to keep his composure in what limited expression range a wig allows him as "Mommy." Craig plays their precocious child; not only that, he'll take up a baby doll and play his own best friend, love interest, elderly nursemaid, and hopefully someday, mommy herself. There's abuse and disenfranchisement, and it becomes only too visible when they invite newcomer, Bug, to join in.

Treefall falters over clarity and some basic safety precautions for performers interacting with the set. Their world of festering grime should be palpable, but not at the expense of actor mobility needs. Some stage elements are fantastic to look at, but seem guaranteed to cause injury. Likewise, I was waiting for the oppressive sun to leak in somehow, just to confirm how potent the danger their world is in.

The cast, however, is unflappable as they fight on the most intimate stage. Andrew Garcia is firm, frightening and committed to the status quo as Flynn, and Shea Petersen is a tight-wound bundle of torments threatening to unravel, as August. Kirra Silver's Bug is the someone better equipped that the others have all been unconsciously waiting for, sapped of hope. Matt Schutz spends much of the show in dialogue with himself as Craig, and it's a resounding joy to watch. *Treefall* is compelling, strange—and worth a glimpse before it's gone.



Windy City Times

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SPOTLIGHT

If you didn't have to drop out of elementary school to go work in a sweatshop, you owe Chicago's 19th-century labor activists a debt of thanks. Usually it's the men of the movement who dominate the narrative of Haymarket Square—the site of May 4, 1886 rally where seven policemen were killed in a bomb blast. Underscore Theatre's musical *Haymarket* focuses instead on Lucy Parsons (Bridget Adams-King), the wife of activist Albert Parsons. Adams-King has a voice fit for a woman of extraordinary strength and indomitable will.



Haymarket runs through Sept. 16 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.; \$15-\$45; TheaterWit.org

Caption: Photo by Juli Del Prete

NUNN ON ONE: MOVIES

'Crazy Rich Asians' actor Nico Santos speaks out

BY JERRY NUNN

Out Filipino-American actor Nico Santos started in the stand-up circuit, took on television and is now on the big screen. After performing as a comedian he was noticed by the Chelsea Lately television show and became a member of the roundtable.

He landed the role of sales associate Mateo Liwanag in the NBC series Superstore to popular acclaim going into its fourth season this month.

With the new romantic comedy film Crazy Rich Asians he plays Oliver T'sien, cousin to the star. Watch him and Awkwafina steal the show as the story of a wedding in Singapore dramatically unfolds.

Santos talked with Windy City Times when he was visiting Chicago for a Define American panel.

Windy City Times: You are originally from the Philippines?

Nico Santos: Yes. I moved to Gresham, Oregon, when I was 16. I went to college in southern Oregon. After that I moved to San Francisco, where I started stand-up. I have been in LA for about eight years now.

WCT: When did you come out of the closet?

NS: I started telling people my junior year. I told my best friend and a couple of other people. I told my parents my senior year of high school. When I was college I was out.

It was like in the movie Love, Simon where he planned to be completely gay in college. That was me!

It was not like people couldn't tell. I was the vice president of the drama club...

WCT: To some parents, it is more real though when they actually hear it.

NS: My mom was really cool about it actually. I had to tell her over the phone because she was still living in the Philippines. When I told her she said, "Oh, I thought we talked about this last year already." I would remember coming out to her, so no that didn't happen. She was completely okay with it. She said she knew when I was little kid because I would take my homework and draw gowns on the back of the paper.

WCT: You were lucky your mother was so accepting.

NS: I was, especially since that is the exception to the rule with many Asian parents. She was really supportive and great.

WCT: How did get on the show Superstore?

NS: Well, I got the audition for it because I had booked a small role on the TV show Mulaney. I had two lines. The guy who wrote the episode I was in was the creator of Superstore. My agents were able to parlay that into seeing me for Superstore. I went through the whole audition process after that.

WCT: The part was written for a straight person, though, wasn't it?

NS: Yes, it was written for a straight Latino guy. In Hollywood I never want to get my hopes up so



Nico Santos.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

I think I'm not going to get it. I finally tested for it and I am glad I got it.

It was my fifth acting job. I had only done small roles before it. It was my big break!

WCT: I heard from Michael Urie that America Ferrera is a big supporter for LGBT rights.

NS: America is one of the best humans out there. She is the real deal. She's an activist and supports everybody. She puts her money where her mouth is. She inspires everybody to be better.

WCT: How important was it to you to have your character undocumented?

NS: The creator of the show had the idea of making Mateo undocumented. When they came to me I thought it was brilliant and genius. It is part of many people's stories. Every Filipino knows someone that is undocumented. Many of my family members were undocumented for quite some time. It added another layer to Mateo. You get to see why he is competitive and cutthroat. The basis is he yearns for something better.

