

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Directs child sex-trafficking drama *Monger*.
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Photo courtesy of Lambda Legal

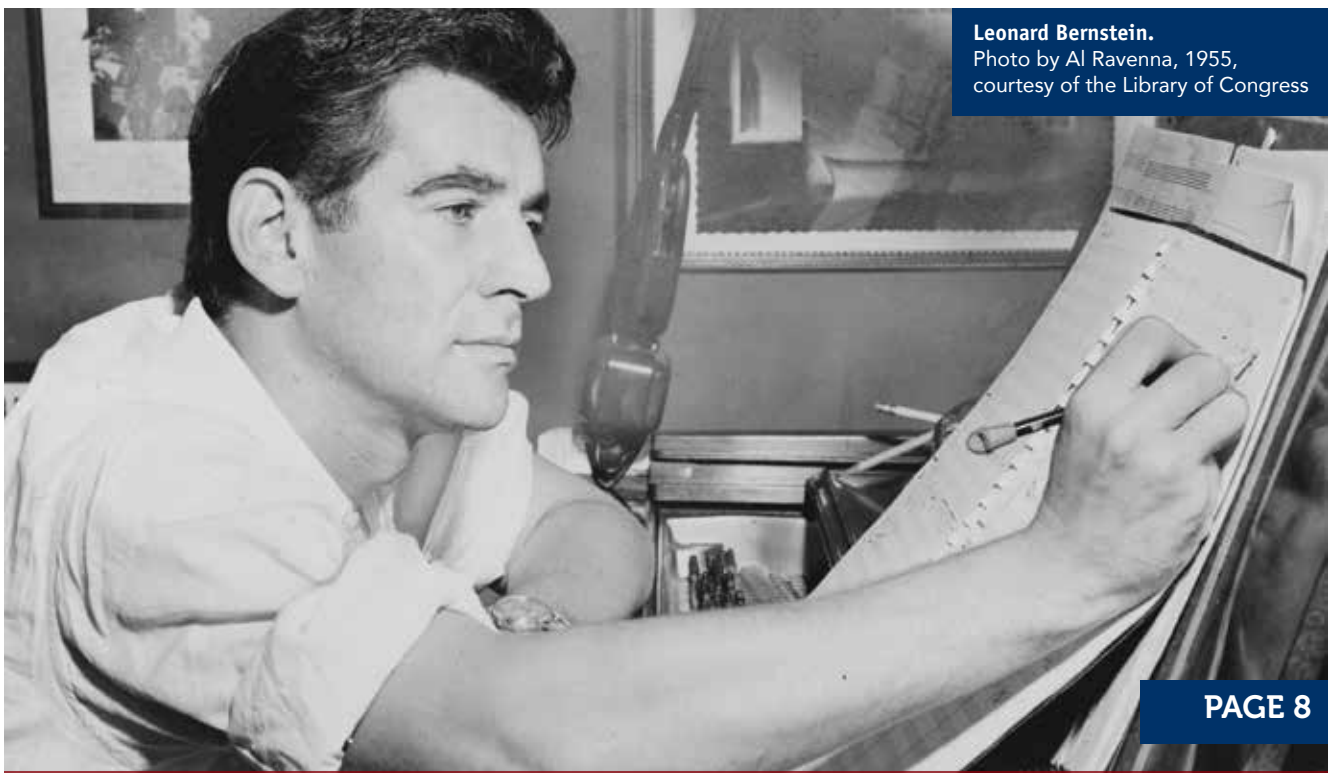


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Photo by Vern Hester

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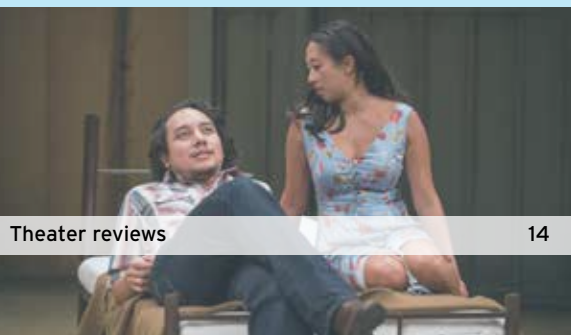
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WCT reviews the production Vietgone.
Photo by Michael Brosilowonline exclusives at
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FIRST RUM, FIRST SERVE

West Loop spot Ronero has more than 200 different bottles of rum, as well as dishes like lamb chops (left).

Photo by Andrew Davis

BY DESIGN

Outspoken interior designer Anthony Michael seemingly does it all.
Photo by Andrew Davis

WALL OF SOUND

So You Think You Can Dance choreographer Travis Wall talks about the show and being out.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about The Big Bang Theory, Hayley Kiyoko and Liam Payne.

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Panelists: Many more LGBTs to face issues related to aging

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A number of community advocates gathered Aug. 24 for a morning-long discussion centering primarily on extending the availability of culturally competent services and resources for LGBT seniors.

The forum stemmed from an extensive community survey undertaken by the Pride Action Tank advocacy and its community partners focusing on issues faced by aging LGBT community members. Concerns around service providers' cultural competence, along with housing availability, were the two issues most commonly raised as concerns, organizers said.

"We can't just build our way out of this," said Pride Action Tank Executive Director Kim Hunt, discussing the widening scope of the problem as the LGBT community ages. She added that "having input from folks with lived experience is central to the work that we do."

Panelists at the Aug. 24 forum, which was held at Center on Halsted, included Center of Halsted Senior Services Director Britta Larson; Howard Brown Health Intensive Community Care Services Program Manager Kelly Rice; AARP Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach Terri Worman; and activist Don Bell.

At the outset of discussion, Bell reiterated the importance of recognizing the multiplicity of voices and experiences within the LGBT community: "I wanted to remind people of the diversity of this community that is frequently lost here on the North Side, especially here in 'Homo Central.'"

Larson additionally emphasized that 80 percent of aging LGBT adults have to go back into the closet if they go into an assisted living facilities. Some 85 percent of such communities have ties to a religious organization, according to Serena Worthington of SAGE, who also spoke.

Even if that organization is supportive of, or even ambivalent about, the LGBT community, there are few guarantees as to how residents will be treated by staff, fellow residents or onsite religious personnel.

Larson noted that personnel at faith-based agencies are frequently committed to helping aging LGBT clients but are sometimes hindered by organizational policy; she recalled speaking with a social worker trying to locate resources for a client who could not do so since the agency blocked search-results containing LGBT-related keywords. An audience member who lived at Town Hall Apartments, next to the Center, said that even there, in a facility geared towards LGBT residents, resources could not be brought up on



From left: Britta Larson, Kelly Rice, Terri Worman and Don Bell.

Photo by Matt Simonette

communal computers since words such as "sexuality" and "gender" are blocked by one of the facility's operators, Heartland Alliance, for fear that residents will be inadvertently exposed to pornography.

Larson promised to take up the issue with Heartland.

Bell said persons needing particular resources must not be afraid to ask providers about them ahead of time. Worman said that a key concern is educating consumers about knowing what they should be asking for.

One audience member inquired whether stakeholders could formulate a set of benchmarks, similar to criteria around LEDE-building certification, that providers could be held to. Panelists said that such ideas have been carried out on a smaller scale by organizations like SAGE, but large-scale certification would likely get little buy-in from providers at first, since their compliance would be hindered by rapid staff turnover, which is characteristic of the industry.

Worthington put the various logistical problems into a wider political context, warning that so-called religious freedom laws could have a devastating impact on aging LGBT Americans if they end up at the mercy of nursing home personnel who might use such laws to discriminate against patients and clients.

She also discussed a series of recommendations SAGE made to state governments on behalf of aging LGBT Americans. Those included designating LGBT adults as a target population under the Older Americans Act; passing a "Bill of Rights" for LGBT residents in long-term care facilities; establishing a commission on LGBT aging issues; mandating cultural competency training as a condition for state certification; and asking stakeholders to create comprehensive plans for LGBT seniors.

GUEST COLUMN

BY SERENA WORTHINGTON



Religious exemption laws put LGBT elders at risk

At a time when LGBT older adults are at their most vulnerable and in need, religious exemption laws threaten to jeopardize their security and safety.

Take the case of Mary Walsh and Bev Nance who, like any other married couple, wanted to age together in their hometown of St. Louis. They did their research. They found a retirement community, visited several times, went through the application process, and cut a check for the \$2,000 deposit. At the end, they were turned away at the door. Friendship Village Sunset Hills, a senior housing facility in their community, refused the couple because it followed the "Biblical definition" of marriage and "defined marriage as between a man and a woman." Just a few weeks ago, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Relman, Dane & Colfax PLLC, and co-counsel filed a lawsuit on behalf of Mary and Bev.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration

States, rely on a network of service providers as they age—for community programming and congregate meals, for health care, and for housing ranging from independent living to skilled nursing. However, the vast majority of these services are offered by religiously affiliated organizations.

The report, Dignity Denied: Religious Exemption and LGBT Elder Services is by The Movement Advancement Project, SAGE and the Public Rights/Private Conscience Project (PRPCP) at Columbia Law School. The research finds that while many of these religiously affiliated facilities provide great care, there is a coordinated and on-going effort to pass religious exemption laws, issue executive orders and agency guidance, and to litigate court cases to allow individuals, businesses, and even government contractors and grantees to use religion to discriminate.

As you can imagine, these laws are particularly concerning for our elders who are already at higher risk of discrimination when accessing aging services and long-term care. A recent AARP survey found that roughly half of LGBT older people fear discrimination in health care as they age, while 34 percent of LGBT elders are concerned that they will have to hide their identity in order to access suitable housing. According to a national study released by the Equal Rights Center, 48 percent of same-sex couples experience discrimination when applying for senior housing.

It is more important than ever that advocates and allies fight against these concerted efforts across the country and by the Trump administration to create a

"The research finds that while many of these religiously affiliated facilities provide great care, there is a coordinated and on-going effort to pass religious exemption laws, issue executive orders and agency guidance, and to litigate court cases to allow individuals, businesses, and even government contractors and grantees to use religion to discriminate."

religious license to discriminate. No one should worry about fear of rejection, discrimination, or unequal treatment when accessing services and housing. Stand with Mary and Bev and against these harmful religious exemptions.

Links: <https://www.sageusa.org/resources/posts/dignity-denied-religious-exemptions-and-lgbt-elder-services/>.

Serena Worthington is on the Pride Action Tank Advisory Committee and is the Director of National Field Initiatives at SAGE, where she oversees SAGE's national affiliate network, facilitates state-based policy advocacy on LGBT aging issues, and enhances the capacity of partner organizations across the country to work effectively on behalf of LGBT older people.