WCT: Where do you want to see your character go on Superstore?

NS: I would like to see him move ahead. He is still this employee at the store so I want a better life for him.

WCT: Have you ever worked at a similar store?

NS: Not in a big-box store but I have worked retail a lot. In San Francisco that was my day job. I worked boughie retail like Neiman Marcus, Jimmy Choo and Dior. I would do that during the day then comedy open mics at night. I incorporated that into my act. I would talk about my retail day job. The straight comedians would be in their hoodies and I was wearing my three piece suit! I was, like, "What's up, bitches?"

WCT: Tell our readers about your role in Crazy Rich Asians.

NS: I play Oliver T'sien, who is Nicholas Young's cousin.

In the book, he is a Christie's art dealer. He really helps out in the family and takes care of a lot of things for them. In the movie, he sees Constance Wu's character and empathizes with her. He shows her what she got herself into.

It is a fun small role and I shot in Singapore and Malaysia for six weeks. It was an amazing experience. It is our Black Panther. We should call it Asian Tiger!

The last time Hollywood made a movie with an all-Asian cast was 25 years ago, with Joy Luck Club. Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon doesn't count because it was made by a Chinese studio.

The themes in the movie are so universal that you don't have to be Asian to get what is going on. It is not a period piece or a kung-fu movie, it is just about family, love and relationships. I hope it resonates with a lot of people and they go see it.

WCT: Do you feel Asian representation is getting better in Hollywood?

NS: It is getting better, but I feel they don't know what to do with us. They need to do more to put us in roles. It shouldn't just be Crazy Rich Asians. There should be more content regardless. While it is better, the work is not done.

WCT: What are your thoughts on RuPaul Drag Racer Kim Chi bringing attention to "No fats, no femmes, no Asians?"

NS: Listen: I used to be 250 pounds so I was fat, femme and Asian. I think it is unfortunate in the gay community that we are so segregated. There is so much femme shaming and bottom shaming. It is crazy to me because it is so rooted in deep misogynistic sexism.

It is saying, "If you are anything resembling a woman that you are gross."

There is nothing wrong with being femme, but for some reason there is that toxic masculinity creeping into our community as well.

WCT: I saw people disguise it while saying Asians were not their type when it was actually racism.

NS: Some will say it is a preference, but it is disregarding everybody and saying any Asian person is not attractive. The fact that they are so blatant about it is insane to me. I feel our community is so behind in certain ways. They need to catch up.

Listen for Santos as one of the voices in the upcoming Sony Pictures Animation film Wish Dragon. Crazy Rich Asians currently plays in theaters everywhere.



From the 27th annual Dance For Life Chicago.
Photos by Kat Fitzgerald
(www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

Auditorium hosts 27th annual Dance for Life

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald
(www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)
See more online.

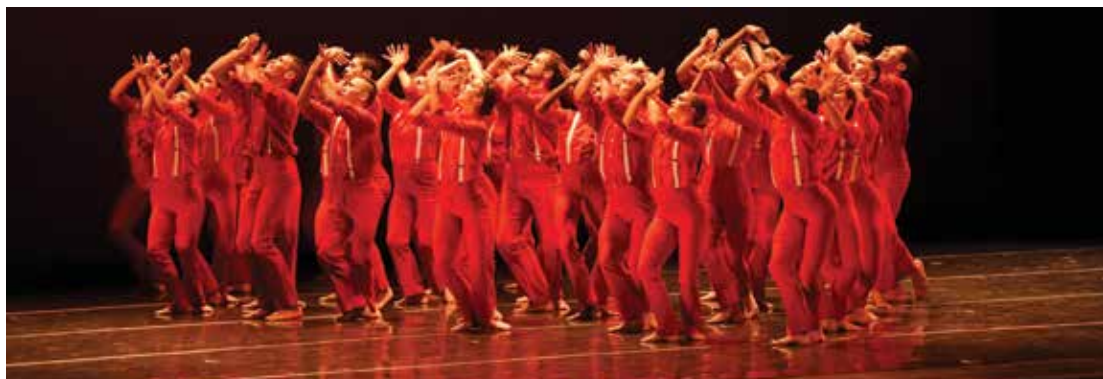
For its 27th annual event, Dance for Life Chicago presented a diverse group of companies and artists performing Aug. 18, at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.

Joining the partner dance companies that perform each year—Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and The Joffrey Ballet—are Hanna Britson and Dancers, Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Chicago Dance Crash and Nomi Dance Company. The concert also included a Randy Duncan-choreographed work.