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Frank Chapman, field organizer and educational director for Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

Photo by Matt Simonette



Rally commemorates 1968 convention

BY MATT SIMONETTE

An Aug. 25 rally in Daley Plaza commemorated the violence that marked—and the political activism that rose out of—the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention.

The rally was followed by a march that wended its way around downtown locations integral to

the Convention.

In opening remarks, Andy Thayer of the Chicago Committee Against War & Racism as well as Gay Liberation Network called the episode “a horrible chapter in our city’s history ... but it is an important event to remember and indeed celebrate.”

Thayer explained that the Convention served

as a spark for a multitude for activist work as the rest of the ‘60s and the early ‘70s unfolded.

Frank Chapman, field organizer and educational director for Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, discussed the need for an elected police accountability board, adding, “We’re not in the same place as 1968; we’re in a worse place.”

Historian and activist Barbara Ransby discussed the need for Americans to “remember and resist,” adding, “We have to keep in mind the big picture ... The biggest lesson in history.. is that we always have been fighting.”

A number of speakers discussed various issues central to progressives: Activists Kathy Kelly and Vincent Emanuele discussed U.S. military policy; sociologist and activist Sauer Owaide discussed Palestinian rights; artist and activist Robert Ferreyra discussed violence in Mexico; and Natasha Erskine discussed issues with Chicago Public Schools.

Ransby urged audience members not to forget issues pertaining to the LGBT community, adding, “We can’t throw anybody under the bus.”

Museum exhibit features ‘68 DNC

The Chicago History Museum, 1608 N. Clark St., is exploring a watershed moment in U.S. politics—the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Democratic National Convention (DNC) protests—with the new virtual-reality experience “Chicago 00: The 1968 DNC Protests.”

“Chicago 00: The 1968 DNC Protests,” is a virtual reality (VR) experience that brings photographs and documents from the Chicago History Museum’s archives to the site of the demonstrations that took place in Grant Park in August 1968. Chicago ‘68 author David Farber, Ph.D., narrates the 14-minute VR tour that can be viewed through YouTube; the Chrome browser; or with Google Cardboard VR glasses.

Museum visitors can revisit the 1968 DNC all-year round in the Museum’s permanent exhibition “Chicago: Crossroads of America.”

See ChicagoHistory.org; for more on “Chicago 00,” visit <http://chicago00.org/experiences.html#dnc>.

ELECTIONS 2018

Victory Fund backs Peoria candidate

LGBTQ Victory Fund, the only national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ leaders to public office, has included Illinois political candidate Rob Reneau in its most recent batch of endorsed individuals.

Reneau is running for the Peoria County board (10th District) in November. Reneau—who has been Knoll Crest Homeowners Association president since 2014—has been a forensic scientist for more than two decades.

See VictoryFund.org. For more about Reneau, visit “Rob Reneau - Peoria County Board D10” on Facebook.

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Quigley urges voter participation in 'Trans Talk'

BY BRONSON PETTITT

With fewer than 80 days before midterm elections, U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05) called on voters to get engaged in local politics and remain vigilant of LGBTQ rights.

Quigley spoke at the "Trans Talk" series at the Center on Halsted on Aug. 16; Center on Halsted Director of Gender Equity Vanessa Sheridan moderated the event.

The congressman, who was first elected in 2009, underscored the importance of participating in the democratic process at a time when the country is polarized and the Trump administration's policies become increasingly autocratic.

"It's easy to be discouraged as we look at the situation now, but the worst thing we can do is give up," said Quigley, a founding member of the Transgender Equality Task Force and vice chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus.

"A lot of the victories happen locally," Quigley said. "Every governmental body can make a difference on (LGBTQ) issues: local school councils, state senators, aldermen, lawmakers in the county levels, townships. Don't give up on that ballot. Influence a generation of lawmakers."

Voters need to engage family and friends as well, Quigley said.

"One person can make a huge difference. We

need people to train others, engage them, empower you and all those who come with you," he said.

Quigley said Democrats would likely win control of the House in November but indicated a "blue wave" isn't guaranteed.

"Don't believe when someone says there's going to be a wave. There are no waves. There are national influences on local races," Quigley said. "Both parties have the ability to shoot themselves in the foot. Every race is different, every race has different candidates, each race must be fought out as if there was no national influence there at all."

If Democrats don't win the House, Republicans "will be emboldened," Quigley said. "The worst of the worst—on all of these issues, in particular justice issues."

"That could be very discouraging," Sheridan said.

"Since the president took office, I feel like I've been doing group therapy, and reminded folks they need to feel better after the group session. I'm struggling with that. You have to be involved," Quigley said.

Even if Democrats win the majority, Quigley said voters must be vigilant of Congress' actions during the lame-duck session—the months following the election but before the next session



Center on Halsted's Vanessa Sheridan and U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley at "Trans Talk."

Photo by Bronson Pettitt

of Congress.

"I think [Republicans] will attempt to do some extraordinarily bad things. And that will include immigration, I think it will include healthcare, I think it will include equality matters," Quigley said.

"When we separate families at the border and we ban Muslims and we build walls, we do all these things—I hear people say, 'That's not who we are as a country.' My answer is: If we don't change things in November, that is it. That is who we are," Quigley said.

In addition to getting involved in the elections, Quigley stressed the importance of listen-

ing to others' perspectives.

"It's important to try to understand what is motivating those that you disagree with. Some of it is impossible: bigotry, hatred. But how do you get to those other folks—how do you build that middle ground?"

"If all we do is surround ourselves with people who solidly agree with us, we're not going to make the next stride forward. You've got to convince them that this is in their interest. Why should they care about gun control, climate change, better schools, injustice—we made strides but we made them [by] slipping into the skin of someone else."

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Photo: Mike Wenzel

Wetzel wins Niles LGBT housing case

Lesbian senior Marsha Wetzel has prevailed in an Illinois housing case that could have far-reaching implications.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, on Aug. 27, overturned a lower-court ruling and held that Glen St. Andrew Living Community, LLC, in Niles, Illinois, can be held accountable for purposefully failing to protect Wetzel from the harassment, discrimination and violence she suffered at the hands of other residents because of her gender and sexual orientation.

After she disclosed to other residents that she had been in a three-decade relationship with a woman and that they had raised a child together, some residents began to harass her, physically attack her and call her names like "fucking dyke," "fucking faggot" and "homosexual bitch."

"This is a tremendous victory for Marsha," said Lambda Legal Senior Counsel and Seniors Strategist Karen Loewy in a statement. "She, just like all people living in rental housing, whether LGBT or not, should be assured that they will at least be safe from discriminatory



Marsha Wetzel.

Photo courtesy of Lambda Legal

harassment in their own homes. What happened to Marsha was illegal and unconscionable, and the Court has now put all landlords on notice that they have an obligation to take action to stop known harassment."

Loewy, along with Law Fellow Kara Ingelhart as well as Foley & Lardner LLP Co-Counsel John Litchfield, Ellen Wheeler, Will Lopez and A.J. Schumacher are litigating the case. For more information about the case, visit https://www.lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/il_wetzel-v-glen-st-andrew.

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Leonard Bernstein's son discusses father's legacy

BY NOAH MCCARTHY

Leonard Bernstein would have been 100 years old this August. As one of the foremost composers of the postwar era, his legacy has resounded into modern times. Among his most famous works are *Candide*, *Symphony No. 1*, and his scores to *Peter Pan* and *West Side Story*.

His son, Alexander Bernstein, discussed his father's legacy with *Windy City Times*.

Windy City Times: You're president of Artful Learning, which was founded by your father. How large a part of his legacy is that, and how concerned are you with carrying it on?

AB: It's a crucial part of his legacy. Education was such a big part of his life's work, and it's been sort of a line through everything. He had to communicate everything he felt and knew. He always said that he hated to be alone. He had this need to share everything, and that was at the core of his teaching. [Toward] the end of his life, he was thinking more and more about the arts in general being the great connector of all disciplines, seeing teaching and learning as basically creative forces. ... Sadly, he died right at the beginning of [Artful Learning], but I was teaching and getting my master's in education at the same time, and thinking along many of the same lines. The trustees of the estate and my sisters and I decided to keep it going. To this day, it's very successful and doing wonderful work in many schools around the country.

WCT: He sounds to me like someone who might handle fame well. Do you think he had to adapt to fame, and did his relationship with it evolve as he grew older?

AB: I think he enjoyed it so much for a long time. He wasn't shocked or unready for it at the beginning. I remember growing up, [that] he loved meeting new people. My sisters and I often say that his mission was to meet every person in the world. As he got older and, in the '80s particularly, the fame became a little more of a burden. It became kind of an industry more than fun, and the entourage got a little bigger. I remember him saying at one point, "I'm sick of Leonard Bernstein."

WCT: Did he protect you from the public eye when you were growing up?

AB: Not so much; I don't think he thought of it that way. He made it fun. It was occasionally cringe-worthy. On the rare occasions when he would come to my school for a performance, he would act up. I wanted to run and hide somewhere but, apart from that, it was very positive.

WCT: What was he like as a dad?

AB: He was a lot of fun. He loved being around his kids. We never felt that we couldn't go into his studio or that we couldn't bother him. He had an office to go to and sometimes he was up very late composing. Whatever he was doing, he never slept.

I never saw [my mother and father] fight. For all the tension that we learned about later, they never displayed it in front of us. He was a terrific dad and he was always teaching us about anything: politics, history, language. Any dinner table conversation always wound up being a lecture about something.

WCT: He was so public and loved people, but at the same time he didn't come out until much later. Why do you think he kept [his



Leonard Bernstein conducting.

Photo by Paul de Hueck, courtesy of the Leonard Bernstein Office

sexuality] concealed for so long?

AB: In those days it was very difficult—especially if you were a public figure. He was the music director of the New York Philharmonic. He certainly wouldn't have gotten that job, or very many others, if he'd been out. He was a man with a family. I think it was just unthinkable for him. He thought about his mother all the time, and what that would have meant for her. I'm sure that was true in those days for so many gay men. So when he did come out, it was a big deal for him and for my grandmother.

WCT: How has his legacy changed over the years?

AB: His compositions ... have been growing in estimation around the world, which is really gratifying. I think for a long time, certainly while he was alive, if you weren't a 12-tone, atonal composer you weren't taken seriously by academia, or the world of music.

Now, more and more people appreciate and miss his educational abilities. People are always asking me, "Who do you think can be our Leonard Bernstein? Who is that extraordinary mix of personality, knowledge and the ability to teach?"

And of course, there's nobody—he's *sui generis*.

WCT: Do you think there are any misconceptions people have about him?

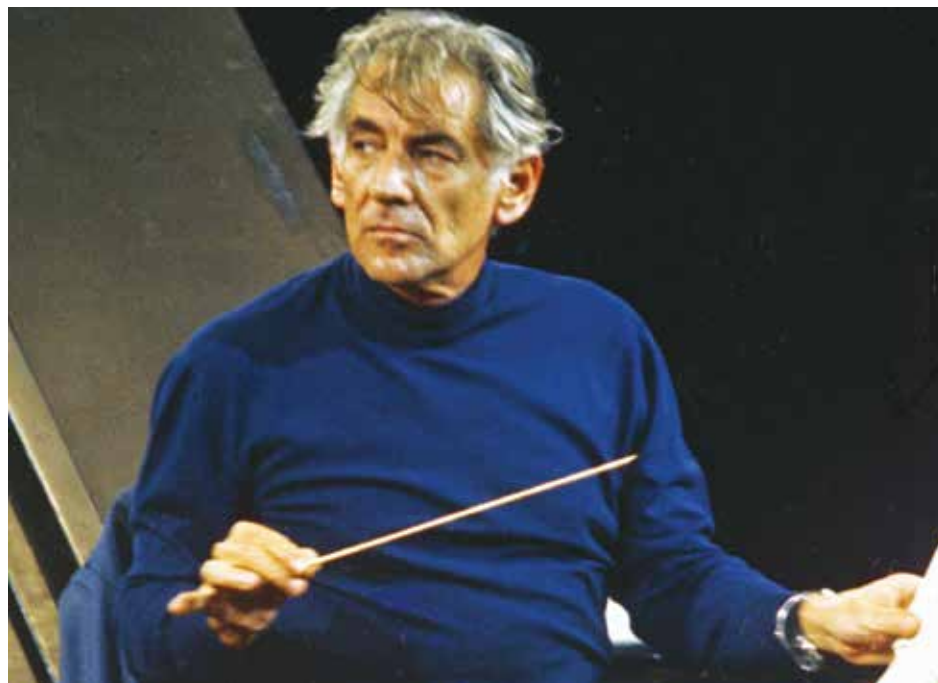
AB: A little bit about his being a showboat on the podium—that he was just showing off and being a ham. But, it was all to a purpose. He didn't choreograph himself. It was all very spontaneous. No two performances were alike.

WCT: Is there a piece that he wrote that you're particularly glad has grown in esteem recently?

AB: *Serenade* is getting played by the world's top violinists, which is wonderful, as it's really such a great piece. *Candide* is our surprise star of the centennial. It has been done all over the world in many versions.

Mass is being done a lot as well, but mostly in concert versions because it's so enormous and hard to produce. It has a cast of hundreds and hundreds involved: various choirs, an orchestra, a marching band. It's very wonderful to know that Mass is out there and being done so much, and I've seen some wonderful performances.

See the work Alexander does with Artful Learning at ArtfulLearning.org.



Leonard Bernstein in 1973.

Photo by Allan Warren

Chorus notes Bernstein at Legacy Walk

On Aug. 25, members of The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, under the musical direction of Jimmy Morehead, performed Leonard Bernstein's "Somewhere" in a live pop-up performance as part of WFMT Radio's celebration of the composer's birth. The performance took place on the corner of Waveland Avenue and Halsted Street in front of the Legacy Walk memorial plaque dedicated to Bernstein.

Bernstein would have turned 100 on Aug. 25.

Photos and text by Vernon Hester



Legacy Project Executive Director Victor Salvo (far left) and members of the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus.

Photo by Vern Hester

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Top: Chorus director Jimmy Morehead and WFMT host David Polk. Above: The plaque of Leonard Bernstein on Chicago's Legacy Walk. Top photo by Allan Warren; above photo by Melissa Wasserman

Lurie program matches transgender teens with adult role models

BY TONY PEREGRIN

TransMentor—a one-on-one mentoring program believed to be the first of its kind in the United States—pairs trans and gender non-conforming youth ages 13-20 with trans and gender-expansive adult mentors in an effort to help these teens thrive and achieve their goals. Organized by the Gender & Sex Development Program at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, the initiative includes weekly check-ins and bimonthly social events with a one-year commitment.

The TransMentor program, which officially launches in September, arrives at a key socio-cultural moment in America. In a recent Atlantic cover story titled, "When Children Say They're Trans," journalist Jesse Singal suggests the dawning of a new era of "gender-identity awareness" that could make "life easier for many young people who feel constricted by the sometimes-oppressive nature of gender expectations." While this awareness is a move in the right direction, TransMentor organizers realized that mentorship—by someone who has "walked the talk"—is even more essential for helping teens explore

their gender identity.

Windy City Times spoke with the TransMentor Program Coordinator, Josephine Kearns, 35, who identifies as transgender, about the genesis for this singular initiative, the benefits of a formalized mentorship program, and the biggest misconception regarding gender-fluid youth.

Windy City Times: The TransMentor Program is likely the first of its kind in the United States. What was the genesis for developing this initiative?

Josephine Kearns: We looked for another program similar to the TransMentor program, and we have not been able to find one, except in Toronto, Canada—so we believe it's the first of its type in the U.S., and when I say the first of its type, I mean the first mentorship program specifically designed to serve trans youth. The idea came from a number of places, specifically focus groups organized by Lurie's Gender Program, which involved asking trans youth what services they're interested in—and mentorship was a very popular option.

WCT: What topics do you anticipate mentors and mentees will discuss in these one-on-one



Josephine Kearns.

Photo courtesy of Lurie Children's Hospital

pairings?

JK: A lot of the topics that the mentees have expressed interest in are actually pretty common for this age group, such as questions about dating, and suggestions for overcoming the challenges of high school, and then college, depending on the age of the youth. They're really eager to talk to an adult who shares their identity and simply ask, "Hey, what was this like for you?" I think in a lot of cases they are just looking for someone who's been through it.

So, maybe if they have questions about the coming-out process or they have people in their lives who are having a hard time grappling with that aspect of their identity, they can talk to an adult who has been through that already, and who can say to them, "Yep, I had a hard time with this and here's how it turned out years later." I think just giving them some big picture context is incredibly valuable.

WCT: How does a mentoring relationship within a formal structure, like the TransMentor program, differ from a relationship that's more informal and organic?

JK: I think there is a very real place and value for informal mentoring relationships, too. But the reason that we're setting up the program to create these formal relationships is because so many youth do not have access to an adult who shares their identity to even begin to think about crafting those relationships. Both types of mentoring relationships are necessary and important in the lives of young people. I think that the TransMentor program is just a way to give youth access to a specific group of adults that they really want to get to know and otherwise might not have an opportunity to.

WCT: Describe your vision for the bi-monthly social events that are part of the TransMentor

program.

JK: We're trying to craft the program around the wants and needs of the youth above all else. And so, as we get into it, we'll determine what sorts of things they are interested in. But a lot of it is simply creating a relaxed space. For example, in October there's a Shake Shack location downtown that has donated food and space for us to meet—they basically said "Hey, come hang out here." And so we're going to have an event there for all of the mentors and mentees, to help everyone get to know each other in a social setting.

WCT: You've had approximately 25 potential mentees express interest in the program and double as many mentors. Why do you think there is such an interest in the mentor role?

JK: What we hear over and over again from our mentor candidates is that when they were growing up, they wished they had access to a program like this. And now that this program exists, they really want to be able to give that to another young person—that's the refrain we hear from almost every person that we talk to.

WCT: How can potential mentors and mentees best determine if the TransMentor program—a year-long commitment—is a good fit for them?

JK: I think for the mentors it's really important that they self-assess and ask themselves "Do I have the emotional awareness and capacity to give to a young person in this way?" The mentors need to be in a solid enough place on their own journey that they're capable of supporting someone else. Potential mentors should also be able to commit to this young person for at least a full year. It's really important to us as a program that we aren't setting up mentees to start building a relationship with someone and then lose that person prematurely.

WCT: And what about the mentees?

JK: The questions I ask mentees are: "What kind of person are you looking to have in your life? Are you looking for a parental figure or are you actually looking for an adult who you can ask really specific questions of or who can help you with these specific goals that you have?" We want to make sure that they have realistic expectations of what a mentor can and cannot be for them.

WCT: What happens at the end of the year-long commitment? If the mentor/mentee form a strong bond are they permitted to continue their relationship beyond the parameters of the program?

JK: Yes, they can. The way we have it set up now is that at the end of the year, we'll meet with the mentor and the mentee and ask them "What would you like this to look like going forward?" We'll figure out what makes the most sense after that year for each pairing, but the expectation is absolutely that some of the pairs would want to continue longer than a year.

WCT: Do you anticipate any pushback from mentees' parents?

JK: That's a good question. So, we can't accept mentees into the program if they're under 18, unless they have parental consent.

WCT: How do you respond to a gender-nonconforming or trans teen whose parents won't sign a TransMentor consent form but

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McCain memorial service details set

U.S. Sen. John McCain's (R-Ariz.) memorial service will be held at the Washington National Cathedral on Saturday, Sept. 1, and his burial will follow at the U.S. Naval Academy the following day.

In addition, McCain will lie in state at the Arizona Capitol on Aug. 29, followed by a memorial service in Phoenix on Aug. 30.

McCain—who was a naval bomber pilot, prisoner of war in Vietnam and presidential candidate—died Aug. 25 at age 81. The cause of his death was brain cancer, and it was publicized Aug. 24 that he was refused any more treatment for the disease.

When he died, McCain was considered a maverick within his own party, as one of the few Republicans willing to criticize President Trump, who had made some controversial comments of his own about McCain. Last September, in a final act of defiance, McCain delivered a thumbs-down gesture on the Senate floor—casting the vote that halted the GOP's effort to repeal and replace Obamacare.

McCain did not always back LGBTQ rights (calling the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" a "sad day"), and he generally received low scores on the Human Rights Campaign's Congressional Scorecard, Advocate.com noted. However, he became more of an ally as his career progressed, doing things such as backing the confirmation of Eric Fanning, the gay man President Obama nominated to be secretary of the Army. McCain also spoke out against Trump's efforts to ban transgender people from serving in the military.

Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin said in a statement, "Senator McCain was a patriot and a hero, whose life was defined by his service and sacrifice on behalf of our country. While we disagreed on many issues, later in his career, he became an increasingly vocal advocate for LGBTQ service members."

McCain, who was divorced from his first wife,

Carol, in 1980, is survived by his wife, Cindy; seven children including Meghan McCain, a co-host on the TV show The View; and his mother, Roberta, age 106. (Cindy and Meghan have become vocal LGBT allies as well.)

The Advocate's article on McCain's passing is at <https://www.advocate.com/politicians/2018/8/25/john-mccain-veteran-senator-presidential-nominee-dead>.