A gala reception at the Hilton Chicago preceded the event.



**Dance for Life
Board President
Kevin McGirr and
Giordano Dance
Chicago Artistic
Director Nan
Giordano.**



Haring mural exhibit through Sept. 23

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events will present “Keith Haring: The Chicago Mural” through Sunday, Sept. 23, at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St.

The exhibition will be in the Sidney R. Yates Gallery as part of the City of Chicago’s Year of Creative Youth.

There will be 36 original panels of the monumental mural created in 1989 by Keith Haring, with the assistance of 500 Chicago Public School students in Chicago’s Grant Park. Presented by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools, the exhibition will also feature a collection of photographs, correspondence, designs, plans, T-shirt drawings and more.

Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children’s programs, among other things. Nine months after completing the mural in Chicago, Haring died of AIDS-related complications at age 31, on Feb. 16, 1990.

Admission is free; visit ChicagoCulturalCenter.org.

Former Joffrey dancer part of board

Joffrey Board Chair Zachary Lazar and President & CEO Greg Cameron have welcomed former Joffrey dancer John Mark Giragosian to the dance company’s board of directors.

Giragosian becomes the first former company-turned-board member in Joffrey history. Board members serve as the governing body of the Joffrey, providing leadership, overseeing policy and direction, and are responsible for the fiscal accountability of the organization. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is the board’s honorary chair.

Giragosian is currently a private equity associate at Linden Capital Partners.

‘20,000 Leagues’ extended to Sept. 9

Lookingglass Theatre Company has again extended 20,000 Leagues Under the Seas Althos Low adapted from Jules Verne’s books—this time, through Sunday, Sept. 9. The production is running at Lookingglass Theatre Company, located inside Chicago’s historic Water Tower Water Works at 821 N. Michigan Ave.

Tickets are \$45-\$80 each; visit LookingglassTheatre.org.

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MUSIC

Aretha and that seven-letter word

VIEWPOINT BY HESTER

For musicologists and pop-culture nerds there is a very funny inside joke in Taylor Hackford's musical biopic *Ray* (2004). Ray Charles (played by Jamie Foxx) informs his collaborators—record producer Jerry Wexler and Atlantic Records president Ahmet Ertegun—that after selling millions of records, he is leaving for a far more lucrative contract with another company. Wexler and Ertegun literally have a meltdown on the spot, fearing they will never find another artist with such an immense and rich talent.

The punchline of the joke was that six years later, a bewildered young woman named Aretha Franklin would walk into tiny Atlantic Records and, with the help of Wexler and Ertegun, change everything. It wasn't just soul music, rock 'n' roll, entertainment or pop culture—but with that first collaboration they showed how an artistic medium could impact society, define an era and change minds.

Franklin, who passed away Aug. 16 from pancreatic cancer at 76, was a game-changer who initially didn't know the power of her own talents.

Her first major-label contract was with Columbia Records, under the watchful eye of bandleader and label head Mitch Miller, who wasted time and

energy trying to squeeze her talents into a mold. Miller clearly had no idea what to do with Franklin; when her contract lapsed, Wexler grabbed her. Wexler and Ertegun knew exactly what to do with her and they immediately whisked her to FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and turned her loose. The first song on her first Atlantic album was a cover of Otis Redding's "Respect," and when it was released as the second single in early 1967 it soared to number one and made her an instant icon.

Franklin's version of "Respect" (Redding, who would die shortly after she recorded it, said publicly that he preferred her far less restrained version) is a song that simultaneously ignited several seemingly unrelated movements and articulated a troubling era. Much like The Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction," The Who's "My Generation" or Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," it expressed what the mid-1960s youth of this country felt and what the older generation could not grasp.

But Franklin's recording went much deeper and had a larger impact. A pampered British white boy from the suburbs yammering about satisfaction didn't have nearly the bite of a Black woman from Detroit who wouldn't simper or beg like the submissive Diana Ross (who was the most popular Black female vocalist at the time), but demanded



Aretha Franklin, in Ravinia 2015. In a statement, Ravinia organizers said, "This isn't the first time Aretha had us all crying. This once-in-10-lifetimes talent took us to church over the radio in very turbulent times and in joyous times. She was an absolute joy to know, and in a way we all knew her. Let the tears flow—and pay her the respect that both the song and her life demanded."

Photo by Patrick Gipson

and felt entitled to respect. The song may be about a romantic confrontation, but the fury that Franklin fueled it with spoke to feminists, African-Americans, the youth, whites, gays, lesbians, men, women, the underprivileged and the

ostracized.