Lesbian judge has hearing for federal appointment

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicagoan Mary W. Rowland, who has served as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Northern District of Illinois since 2012, appeared Aug. 22 before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Rowland, who is lesbian, was nominated in June by President Donald Trump for a post as a district judge in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She is the only person among those nominated for the judiciary by Trump who is part of the LGBT community.

According to The Washington Blade, the Aug. 22 hearing was relatively straightforward and free from controversy, with Rowland drawing praise from, among others, Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth. Rowland was not asked about the LGBT community during the hearing.

Prior to her time on the bench, Rowland was a partner in the Chicago firm of Hughes, Socol, Piers, Resnick & Dym, Ltd., where she handled a number of high-profile discrimination cases. She also worked as in the Chicago office of the Federal Defender and is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago.

Washington Blade's story is at <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2018/08/22/trumps-lesbian-pick-for-judiciary-enjoys-bipartisan-support-breezy-hearing/>.

ing with our team to determine mostly mentor and mentee satisfaction. I do want to say that, at the moment, we don't have any specific research projects that have been approved or anything like that. We're really just setting it up for our own internal measures at this point.

WCT: What are some of the more common misconceptions you've encountered regarding transgender youth?

JK: That is a big question. I think something that trans youth hear from adults a lot is the notion of "You're just going through a phase." At the end of the day, being a young person is about exploring your identity and trying different things and figuring out what's right for you. It's not really our place as adults to judge. It's really just about supporting them where they are, as they grow into the person that they want to become.

For more about the TransMentor program, visit <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/specialties-conditions/gender-identity-children/transmentor/>.

This Week's Featured Properties



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

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



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

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



With expansive views East and North of the harbor, park, and lake beyond, this is what pre-war Lake Shore Drive living is all about. Sprawling 3-bedroom/3-bath residence.

3530 N. Lake Shore Dr. #7A
\$569,000



Rare opportunity for expansive 2-bedroom in newer boutique East Lakeview elevator building with two attached heated garage spaces (one included in price)!

545 W. Aldine Ave. #4D
\$570,000



Cool concrete loft with expansive wall of windows, soaring 18' ceilings, private balcony, fireplace. Heated garage parking included. Prime location conveniently located to three neighborhood grocery options, walking distance to the Lake and Wrigley Field, and steps from the el, cafes and fun of the neighborhood.

3631 N. Halsted #406
\$279,000



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LURIE from page 10

they obviously are in need of a mentor?

JK: I would tell them that I really, really wish we could help them, but this program isn't the best way for us to do it.

WCT: Where do you suggest they find alternative resources?

JK: Probably the best place is through school, like through school social workers.

WCT: Tracking data is key in order to measure success for any health- or wellness-related program: How do you plan to track data for the TransMentor program?

JK: It was really important to us in setting up this program that we make it two things: That we make it replicable because we felt it was important to do something that, if we're successful, can be copied and done in other places—so we built the whole thing with an eye toward that. And the other part was gathering data in order to determine the impact of the program. We have a research who is work-

viewpoints



**Dana
RUDOLPH**

MOMBIAN

What's possible in LGBT-inclusive classrooms

As the hot days of August try to tempt us into laziness, another influence pulls at many of us parents—the increasingly loud voice in the back of our heads that says school will soon be starting for our children. Can we fit in one more trip to the beach or to visit family? What's on the school supply list?

For LGBTQ parents, back-to-school time can also bring worries about whether our children will have their family structure and identities supported. Will the school and classroom climate be safe and welcoming? Will they find a community of supportive peers? Will the curriculum reflect families like theirs? It can all be a bit overwhelming. For those seeking advice and assistance, I've updated my annual annotated list of LGBTQ Back-to-School Resources at mombian.com.

I want to focus here, however, on my favorite new educational resource of the year, for it offers a wonderful model of what is possible in LGBTQ-inclusive education. *Reading the Rainbow: LGBTQ-Inclusive Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Classroom* (Teachers College Press and GLSEN), by Caitlin L. Ryan and Jill M. Hermann-Wilmarth is a slim (160-page) volume to help elementary school English language arts (ELA) teachers introduce or deepen classroom discussions around LGBTQ identity and gender. It's full of practical tips and ideas backed by curricular standards and classroom experience—but even if you're not a teacher (or teach another subject), it may provide much food for thought. Its brilliance lies in the way it offers tools for teachers who may have varying degrees of experience or comfort in addressing LGBTQ topics, and in showing how classrooms could become more inclusive even in schools resistant to such topics.

Ryan and Herman-Wilmarth each have years of experience teaching in elementary classrooms, although they now hold positions in higher education. They draw not only from their own experiences, but also from those of three other teachers whose classrooms they have studied (and in some instances,

co-taught in) for several years. Ryan and Herman-Wilmarth both identify as queer, lesbian, cisgender and white, as does one of the other teachers; the remaining two are white, straight, cisgender allies. I wish this panel had been more diverse—teachers of color and transgender teachers would have added important perspectives—but they nevertheless provide a starting point as well as allies' ways of looking at the intersections of gender, race, and other identities.

READING THE RAINBOW



LGBTQ-Inclusive Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Classroom

CAITLIN L. RYAN AND JILL M. HERMANN-WILMARTH
Foreword by Mariano Souto-Manning

By including LGBTQ people and ideas in classrooms, the authors explain, teachers provide students with “new windows and mirrors of the world around them.” The authors offer many examples of how their panel of teachers helped students use inclusive texts to better understand their own lives or the lives and situations of others. Along the way, students practiced language arts skills, such as learning multiple meanings of words, using more nuanced vocabulary, and crafting arguments.

At the same time, the authors caution that a single LGBTQ-inclusive book cannot show the full range of LGBTQ lives—and indeed, the number of such books for elementary-age readers is still limited, particularly in showing LGBTQ people who are not White, suburban, or partnered. For this reason, and because some teachers may still find it challenging to overcome (unwarranted) parental and administrative

concerns about LGBTQ-inclusive books, Ryan and Herman-Wilmarth also explore how to “queue,” i.e., “mess up and complicate,” traditional categories related to bodies, gender, sexual orientation, and love, even when not explicitly reading or talking about LGBTQ people. Classrooms can explore ideas of gender expectations, for example, even in books without LGBTQ characters. The authors acknowledge that this approach can, if mishandled, lead to the ongoing silencing of LGBTQ identities, but as a supplemental approach, it may begin to shift students' understanding, especially in places where discussion of clearly LGBTQ characters may not yet be possible.

Ryan and Herman-Wilmarth also say that teachers should go beyond simply asking if LGBTQ people are represented and look more closely at “how they are represented and what the overall message is to students as a result.” For example, how can teachers expand the representation of LGBTQ people but also critique the ways in which portrayals are limited by race, class, or other intersecting identities? Again, the authors provide examples of this in practice, and connect them to specific ELA skills, such as clarifying terms, conducting independent research, writing prompts and engaging in classroom discussion.

They also offer resources for finding support and recommend that teachers familiarize themselves with their states' nondiscrimination and safe-schools laws (or lack thereof). Laws aside, they also suggest various ways of talking with parents and administrators about introducing LGBTQ-inclusive books or topics. And they list a small selection of picture and chapter books, media resources, and lesson plans.

Reading the Rainbow is a nuanced, practical volume, showing how a truly LGBTQ-inclusive classroom, benefitting children of all identities, means more than just reading a book or two. ELA teachers should value it—but it may also provide inspiration to teachers in other areas, including history/social studies and art, to get them thinking about similar approaches in their own fields. For us parents, it may even offer a model to guide the ways we read and discuss books with our children at home.

I chose to highlight this book because we deserve something positive to start the school year. I don't want to minimize the challenges we may face, individually and collectively—but I hope we take heart, knowing that such resources—and teachers like the authors and their colleagues—exist.

May our children have a school year full of friendship, inclusion and learning.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (Mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

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



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Among the celebrities at Comic Con was Star Trek original Nichelle Nichols.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

THEATER FEATURE

One-woman show focuses on challenges of raising a trans child

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

Megan Wells has dedicated the last 25 years of her life to storytelling and solo performance. She believes that granting extended time and space to solo performers will help them deepen their stories and connect audiences to previously underrepresented narratives. To that end, Wells and Scott Jones have organized the Power of One, a solo performance series that opens at the Oak Park venue's studio space on August 31. The series begins with Big Giant Love, written and performed by Maureen Muldoon.

Big Giant Love portrays what Wells characterizes as an "exploded moment" for Muldoon. The show follows Muldoon as her child announces that they are transitioning to a new gender identity. "Once she comes across her child's decision," Wells said, "the moment explodes for her. She must look at what she thinks, what she feels, how to embrace it, how to explore the community, how to deal with the whole protective parent thing."

Wells and Jones—who are, respectively, Madison Street Theatre's artistic and managing directors—chose to open the series with Big Giant Love because it asks questions they believe everyone should be exploring. "We wanted to make a dent in social circumstances in our area," Jones said. "How a mom handles her child transitioning is a big deal."

Wells has been developing the show with Muldoon for a year. "It's vulnerable, it's funny, it's

smart. She sings. It's the kind of voice we need around these issues," Wells said. "When we look back on the belief that there are only certain ways to define gender, I hope that we end up twenty years from now saying, 'How insane was that?'"

The Power of One series aims to give a diverse set of solo performers a platform to voice their experience of greater social issues. The three subsequent shows will spotlight veterans, one woman's experience of a rally led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and an examination of biodiversity performed by Wells herself.

"Solo performance is this amazing blend of theatre, storytelling, and improv," Wells said. Madison Street's black box space, she added, will fuel intimacy, empathy and growth between audience and artist.

Jones finds the studio provides an opportunity to explore the dramatic dimensions of each story told. "For Maureen's show, we have a very simple living room setting," he said, "(T)hat adds a nice theatrical element that you don't always have in solo spaces."

"I think the biggest question in Big Giant Love is, 'What in my own life is in my way of a bigger, more giant love?'" Wells said. "What's really vulnerable is that this is a young person moving into a different understanding of gender."

"That's a very big question we're all holding right now. What is too young to know? Maybe there's never too young to know. And yet there is too young to know because we try on a lot of



Megan Wells.

Photo by Joe Mazza

different identities in our adolescent years. How do we love our adolescents through exploration all the way up through to a declaration?"

Wells sees the series' longer performance runs as a learning process for the artists, noting, "We want this to be a place to grow. Not too many spaces run shows for four weekends. A show grows on its feet in front of audiences."

She and Jones hope to continue the series next season, adding even more diverse voices to the line-up over time. "We hope we'll be the place

where you grow your show."

Wells explained that they wanted to be on "the social edge" in showcasing shows like Big Giant Love.

"Maybe these stories can help you," she said. "They can show you you're not alone. They can lift you up."

The Power of One runs Aug. 31–Sept. 3 at the Madison Street Theatre, 1010 W. Madison St. Tickets are \$15; visit www.MSTOakPark.com.

THEATER REVIEW

Tres Banditos

Playwright: Cody Lucas

At: The Agency Theater Collective at the Heartland Studio, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave.

Tickets: \$15 or pay-what-you-can;

Wearetheagency.org 773-680-4596

Runs through: Sept. 15

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

You've got these three guys planning to rob a bank, see, but their plan is temporarily derailed by heavy rain and a dead battery in the getaway car, forcing them to take refuge in the kind of dingy Texas motor court where the rooms are so spartan as to resemble those in a monastery (with a crucifix on the wall by way of decor). In the absence of TV or radio to pass the time while avoiding the scrutiny of fellow lodgers, the

would-be desperadoes are left to their own resources. When a friendly card game precipitates each one to name his favorite Western movie, the answers tell us immediately that this venture will not end well.

So is this a heist puzzle, a bunker drama, a men-in-groups sociological study, a John Ford morality fable, a Sergio Leone staring-contest, or a Sam Shepard ghost story? It only takes Cody Lucas a little over an hour to cobble together our expectations into a taut little thriller progressing with more twists and turns than a desert sidewinder, as we learn—along with the co-conspirators themselves—the individual backstories leading them to embark on this risky proposition and the reasons behind the necessity of securing large quantities of money *right away*. (Hint for playgoers contemplating a life of crime: Never initiate a project under expedient conditions, never attempt to improvise when stealing from coffers already fortified against invasion and always make

Joe Lino in *Tres Banditos*.

Photo by Katie Reynolds



THEATER REVIEW

El Grande de Coca-Cola

Playwrights: Ron House, Diz White, Alan Shearman, and John Neville-Andrews

At: Berger Park Coach House, 6215 N. Sheridan Rd.

Tickets: ElGrandeDeCocaCola.com; \$20-\$60

Runs through: Sept. 29

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Down a margarita or two before seeing El Grande de Coca-Cola—they are available for purchase before the show or included in a dinner-and-

show combo (taco bar and open bar). Y'see, El Grande de Coca-Cola is designed to be a really tacky testament to minimal competence, with over-the-top gaudiness (Diane Hamm, costumes) and considerably-under-the-top talent in so-bad-it's-good fashion.

A '70s international hit, this little show first was seen in Chicago close to 40 years ago. There have been few local productions since then, perhaps in part because its south-of-the-border cantina setting and comic pidgin Spanish might be regarded as insults to Latin culture, especially in the Trump era. This new version employs a Latinx cast and director.

In truth, one could take the El Grande de Coca-Cola concept and easily translate it to a French or Yiddish or Greek or whatever context because silly, endearing, grandiose and talentless performers can be found in every culture! Perhaps the

same may be said of critics (not *me*, of course).

So cantina owner Don Pepe Hernandez (Johnny Garcia) has lured you in with the promise of international stars. Surprise—they don't show up! Instead, Don Pepe and his family throw together a nightclub show involving many costume changes and every bad act you can imagine: acrobats, a magician, tango dancers, a mentalist, German punk rockers, bad ballet and pseudo-Spanish Shakespeare ("*Un burro, un burro! Espana por un burro!*"). They not only are bad but also clumsy, and much of the humor comes from head-banging and pratfalls. Slapstick is not to all tastes, so be warned and finish your margarita.

Director/choreographer John Martinez and producer Frank Pullen abandon much of the original script and music, instead providing more contemporary updates. I might be the only one who knows that—so long ago was this show last

sure you know who your allies are.)

This material, however well-crafted, could have emerged just another rats-in-a-jar writing-workshop exercise, featuring characters familiar from the Hollywood canon, if not for the intensely personalized performances of Guy Wicke, Joe Lino and author Lucas, delivered with the guidance of co-directors Cordie Nelson and Jack Schultz.

Fight director Hannah Tarr and weapons master Edward Karch ensure that the inevitable gunfire is firmly integrated into the dramatic action, Chas Mathieu's scenic design invokes stark flatlands and sun-baked stucco cells, and the close quarters in the Heartland studio are rendered even more claustrophobic by lighting designer Ellie Humphrys and sound designer Ryan Wiechmann's replication of an electrical storm so real as to completely erase our memory of a balmy summer evening on Glenwood Avenue during its tension-filled 65 minutes.

seen locally—and it doesn't matter, because the show's concept is everything while the format is meant to be elastic.

Martinez is a skilled choreographer intentionally making it bad, but even so it's clear that lithe Pauleth Jauregui (as Consuelo Hernandez) and toothy Christian Valdivieso (Miguel Hernandez) have real dancing chops. The best comic business goes to Sophie Hernando Kofman (as Maria Hernandez) and Richard Gomez (master of droll facial expressions as Juan Rodriguez). As Don Pepe, dressed in all-white formal tails, Garcia for better-or-worse channels ultimate Latino TV host Don Francisco

El Grande de Coca-Cola essentially is a one-trick pony, so the one-hour running time is about right for this sort of fluff, and the intimate lake-front locale is ideal. Kick back with a rum-and-Coke and enjoy.

THEATER REVIEW

Vietgone

By: Qui Nguyen

At: Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe

Tickets: 847-242-6000 or

WritersTheatre.org; \$33-\$60

Runs through: Sept. 23

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Director Lavina Jadhvani and playwright Qui Nguyen are a formidable team. The sum of their efforts—Writers Theatre's production of Nguyen's *Vietgone*—is a wildly entertaining, genre-busting epic. The saga of an unlikely road trip and an unlikely courtship, it's also a war story that breaks with trope and stereotype. May that breakage never be repaired.

As the action moves from Vietnam to a U.S. refugee camp to a cross-country motorcycle journey, the production is illuminating, thrilling, funny, harrowing, tragic, joyful and audaciously sex-positive. The courtship of Tong (Aurora Adachi-Winter) and Quang (Matthew C. Yee) is a rom-com that's smart, cutting and a million

miles away from the saccharine dreck rom-coms usually traffic in.

Nguyen's dialogue is propelled by urgency and admirably creative profanities. It's peppered by expertly deployed hip-hop, a verbal fusillade overseen by music director and composer Gabriel Ruiz. Yee and Adachi-Winter turn words into projectiles, fired with the fervor of a thousand suns.

Finding refuge (sort of) in a refugee camp in the American South, Quang's heroic attempts to get back to his wife and children in Vietnam and his slowly blooming relationship with the strong-willed Tong comprise the bulk of *Vietgone*'s fast-moving plot.

As the action unfolds, Nguyen skewers stereotypes and mines pop culture. There are references to everything from Mickey Rooney in yellowface to Jennifer Grey in *Dirty Dancing* to any actress who has ever played a delicate Asian flower *a la* Madame Butterfly.

Nguyen's humor crops up in unexpected places. Take, for example, a scene where full-on ninjas go ballistic while a gas station explodes in a firestorm. You'll want to memorize the moment Quang nonchalantly walks away from an inferno

behind him (crucially, not even bothering to look back). File the image in your mind. You'll want to refer back to it on those days when your own world seems in flames.

Jadhvani's cast is flawless. As Tung, Adachi-Winter is—as her character notes—the exact opposite of your typical Asian woman stereotype. Yee's Quang is a propulsive package of effortless sex appeal, understated charisma and bone-deep loyalty. He's simultaneously marvelously and a winning mashup of James Dean, Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan to Bradley Cooper.

As Quang's ride-or-die buddy (among other roles), Rammel Chan is the best friend everybody needs. He's riding "bitch" on Quang's motorcycle for much of the production, but he's nobody's sidekick.

Alongside the sheer entertainment value of *Vietgone*, there's a history lesson that millions would do well to hear. In the final scene, we see Quang being interviewed by his adult son. Quang's words illustrate how hard it is to understand war from a distance of half a century and thousands of miles. It's fascinating and moving, and a side of history that's not usually taught.

CRITICS' PICKS

Haymarket, Underscore Theatre @ Theater Wit, through Sept. 16. Sounds like folk music, but it's a sophisticated score that offers a wives' view of Chicago's 1886 Haymarket Martyrs. Twelve gifted singer-actors also play many instruments. JA

Chicago Magic Lounge, open run. David Parr, aka the magician who stumped Penn and Teller, headlines every Wednesday night, but while you're settling into the swanky cocktail room, Benjamin Barnes and his fellow card sharps will prestigitate right up close and cozy at your table. MSB

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

—By Abarbanel and Barnidge

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THEATER FEATURE

Mary Bonnett tackles child sex trafficking with fact-based drama

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Enter the chat rooms where men buy and sell children for sex, and you might initially think you're in the domain of avid stamp collectors or car enthusiasts. Men with names like "Daring Dan" and "Chicago Al" express passion for their "hobby." They enthuse about "new product." They trade tips on where to go for highly specialized amenities. They give reviews of their purchases, compare price points and boast about their acquisitions. Senior "mongers" help newbies navigate.

Keep reading and the perpetrators of a multi-billion dollar human trafficking industry show their true colors. They swap info on hotels that look the other way at a constant stream of men checking in with girls who look like they could be their granddaughters. They confer on how to spot cops. They strategize on how to keep their "hobby" a secret from their churches, their children, their wives, their coworkers.

Opening Aug. 30 at the Greenhouse Theater Center, Mary Bonnett's *Monger* is her fourth play about children and sex trafficking, all produced by Chicago's Her Story Theater. "It's an incredibly lucrative industry. That's what makes it so difficult to fight. A lot of very bad people are making a lot of money," Bonnett said.

Bonnett has been addressing the sex trafficking of minors since 2013, when she debuted *Shadow Town*, the story of sex trafficking and children, told from the supply side. Her next play, *The Johns*, depicted the men who buy children for sex. *Money Make 'Em Smile* is a piece she wrote for seventh graders about how young people their own age are trafficked.