When the record hit in 1967 the nation was divided and confused. Assassinations, rioting, the conflict in Vietnam, the erosion of the American dream, pollution and the encroachment of urban blight all contributed, and the song became a battle cry specifically for its time. That Franklin had been restrained at Columbia gave her the chance to release her talents in a fierce torrent and the charisma of her singing was almost revolutionary. It was the right talent with the right song at the right time and down through the years, as more specific battles are fought (trans rights, immigration, gun violence, education, etc.), it's still intensely inspirational.

It is unrealistic to think that Franklin could maintain such a seismic impact a mere year after "Respect" but, if anything, she endured and did it better than anyone had a right to expect.

Her collaborations with Wexler continued her string of classics ("Think," "Eleanor Rigby," "Spanish Harlem," "Angel," "Chain of Fools," "The House that Jack Built," etc.), and every decade provided a new comeback with different collaborators ("Jump To It," with Luther Vandross; "Who's Zoomin' Who?," with Eurythmics; the Sparkle soundtrack with Curtis Mayfield; her electrifying cameo in the otherwise dim Blues Brothers movie; "I Knew You Were Waiting," with George Michael; "A Rose is Still a Rose" with Lauryn Hill) and she was never far from the spotlight.

Her annual concerts here in Chicago—not far from her home in Detroit—made her accessible, Presidents Obama and Clinton insisting on her singing at their inaugurations indicates that the lady, her talents and her recordings were national treasures.

INTERNET

Hamburger Mary's camps it up with 'Wannakiki'

BY JERRY NUNN

The owners of Hamburger Mary's International are camping it up this summer in a new seven-episode YouTube series called Camp Wannakiki.

Ashley and Brandon Wright have created, produced and also star in the drag competition as camp directors Apple Brown Betty and Cherry Pi Sugarbaker. The twins pit eight drag queens from Illinois and Wisconsin against each other and through challenges in 20 different locations. Each week competitors either earn badges to stay or to take a hike. The producers encouraged the cast to save the drama until off camera making this a more friendly take on the world of drag.

The Queen of Camp champion will take home a prize package of nearly \$5,000, including a cruise courtesy of AOVacations.com; the winner will also be featured at the Austin International Drag Festival and receive free hamburgers for a year.

On the first episode Chicago's Muffy Fishbasket won the canoe race, a water-sports badge and the final lip-sync segment, taking home a wig from 1800WigTakeOut.com. No one was sent home after the judges discovered an extra badge in the pocket of camp counselor Dear Ruthie.

Episode two had the group pursuing a straight shooters badge with an archery challenge that had Alexis Bevels from Chicago the winner, taking home accessories from TheDragQuinn on Etsy.



From left: Camp Wannakiki cast members Cherry Pi Sugarbaker, Muffy Fishbasket, Alexis Bevels, O'Laysia, C'est Kevvie and Apple Brown Betty Sugarbaker.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

com. Sylvia Nyxx packed her bags at the end and went back home to Milwaukee, Wisconsin after a touching video message from RuPaul's Drag Racer Jaymes Mansfield.

Potato-sack races and plank walking were all part of the fun on episode three. Milwaukee's Pagan Holladay was the winner after walking the tight rope for a squirrel friend badge challenge.

Feast of Fun podcaster Fausto Fernos made a surprise guest appearance as judge and Fishbasket took home a gift certificate from FlawlesslyTaboo.com as the overall winner, forcing Wisconsin's Dominique DeGrant to take a hike as an end result.

A Q&A with the attending cast members followed the screening

at Andersonville Brewing on Aug. 19, and it included Midwest queens O'Laysia and C'est Kevvie.

The group claimed there was no rivalry between the two neighboring states during the contest. The average time most of the cast had been performing drag was around five years, with Fishbasket possibly being the most seasoned. "I've been doing this for decades!" she joked.

For future episodes, visit the Camp Wannakiki YouTube page with new episodes every Tuesday. Alternately, people can watch it live at Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N. Clark St., on Sunday evenings before the release.



BILLY Masters

"All of my best friends are gay. I support the community. I love the community. They love me. That has nothing to do with this."—**Kim Kardashian** speaks out about possibly accusing **Tyson Beckford** of being gay after he criticized a photo of her booty. Yes, it's as ridiculous as it sounds.

Nobody ever questioned **Aretha's** talent—certainly in its prime, it was beyond reproach. But one rarely heard of a fun-loving Aretha who loved people. She wasn't that kinda diva. It takes a special skill to come off badly in your own autobiography, but Auntie Ree did it in *Aretha: From These Roots*. As with everything, she lived on her own terms. PETA didn't like that she wore furs? She started wearing them onstage. People criticized her weight? She wore dresses with spaghetti straps. A personal shopper informed her that purple was the only color that didn't suit her? She showed up at the next concert in purple. People gossiped about her skipping **Whitney's** funeral? She sent a largely incoherent and endless fax to the press saying nothing that defended herself and fueled a feud with **Dionne**. She was always Aretha—spaghetti-strap, fur-wearing, purple, petty Aretha. But when she strolled onstage and plopped her purse on the piano (she reportedly didn't trust anyone backstage), it was magic. The queen is dead—long live the queen.

Did you hear about the latest church sex scandal? For several years, the Pennsylvania attorney general has been investigating six Catholic Church dioceses in the state. According to the 900-page court document, more than 300 priests have been accused of sexually assaulting and grooming children in their parishes. The ring-leaders are alleged to have been a "gang of four priests" who worked together. The report claims that when a priest found a boy he felt was, um, "compliant," he would give him a gold cross to wear around his neck. "The crosses were markings of which boys had been groomed for abuse," said Attorney General Josh Shapiro. "One boy was forced to stand on a bed in a rectory, strip naked, and pose as Christ on the cross for the priests." If I've said it once, I've said it a million times—nothing good happens in the rectory.

As you probably know, churches are non-profit organizations and are typically granted tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Last week, the IRS granted such an exemption to a new church called the Pussy Church of Modern Witchcraft! The group claims that they "come together to form a congregation of adherents to our female born, lesbian-feminist-based religion beliefs and traditions." That all sounds fine and dandy, but the group that formed this "church" are Transgender Exclusionary Radical Feminists! And it's exactly what you think it is—and kudos to them for not trying to hide their bigotry. "Males are not permitted to participate, regardless of how they identify." This sounds like it could be a plot point on the new *Charmed* series—coming soon to The CW.



Billy talks about Armie Hammer (above) coming to Kate Bornstein's defense.

Photo from Sony Pictures Classics

The good news—Disney's first openly gay character appears in the upcoming live-action film, *The Jungle Cruise*. The bad news—the guy playing the gay character is straight. The upshot—people are pissed. Because apparently acting is no longer "acting." Only Jews can play Jews, lesbians can play lesbians, etc. It was not long ago that gay actors bemoaned the opportunities to play straight parts. "I'm an actor—I can play any role," they'd say in frustration. I do hope they all remember this when the only roles available to them are the gay best friend.

Armie Hammer is appearing in the Broadway play *Straight White Men* alongside trans performer **Kate Bornstein**. At one of the preview performances, Kate began the play with the opening line—"Good evening ladies, gentlemen, and the rest of us." Well, this was too much for one woman in the audience, who exclaimed, "You're not welcome here!" It is reported that the woman and her husband frequently interrupted the play by booing.

Armie later tweeted, "To the woman in our audience who felt it was appropriate to yell, 'You're not welcome here!' at Kate Bornstein, our beloved friend, co-worker, and now family member ... feel free never to come back." This led to another audience member Tweeting back that she sat behind the woman and her husband. Armie asked for the specific seat number, which the lady provided. It still begs the question—if audience members are being disruptive, why aren't they dealt with by the theater right then and there?

Last week was the 40th annual Carnival celebration in Provincetown. To commemorate the event, there were 40 grand marshals. One of the honorees was the beloved **Bruce Vilanch**, which was fortuitous since he happened to be in town to perform two shows at The Crown & Anchor. We recently did a Queery Q&A with Vilanch for the *Los Angeles Blade*, which you can read online.

Another honoree was **David Drake**, the new artistic director of the Provincetown Theater. He also directed and stars in the theater company's

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current offering, Terrence McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, which runs through Aug. 30. If you don't know the play, the entire cast is nude at various points. As luck would have it, some footage from the show has fallen into our hot little hands. If I'm not mistaken, this will provide the first public viewing of the fabled Drake Dick. And it's just as big as you heard, as you'll see on *BillyMasters.com*.

When we're showcasing Drake's snake, it's definitely time to end yet another column. But we do have one more important thing to say—Happy anniversary to ME! Yes, way, WAY back in August 1995, I was cajoled into writing my first column. And now, 23 years later, week in and week out, we're still here. As they used to say in those ads that no longer run on television, "You've come a long way, baby!" In fact, we've come all the way to our own website—*BillyMasters.com*—the site where you'll be coming before too long. If you want to send me a question (or an anniversary greeting) you can write to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I celebrate my silver jubilee! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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SAVOR

Out restaurateur Bruce Bozzi Jr. brings changes to Palm Chicago

BY ASHLEY COLLINS

Bruce Bozzi Jr., executive vice president of The Palm Restaurant Group, is the fourth-generation descendant of a company that his great-grandfather co-created.