Bonnett has interviewed buyers, sellers and trafficked children firsthand. For years, she's been frequenting the "monger" (as in "whoremonger") chat rooms, anonymous places where men hiding

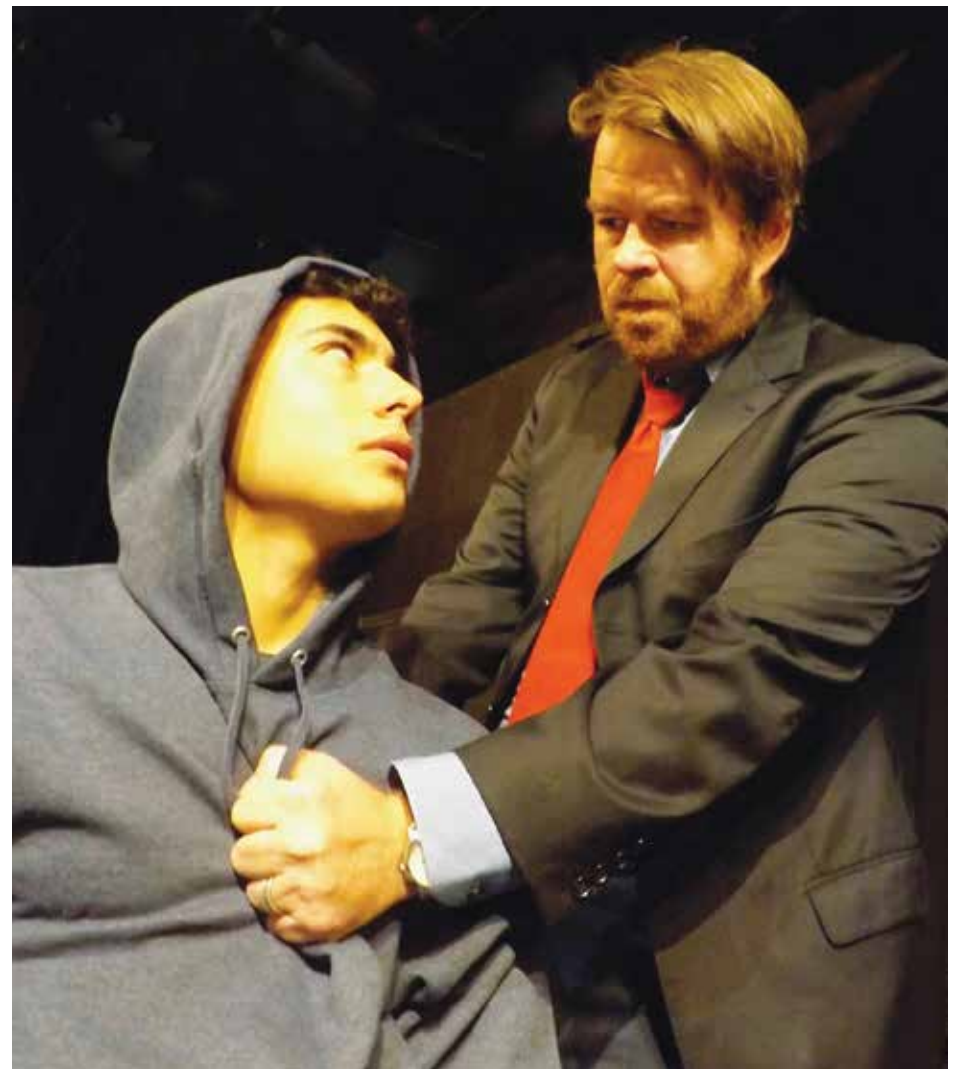
behind pseudonyms and encryption make plans to rape children, then return to boast about their actions. Bonnett's interviews sometimes come from men "in recovery" and are trying to help, but they always are on untraceable burner phones. She's talked to social workers, detectives, school guidance counselors and students. She's heard directly from girls who have been trafficked, whose stories are usually unseen even when they play out in plain sight.

"When I talk to the johns, they don't see what they do as a problem. They'll say, 'I'm a good father, a good husband. This is my hobby,' like it's a sport. They don't see the girls as people. They see them as a product. And like any product, they're entitled to get what they've paid for," Bonnett said.

Bonnett's dialogue contains verbatim passages from the chat rooms and her interviews. *Monger* deals with a "senior monger" in the chat rooms: JB is a high-powered attorney called on to take a statement from the mother of a 16-year-old girl who has been trafficked and murdered. The play was inspired in part by Desiree Robinson, 16, who was found badly beaten and with her throat slit in a Markham garage on Christmas Eve, 2016. The *Sun-Times* reported that before she died, Desiree made a final Facebook post: "He won't let me leave."

Roughly two million minors are sexually trafficked every year, according to statistics from Ark of Hope and UNICEF. The average age of a child when they are first trafficked is 12. For those who stay in the industry, the average life span is another seven years. Common causes of death include AIDS, malnutrition, drug overdose, suicide and homicide.

The play ties trafficking to toxic masculinity, said *Monger* director John Mossman. JB, for example, offers to buy his sensitive, artistic son a



Joshua Zambrano (left) and Ira Amyx.

Photo by John Mossman

girl as a means of helping the kid "be a man." When the son snaps after years of bullying and beats up a high school jock, the father is proud. Mossman has a history of directing plays and films that deal with masculinity, but *Monger* stretched him beyond his comfort zone.

"I've had to limit my visits to chat rooms. They make me feel infected," Mossman said. "I don't like talking about what goes on. But we have to. It's important. You can't intellectualize it. You have to realize it's happening in real life. Every single day. Maybe to people you know."

They are also people in the immediate area. JB was inspired by a real-life Chicago lawyer, Bonnett said. JB's son is based on an interview she did with a high school boy who had been bullied. As for Diamond Jones, the never-seen dead girl at the heart of the play, a version of her story is playing out in the court systems right now.

Charles McFee has pled guilty to recruiting Desiree Robinson into the trafficking industry. He was reportedly promised a \$250 "finders fee" for

bringing Desiree to Joseph Hazley, 33, who was arrested and charged with the sex trafficking of a minor. Antonio Rosales is charged with buying Desiree Robinson, and killing her.

While Desiree Robinson's case continues in court, Her Story is continuing its mission to fight trafficking. The company has donated more than \$40,000 in ticket sales to organizations dedicated to fighting sex trafficking.

For those who want to donate to anti-trafficking non-profits, Bonnett recommends the following:

—Traffick Free: <https://traffickfree.org/donate/>.

—CAASE: <http://caase.org/donate>.

—The Dreamcatcher Foundation: <https://thedreamcatcherfoundation.org/donations/>.

Mongers runs Aug. 30-Sept. 30 in a Her Story production at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. See GreenhouseTheater.org.

SPOTLIGHT

Director Ron OJ Parson begins a winning season (his *Radio Golf* opens this week at Court Theatre) with **The African Company Presents Richard III**, Carlyle Brown's alternately wrenching and inspiring (sometimes both simultaneously) based-on-the-true-story of an all-Black theater company in 1820s New York. Embedded in the play-within-the-play: The most powerful Lady Anne/Richard wooing monologue is as memorable as a brand—and should be required viewing for any company planning to stage Shakespeare's *Richard III*. It runs through



Sept. 1 at the outdoor Oak Park Festival Theatre, Austin Gardens, 167 Forest Ave., Oak Park. Tickets are \$20-\$32 each, under 12 free; visit OakParkFestival.com.

Caption: Photo by Jhenai Mootz



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'Fahrenheit Chicago' heats up South Side

BY VERN HESTER

Equality Illinois held its second Fahrenheit Chicago—the end-of-summer beach party of fun, music and social networking for LGBTQ Illinoisans, their friends, and families—Aug. 26 at Oakwood Beach (41st Street and South Lake Shore Drive). The presenting sponsor was Howard Brown Health.

The beach party was the culmination of Fahrenheit activities that took place Aug. 24-26, with events such as a kickoff party on Aug. 24, the “Fahrenheit Bae Skate” on Aug. 24 and the “Fahrenheit Chicago Day Party,” on Aug. 25. At the kickoff party, Lora Branch of Gilead Sciences Inc., Mo Green of the Office of the Cook County State’s Attorney and the South Side cultural institution Jeffery Pub were honored for LGBTQ leadership.

Aug. 25 activities included a Sunday-morning worship service that The Lighthouse Church held as well as a beach party. Both events were held at the Oakwood Beach.

Following last summer’s successful event, this year aimed to expand and the Aug. 26 beach party was jam-packed with performers. Vocalist Marc Wayne, DJ All the Way K, Terisa Griffin, DJ Superman and Ms. Ruff N Stuff and her crew entertained the crowd. Father Kentrele presided over a mini-ball segment that included vogue and “realness” competitions.

In addition, Equality Illinois Director of Civic Engagement Anthony Galoway thanked the audience for supporting the event. He also presented a special award to The Jeffery Pub and recognized it as one of the oldest LGBTQ safe spaces in the country. Later, Illinois House candidate Lamont J. Robinson Jr. spoke about the importance of the November elections, adding that many representatives in Springfield have made it clear that they don’t want an African-American gay man like himself in office—but that he has no intention on backing down from supporting the LGBTQ community. Attorney General candidate Kwame Raoul got a surprise when Dr. Maya Green, who heads the Howard Brown Health clinic in Englewood, thanked him personally for signing a grant that enabled her to attend medical school.

Co-sponsors of Fahrenheit 2018 included Howard Brown Health, Start Talking. Stop HIV., Project RSP, Women Connection of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Jeffery Pub.



Ms. Ruff N Stuff.

Photos by Vern Hester



Kwame Raoul (left) and Dr. Maya Green.



Lila Star.



Left: TPAN. Right: Lakeside Pride.



Left, above: PFLAG Council of Northern IL. Left, below: Northwestern Hospital. Above: Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus.

Oscars producer Zadan dies at 69

Craig Zadan—the prolific producer behind movies, TV projects and Broadway musicals—has died at 69.

The cause involved complications related to shoulder-replacement surgery.

Along with his producing partner, Neil Meron, Zadan produced the Oscars 2013-15, earning an Emmy nod for the show all three years. The duo also produced the Oscar-winning adaptation of Chicago as well as Broadway revivals of such productions as How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying. Zadan and Meron also produced NBC's recent string of live musicals, including The Sound of Music, The Wiz and this year's Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert.

Among the many who mourned Zadan's passing was producer Adam Shankman, who posted on Facebook, “In shock....Craig Zadan, my colleague and producer of Hairspray and so many musicals has passed.... prayers for him and his loved ones....I'm so confused and disoriented....he and @neilmeron gave me the opportunity of a lifetime with that movie. I'm so so grateful and so so sad. #rip.”

Zadan and Meron's productions garnered many honors, including six Oscars, 17 Emmys, a Grammy, six GLAAD Awards, four NAACP Image Awards and two Tonys.

Second City, HBH team for Women's Health Fair

The ladies of The Second City and Chicago's premiere women's health organizations are collaboration on the first-ever Second City Women's Health Fair, with She the People & Women's Health Services at Howard Brown Health (HBH) as hosts.