With 22 locations in the United States and Mexico—including one in Chicago's downtown area, at 323 E. Wacker Dr.—recently underwent renovations last year and re-opened its doors in April. The new renovations feature additions to



Bruce Bozzi Jr.
PR photo

the design, artwork, menu and more. The Palm Chicago has been a part of the city for more than 30 years, and still continues to deliver exceptional experiences and classic cuisines—and patrons might see a famous star or two.

"We've been in Chicago for over 22 years and this is our second location. A restaurant after a certain amount of time needs some tender love and care," Bozzi said.

The Palm Restaurant Group began its journey in the heart of New York during the 1920s, when two Italian immigrants originally created a

restaurant that served lunch and dinner and was a favorite of cartoonists and writers from the local newspaper syndicates. As an Italian restaurant, it first opened offering similar dishes, later adding steak, beef and seafood options to the menu. As its popularity grew, the next opened in 1972.

Celebrating 92 years of service, the restaurant group continues to be operated by members of the Bozzi and Ganzi families since its founding in 1926 and upholds The Palm's philosophy when it first started: "Treat guests like family, serve great food, and always exceed expectations."

"I am very proud of the tradition that my family and the Ganzi family carried on—delivering great service and building relationships it's pretty awesome," Bozzi told Windy City Times. "I feel honestly really proud to keep the family business going."

Currently in California, Bozzi said he spends a lot of his time in the restaurant working the floor and engaging with customers during lunch, along with his social-media component. In 2011, Bozzi created the radio show "Lunch with Bruce," during which he features a different well-known individual to have lunch and casual conversation which sparked after his interview with his good

friend Andy Cohen.

"I have a really great time doing what I love to do which is, eat and talk," Bozzi said.

Along with working in the restaurant, Bozzi also assists in directing the company's marketing, culinary, and human resource teams. The future for The Palm Restaurant Group is growing and the company is currently looking at new cities to explore and share their hospitality culture. With appearances on the The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon and All of the Above with Norman Lear, the restaurant is constantly gaining exposure, which is leading to new ideas.

After asking Bozzi who he would have dinner with, living or dead, he named Marilyn Monroe, former President Barack Obama, and Harvey Milk. Bozzi is a true restaurateur who believes that the start of a great experience is to eat and have a good conversation. He strives to deliver great customer service to his guests while working alongside his team who helps develop creative marketing strategies, menu changes, artwork detail and more.

More information on the history and locations of The Palm Restaurant Group can be found at ThePalm.com.



Dominique Jackson Elektra-fies at Hydrate

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JERRY NUNN

Actress Dominique Jackson made an appearance at Hydrate on Aug. 16. She told an early VIP audience how much she appreciated the support for Pose, the FX television show on which she plays Elektra Abundance, making history with the largest transgender cast ever for a scripted series.

A Mini Ball event followed with over \$1,000 in cash prizes and a variety of categories, including Best Dress, Sex Siren and Up in Pumps. Commentators for the runway competition were Kentrele Mizrahi and Mz Ruff n Stuff with music provided by DJ Matty Aga and DJ Kid Riott.

Look for future events at HydrateChicago.com.



@MOSPHERE

Benefit show for Natasha Douglas' quest for the Continental crown.
Joseph Stevens Photography



TOUCHE

Miguel is high in the saddle as the winner of this year's Cowboy Eye For the Leather Guy.
Joseph Stevens Photography



SAVOR Sidetrack holds MOMosa Benefit for Equality Illinois

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY VERN HESTER

On Aug. 18, Sidetrack hosted the sixth annual MOMosa benefit in support of Equality Illinois. The event featured an eclectic brunch menu and a

special martini mixing class by Grey Goose Vodka ambassador Emile Chaillot.

Equality Illinois board member and event organizer Kevin Hauswirth said of the event, "We decided to do something for all the moms of gay kids who support us. My mother told me that she supports all these events but she never meets any other moms of gay kids. So we decided to have a brunch to bring out the moms and support a worthy cause."