The event will take place Thursday, Sept. 6, at UP Comedy Club, 230 W. North Ave. The fair will begin at 6:30 p.m., while the show She the People: Girlfriends' Guide to Sisters Doing It for Themselves will start at 8 p.m.

Representatives from groups including Planned Parenthood of IL, Chicago Women's Health Center, Early to Bed, Empowered Therapy and Howard Brown Health will be on hand before they take in a performance of Second City's The Second City's She the People: Girlfriends' Guide to Sisters Doing It for Themselves—a sketch show created, designed and performed entirely by the women of Second City.

See SecondCity.com/womenshealthfair.

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NUNN ON ONE: MOVIES

Akhavan on helming 'The Miseducation of Cameron Post'

BY JERRY NUNN

Iranian-American Desiree Akhavan wears many hats, including director, producer, screenwriter and actress.

After graduating from New York University's Tisch School of Arts, she appeared regularly in her work. She was in the lesbian-themed web series *The Slope* and in 2014 her film *Appropriate Behavior* had her playing an alternative version of herself.

She wrote, directed and produced *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, starring Chloe Grace Moretz and Sasha Lane. Set in 1993 Montana, the film follows a high school junior named Cameron Post who is sent to a religious conversion camp called *God's Promise* after being caught kissing a girl. Group therapy and surprise friendships are all part of the adventure.

The talented, self-identified bisexual called from London, where she lives, to discuss the new project.

Windy City Times: Did you always want to be involved with film?

Desiree Akhavan: Yes. I started off as a child writing plays around 9 years old and putting them on at school. Growing up in the New York area I always thought I would be a playwright.

In college, I took a film class. I fell in love. All of the skills that I had been cultivating in theater transitioned to film and television.

WCT: You co-wrote *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

DA: Yes, with Cecilia Frugiuale. It is based on a book of the same title. We did research alongside that. We looked into gay conversion therapy and the different organizations that promoted it. A lot of the details that we couldn't find in the book ended up coming from the research we did.

WCT: Was the iceberg idea part of the book?

DA: It was in the book. I wish I could take credit for that, but I can't. Anyone can relate their behavior to that. It is a symptom to a larger problem. It's just a tip of the iceberg.

WCT: Did you add the 4 Non Blondes song "What's Up?" because of the lesbian lead singer?

DA: There is a moment in the book where they sing "Oh Happy Day." I loved that scene in the book, but I thought she should sing something a little more relevant and connected to the world that they live in. I thought "What's Up?" was a really great song for that moment and reflective of what they were going through. It was from 4 Non Blondes that was a notoriously queer band. It felt like the right time for her to have that peak enjoyment in the movie.

WCT: How was working with Chloe Grace

Moretz?

DA: It was fantastic. She put her focus and energy into transforming into a different person. We built a character together. She had lost herself in all of the other characters she had played previously so I loved making this with her.

WCT: Did *Forrest Goodluck* have to actually shave his hair?

DA: Yes. It was a real challenge finding an actor that was not only Native American, also willing to play gay, that was something a lot of Native American actors were not comfortable doing, then on top of that was willing to have his head shaved.

Forrest Goodluck was a unicorn of an actor! We were lucky to have him and he was incredibly brave. He was game to do whatever it took to transform into the role.

WCT: Was it challenging to make *Miseducation* in the first place?

DA: Yes. We didn't make it with a studio. We made it independently. A company called Beachside that financed the movie. They were the only people that had the courage to make something like this. It was a real labor of love. The people involved were all aware of the risky subject matter that was involved.

WCT: What have you heard from audiences now that the film is out?

DA: I have been grateful to meet young people that were desperate for something like this. This film spoke to them on the personal level and spoke honestly about someone's sexual coming of age. I have heard people have laughed and cried. There has been some overwhelming sentiment.

WCT: When the truck is driving away, I saw some Illinois radio station bumper stickers. Was it filmed here?

DA: That is so interesting. I didn't know it was Illinois. Basically, we tried to keep it ambiguous as to where the kids are from. We wanted wherever people are watching it from that it could be their town. So why don't we go ahead and say it's Illinois?

WCT: Well, come and promote the film here.

DA: I love Chicago. My friend Joe Swanberg makes Netflix's *Easy* there so I want to see how he shoots.

WCT: So, you starred in a past film of yours *Appropriate Behavior*?

DA: Yes and it was a fantastic experience. I co-produced with Cecilia Frugiuale. I was in it and shot it for no money. It wound up premiering at Sundance.

More recently, I shot a TV series that will be on Hulu and I am in that as well. After making *Cameron Post* I have to say that I would rather direct than act. I prefer to stay behind the cam-



Desiree Akhavan.
PR photo



Forrest Goodluck, Chloe Grace Moretz and Sasha Lane in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

Image courtesy of FilmRise

era from now on.

WCT: What is the Hulu series called?

DA: It is called *The Bisexual*. I play a bisexual in the comedy.

WCT: How do you feel bisexual people are represented in the media?

DA: There isn't any representation. It is a very niche subject matter. I think it is something people don't discuss very often.

It seems neither here nor there. You are defaulted to whomever you are in a relationship with. If you are with the opposite sex then you are straight and with the same sex then you are gay. It is hard to be visible as a bisexual. It was something I had a lot to say about so that's how the series came about. No one had really said anything so it was a good opportunity to tell stories that hadn't been told.

Visit CamPostFilm.com for screenings and information on *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

'Trans Art Is' in Chicago in Sept.

The Chicago Therapy Collective—which works to create a safer, just and inclusive Chicago for transgender/gender non-conforming individuals—is hosting a "Trans Art Is" gallery exhibit at the Andersonville Galleria, 5247 N. Clark St., throughout September. (It will be open seven days a week.)

An opening-night celebration will be Saturday, Sept. 1, 7-9 p.m., with the closing-night party on Sunday, Sept. 30, 3-6 p.m. Curator tours are by appointment.

In addition, there will be a "Trans Art Is" live outdoor performance at Berwyn Avenue and Clark Street on Saturday, Sept. 15, 6-9 p.m.

Visit "Chicago Therapy Collective" on Facebook or stop by ChicagoTherapyCollective.org.

Jamaican trans event Sept. 7

The Jamaican Fruit & Flowers Arts Experience will take place Friday, Sept. 7, 7-10 p.m., at 5400 S. Pulaski Rd.

The event will spotlight Jamaican-American transgender men Armani Dee (an artist, author and mentor) and Cris Avery (a musician, dancer and writer who penned *The Jamaican Fruit* series).

Advanced copies of *Jamaican Fruit* are available on Amazon and Kindle. People may also email Penofcris@gmail.com regarding autographed copies.

See <http://events.eventzilla.net/e/jamaican-fruit--flowers-artistic-experience-2138951662>.



BILLY Masters

"I do think it's dangerous, personally. I feel like in any of this sort of stuff, you have to take each situation. We copped a bit of flack at the time, 'Why are there three straight actors playing three gay roles?' It's a difficult subject to get into." —

Guy Pearce shares his thoughts on the idea that straight actors should only play straight roles, and that only gay actors can play gay roles, apropos of his turn in *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

Neil Meron and Craig Zadan are primarily known as the team that brought live musicals back to television. They also produced the theatrical film of *Chicago*. And produced the Oscars telecast. And produced the Broadway revivals of *Promises, Promises* and *How To Succeed in Business*. And, and, and ... the list is endless. These guys love this business we call show. They're filled with drive and passion that's not solely motivated by the bottom line. Alas, this past week, Craig died unexpectedly after complications from shoulder-replacement surgery. I can honestly say that I never saw Craig (or Neil for that matter) without a smile, without exuberance, without an encouraging word. They both individually "discovered" me and subscribed to BillyMasters.com. They were supportive of me, and so many others. While we mourn Craig being taken from us way too soon, we are secure in the knowledge that his legacy will live on—and I'm sure we haven't heard the last of Neil.

While **Aretha Franklin** was on her deathbed, several tabloids were trotting out old stories about her father, the Rev. C.L. Franklin. In case you don't know, C.L. had what could politely be called a colorful sexual life, which allegedly included bisexuality and orgies. It's even been rumored that ... well, not even I can bring up such a distasteful subject.

Elsewhere in music, we have yet another sex scandal. **Opera singer David Daniels** and his hubby, **conductor William Scott Walters**, are alleged to have drugged and raped baritone Samuel Schultz. Way back in 2010, when the incident occurred, Daniels was 44 and Walters (who goes by the name Scott and was not yet Daniels' husband) was 28. Schultz was a 23-year-old student at Rice University.

He says that the couple invited him back to their apartment after a performance with the Houston Grand Opera, adding they gave him a drink and, after a few sips, he blacked out. He awoke hours later (as he says in his police complaint) "in a bed alone, completely naked. I was sore and I didn't know why. I made my way to the bathroom to figure out why I hurt. I was bleeding from my rectum. I became numb. I was paralyzed with fear. What had happened? How could I escape? How would I get out? Where were my clothes? I tiptoed out of the bedroom to discover that David and Scott were not there. When they came back from eating somewhere, I think they asked if I had a good time." He added one additional tidbit: "I remember David saying, 'Don't worry about the BB thing, I'm totally negative.'



Opera star David Daniels (above) and his husband have been named in a scandal.

PR photo by Bernard Benant/Virgin Records

BB in this case meant bareback, otherwise known as raping me without a condom."

Schultz says he stayed silent because he was embarrassed and frightened of any professional repercussions. However, he did confide in a friend and a therapist. The friend did not advise Schultz to go to the police. He went public now after learning that Daniels is a tenured professor at the University of Michigan, where he'll be working with young singers. Schultz filed a complaint with the university's police department in July. They in turn passed it along to the Houston Police Department, since that's where the alleged incident occurred. Within hours of Schultz's claim going public, Daniels took a leave of absence from teaching. There's no word on Walters, who happens to be artistic director of the OutLoud Chorus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. However, both Daniels and Walters have denied the claims. Not that it's relevant, but when Daniels and Walters got married in 2014, the ceremony was officiated by Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Oh, no—don't drag RBG into this!

By the way, we hear that there's a new sexual-assault charge against **Kevin Spacey**. For those of you playing at home, that makes two charges that the Los Angeles district attorney is reviewing.

The big gay news last week was that **Garrett Clayton** finally spoke publicly about being gay—apropos of his new film, *Reach*, in which he plays a suicidal high school student. "Reach deals with some very serious and timely topics that have affected me personally, and have likely influenced many of your lives as well," he said. He also said he wanted to post this news on Instagram "instead of in some random magazine or online article—because you are the ones that have been rooting for me and following me on my professional and personal journey in life."

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Jarrod in Milwaukee. "Whatever happened to **Taylor Lautner**? It seemed like he was gonna be the next big thing, but then nothing happened. Does he still act?"