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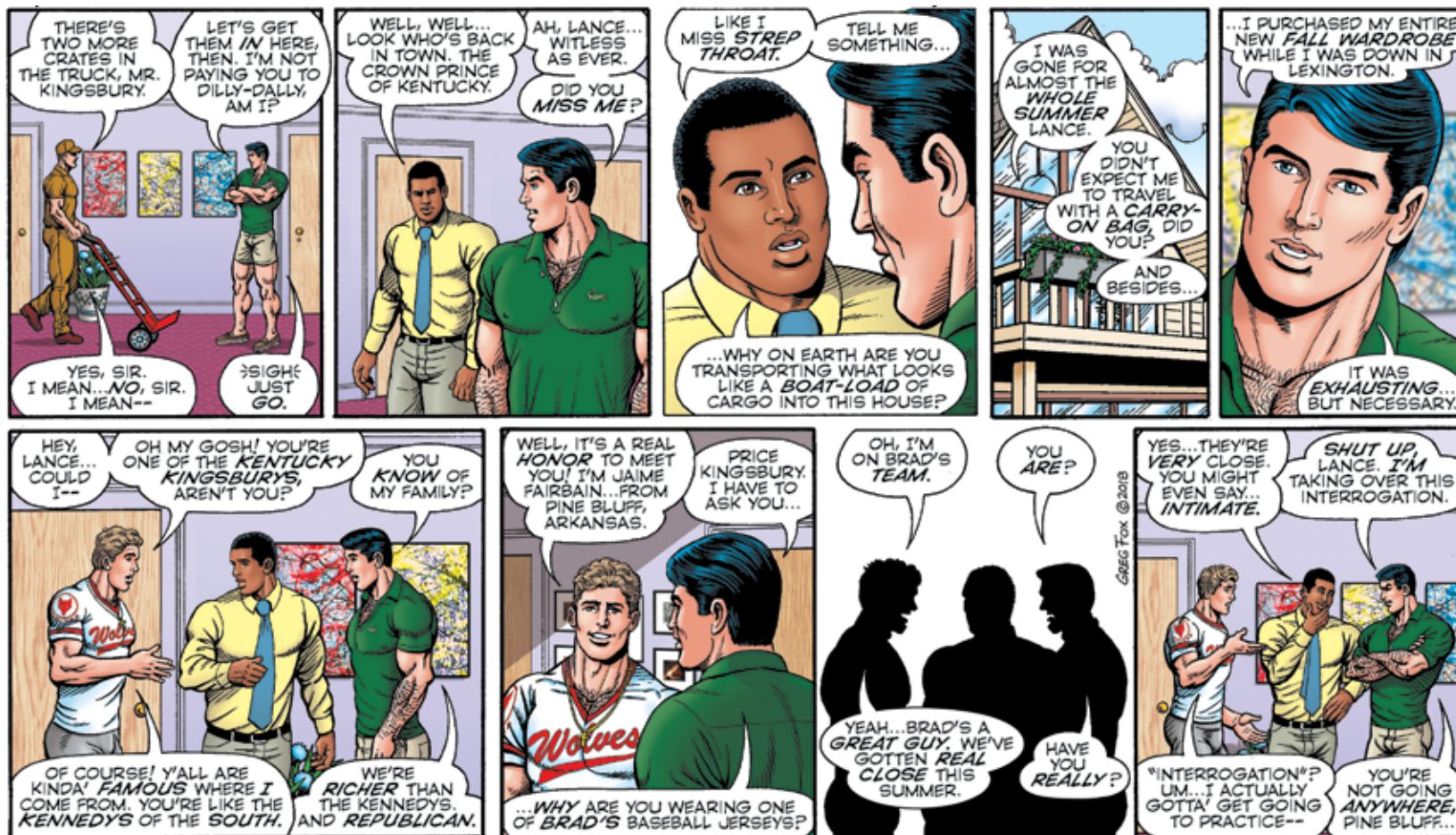
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Aug. 22

Drag Queen Bingo \$15 for seven games and 50/50 split-the-pots. Pizza available to order. Benefits Holy Covenant MCC in Brookfield 7:00pm ForestView Lounge, 4519 S Harlem Ave., Stickney <http://holycovenantmcc.org>

Midwest Will Vote Join DNC Chair Tom Perez in Chicago 7:00pm Address Upon RSVP <http://finance.democrats.org/page/contribute/perez-midwest-will-vote--20180822?raiser=101498056>

Thursday, Aug. 23

Wendy Williams Williams, touring to promote her 10th season will be hosting an evening of "Hot Topics" and "Ask Wendy"-staples of her daytime talk show. See "Wendy's Season 10 Tour: Chicago" on Facebook 5:30pm - 9:00pm House of Blues 329 N Dearborn Chicago

Sugarland Country-music duo of Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush (interview with Bush at WindyCityTimes.com) have just released their sixth studio album. 7:00pm Ravinia Festival 418 Sheridian Road Highland Park, IL 60035 <http://SugarlandMusic.com> Tickets: <http://Ravinia.org>

Friday, Aug. 24

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



FRIEND 'SIP' On Fridays

Three gay Black men (Lenox Magee, David Dodd and Isaac King, from left) host the radio show **The Sip**. Photo courtesy of The Sip

pop culture from a Black LGBTQ perspective. 6:00pm - 7:00pm On line <http://goo.gl/pL7wWA>

OutAging Community Gathering Reporting out on the Pride Action Tank's finding from the OutAging conference and discussion of next steps. Free. Light refreshments provided. RSVP at link. 9:30am - 12:30am John Baran Hall, 2nd Floor, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted <http://tinyurl.com/OutAging>

SexuWellness For women and TGNC individuals, a wide variety of sexual and reproductive health-related services like chest/breast exams, mammogram refer-

als, pap tests including HPV screening and pelvic exams, STI testing, birth control prescription, IUD placements. Fourth Friday of every month. whs@howardbrown.org 5:00pm - 8:00pm Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark, Chicago 773-572-8359 <http://howardbrown.org/womens-health/>

Saturday, Aug. 25

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>

Arguments & Grievances comedy debate show and podcast Half comedy show, half rhetorical fight to the death. Audience chooses the victor on topics like "McRib vs. MacBeth" and "Hugs vs. Drugs." Free entry with an RSVP to ArgueandGrieve@gmail.com 7:00pm North, 1637 W North Ave, Chicago

Peach Presents: Fire (The Elements Series Finale) Celebrates ALL LGBTQ+ women & femme family in a late night, sultry experience in a historic Mason church hall with sounds of Samone, DJ Sandra Suave, and Ariel Zetina and with burlesque star Jeez Loueez. 21+ 9:00pm Preston Bradley Center 941 W Lawrence Chicago <http://thepeachparty.com>

Sunday, Aug. 26

Fahrenheit Chicago, the End-of-Summer Pride Celebration End-of-summer beach party of fun, music, and social networking for LGBTQ Illinoisans, their friends, and families. Focus on public health

awareness and civic engagement. Hosted by Fahrenheit Chicago and Equality Illinois. Free 11:00am - 7:00pm Oakwood Beach, 4100 S. Lake Shore Dr <http://equalityillinois.org/fahrenheitchicago2018>

Tuesday, Aug. 28

Saltine recording podcast Saltine's Newsletter Saltine, performer at Berlin, The iO Theater and the Annoyance Theater, every fourth Tuesday of the month 8:30pm Scarlet Bar 3320 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/saltinesnewsletter/?ref=settings>

Wed., Aug. 29

Intersectionality of LGBTQ and Reproductive Rights Leaders from NARAL Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood Illinois Action, Howard Brown Health, and Pride Action Tank. Moderated by Illinois State Representative Kelly Cassidy. Free. 7:00pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://act.pro-choiceamerica.org/ngpvanforms/17114>

Thursday, Aug. 30

the kates at Chicago Improv All-female, all bad-ass comedy showcase. \$17 7:30pm Chicago Improv, 5 Woodfield Road, Woodfield Mall, Store K120B, Schaumburg 847-240-2001,

Friday, Aug. 31

Trans/Gender Affirming Name Change Mobilization Hosted by Transformative Justice Law Project. Volunteers will assist Cook County residents with filling out the documents required for a name change. Last Friday of every month in room 1202. 9:00am - 3:00pm Daley

Center Plaza 50 W Washington St Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/transformativejusticelawproject/>

White Sox Pride Night, BaseALL: One Game For All Ballpark-Wide Celebration for the LGBTQ Community. Sox vs. Boston. Specially priced Pride Night tickets include an Outfield Reserved game ticket, pre-game parade pass, pair of rainbow-colored sunglasses and benefits the You Can Play Project 7:00pm Guaranteed Rate Field <http://whitesox.com/pride>

Saturday, Sept. 2

Mr and Miss Continental Pageant 2018 Mr and Miss Continental Pageants will be held in Chicago the two days of Labor Day Weekend 2018. Concludes Sept. 3. 2:00pm The Vic Theatre 3145 N Sheffield Ave Chicago 312-644-5269 <http://www.thebatonshowlounge.com>

Tuesday, Sept. 4

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

Latina Continental, Miss & Plus Official preliminary of The Continental Pageantry System. Doors open 8pm, event at 9pm Baton Show Lounge 436 N Clark St Chicago <http://thebatonshowlounge.com>

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LatinX

HERITAGE MONTH

Friday, September 7 | 6 • 8 pm



LatinX Art Gallery Opening

Sandra Antongiorgi

with a Special Performance by AfriCaribe
Center on Halsted • 3656 N. Halsted

Wednesday, September 12 | 7 • 10 pm



In partnership with



La Joteada

Tributo a Juan Gabriel y Selena
National Museum of Mexican Art
1852 W. 19th Street

Monday, September 27 | 6:30 • 8 pm



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