Did he ever? I mean "act?" I don't think anyone thought Taylor would be the next great thespian. Did anyone anxiously await the Taylor Lautner Hamlet? But, hot? Yes—in that way that

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so many teenage young men are. Glamour listed him as second on its list of "The 50 Sexiest Men of 2010." Of course, in 2010 Lautner was all of 18—to paraphrase Britney, not a boy, not yet a man. That same year, Men's Health even detailed his workout regime—as if a teen's regime was relevant to an adult male (but the photos were good). If one wants proof of that, check out the recent pics of Lautner cavorting on the beach during some of his seemingly endless free time. If you ask me, the visibility of abs are in direct proportion with his career. See for yourself at BillyMasters.com.

When we're spotlighting the twilight of 2010's second sexiest man, it's definitely time to end yet another column. We ran so long, I barely have time to remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com—the irreverent site that's even popular with reverends. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before the fat lady sings. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Locanda; The Dearborn

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Italian restaurant **Locanda** (201 E. Walton St.; <https://www.locandachicago.com/>), opened very quietly a few months ago—but the laid-back casually elegant spot practically deserves a parade.

How low-key is Locanda? It's actually housed inside a Residence Inn (although it's a separate space within that establishment). However, this place is a little treasure.

The restaurant is the brainchild of chef Antoine Cedicci, who was behind the Italian spots Pane Caldo (famed for its window-display seating of one table while the rest of the spot seemed virtually secluded) and Trattoria Ultimo. Locanda specializes in seasonal dishes, rotating its menu weekly in addition to offering daily specials.

Starters include items such as parma-and-duck prosciutto and sautéed fresh wild mushrooms. The tuna terrine (with mesclun and lemon-oil vinaigrette) was creamy without a fishy taste; the beets (roasted in sea salt, and served with burrata and honey-lime vinaigrette) were tasty and refreshing; and the parmesan ravioli were simply delightful, accented with crispy prosciutto and corn sauce.

Of course, Locanda has pasta dishes—and the king-crab ravioli in saffron-fennel sauce was one of the most memorable items I had eaten in



Burrata at Locanda.
PR photo

ages. (Moreover, it's pretty affordable, at \$18.) Thankfully, there aren't too many dishes (to spare the indecisive), but they include gnocchi with braised beef short rib (with a gluten-free option), butternut-squash tortellini and fruttati di mare (assorted seafood with squid-ink tonnellarelli and light tomato sauce).

Entrees offer some variety. The roasted duck breast, with cherries, was expertly done. However, there are also options like chicken with wild mushrooms; and grilled lamb chops, with rosemary and mustard sauce.

Lastly, desserts should definitely be sampled. The justifiably named "magic cake" is a three-layered item based in vanilla—but the fig-and-goat cheese gelato just didn't do it for me, "forcing" me to return to the cake. #FirstWorldProblems (You can also try the peach tart, flourless cake and tiramisu.)

By the way, "locanda" means "inn," in Italian. Antoine said he always wanted to open his own

hotel, and Locanda is his "inn" where he felt he could take care of guests, offering great food and accommodations. Mission accomplished.

The Dearborn (update)

I've visited The Dearborn (145 N. Dearborn St.; <https://www.thedearbornatavern.com/>) a few times over the last couple years (for business and/or pleasure)—and I'm happy to report that the quality of the Block 37 spot's cuisine has not flagged one bit.

I witnessed this during a recent lunchtime visit as co-owners Amy and Clodagh Lawless, along with Chef Aaron Cuschieri, continue to serve top-quality food and drinks. (The Loop spot opened in June 2016.)

I loved the housemade parmesan gnocchi (served with morel mushrooms, snow peas, white and green asparagus, heirloom cherry tomatoes, spinach, edamame emulsion and grana padano)

as well as the kicky Midwest fried chicken (with a maple mustard glaze and hot sauce). However, there are so many other fun items on the menu, ranging from the Not Billy's Scotch Egg (with spicy pork sausage) to the Veggie Dagwood to the grilled pear-and-Gruyere sandwich.

BTW, The Dearborn is planning a Prohibition-themed party for the release of its Dearborn Gin, in collaboration with North Shore Distillery's husband-wife team Derek and Sonja Kassebaum. The event—on Monday, Sept. 10, at 5 p.m.—will feature one complimentary cocktail for guests showcasing the custom spirit, plus party bites by Cuschieri. Local jazz at the Jensemble Brooklyn Britches and The Whispers will perform live, and you will take home custom Dearborn shot glasses, while supplies last. (Be sure to RSVP.)

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

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



Molly Brennan



Devlyn Camp



Scott Duff



Lori Lightfoot



Eddie S. Pierce



R.C. Riley

The September edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, September 4, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Molly Brennan** is an actor in Chicago. She is currently hosting the Fly Honey Show at the Den Theatre. Her next project is returning to terrorize a Rich White Cisman as the Ghost of Christmas Past in the Goodman's A Christmas Carol.

—**Devlyn Camp** is the producer and host of the podcast Mattachine: A Serialized Story in Queer History. Their podcast earned them a place on the Windy City Times "30 Under 30" this year, as well as a feature in the Chicago Tribune. Devlyn is also the co-host of a queer talk radio show called They & Them every Tuesday at 2 on Que4 1680. They also have covered queer topics for the Chicago Reader.

—**Scott Duff** is a Chicago-based actor, comedian, radio host and professional gay. A regular at Laugh Factory, he is the host/producer of The Kiki: Queer Comedy with Variety and has gayed up audiences at venues all over the city. You can catch his weekly radio show OUT CHICAGO every Sunday from 11am-1pm on WCPT, Chicago's Progressive Talk.

—**Lori Lightfoot** is running for mayor of Chicago. She grew up in a working-class neighborhood and worked her way through school to become an accomplished lawyer, police-reform advocate, and leader in several city departments, where she supported small businesses and improved emergency response. If elected, Lori will be the first African-American woman and first LGBT person to serve as mayor of Chicago.

—**Eddie S. Pierce** is a Master's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing degree recipient from Chicago State University. Mr. Pierce considers himself to be primarily a fiction and prose writer, but was afforded the opportunity to be published in 95Notes Literary Magazine for poetry and Sage Publishing's Encyclopedia of Identity for an article on the phenomena of "passing."

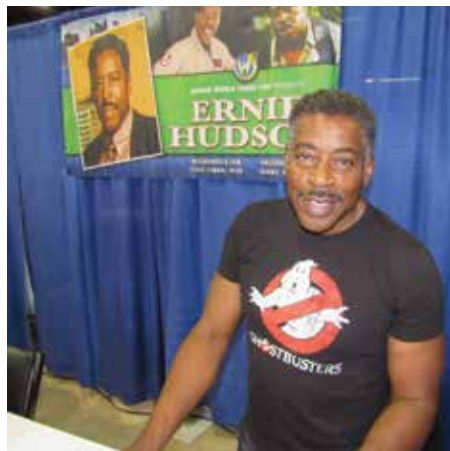
—**R.C. Riley** is a writer and performer who gets a big 'ol kick out of making her childhood friends cringe when she talks about sex-uality and spirituality in the same sentence. Over the years she has been mistaken as straight, "reformed" and/or out of fellowship with God. But her haters can take two seats because she is 40 and gives no - watch your mouth! R.C. makes no bones about the fact that she was created QUEER and she absolutely adores her Creator!



SIDETRACK

Sunday Slushies ... and what they can lead to.

Photos by Jed Dulanias



Above: Star Trek's Nichelle Nichols (left) and Ghostbusters' Ernie Hudson.

Photos by Jerry Nunn

Comic Con big on celebrities, fans—and ghostbusters

BY JERRY NUNN

Wizard World Chicago Comic Con was once again held at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois, on Aug. 23-26.

Bigger than ever, the programming and layout of the convention continued to grow for its 21st year. Celebrity guests sat in booths to sign autographs and meet their fans over the course of four days. Panels on a variety of topics were showcased throughout the weekend's festivities.

The annual Wizard World Costume Contest had people dressing up on Aug. 25 to compete. Even when the convention center closed, the party kept going with several after show events such as a cosplay variety show at Berlin Nightclub. Workshops were offered to help cosplayers improve their props, makeup and costumes.

From self-publishing to body paint, there were presentations scheduled in private rooms or publicly on the Creative Stage for larger crowds.

There was a family-friendly kids zone and a large gaming area for people to test drive and meet other like minded video game players.

Artist Alley was full of comic artists selling their work and vendors surrounded them offering tons of collectors items for sale.

This year was heavy on the Ghostbusters-themed activities, thanks to cast member Ernie Hudson and producer/director Ivan Reitman in attendance. They participated in autographs, photo ops and a Q&A with fans. More fun is planned for June 2019 for the 35th anniversary of the film.

Visit WizardWorld.com for more information and upcoming information on future shows.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Bowie Ball - The Labyrinth Masquerade Celebrate the legend, the chameleon, and the man... David Bowie. Bowiesque DJ sets by Heaven Malone. Mistress of Ceremonies Lucy Stoolie. Live Bowie Performance by Max Goldstein of Yoko and the Oh No's Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/events/1006244546199029/>

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/trans-formativejusticelawproject/>

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

White Sox Pride Night, BaseBALL: 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. 1

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>

Trans Art Is opening event Chicago Ther-



QUITE CONTINENTAL Sept. 2-3

The Mr. and Miss Continental pageants will take place at The Vic Theatre.

Photo of past winner Naysha Lopez by Hal Baim

apy Collective event is first in a series on trans/gnc featured artists and pays tribute to legendary gender transgressor David Bowie. Through Sept. 30 7:00pm - 9:00pm Andersonville Galleria, 5247 N Clark St. <http://andersonvillegalleria.com>

Sunday, Sept. 2

The Oracle Challenger Series Pro tennis A combined ATP Challenger Tour and WTA \$125K tennis tournament. Through Sept. 9. To participate as a ballkid or volunteers, email tfey@desertchampions.com 10:00am Chicago's XS Tennis Village, 5336 S. State St. <http://oraclechallengerseries.com>

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

Monday, Sept. 3

Mr and Miss Continental Pageant 2018 Mr and Miss Continental Pageants will be held in Chicago over Labor Day Weekend 2018. 3:00pm The Vic Theatre 3145 N Sheffield Ave Chicago 312-644-5269 <http://www.thebaton-showlounge.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 7:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St. Chicago

Bike, Laugh, Heal bicycle/comedy Tour for Futures Without Violence Mara Marek of the Happy Never After podcast and co-host Andrew Collin will raise money to end domestic violence 7:30pm - 9:00pm Under The Gun Theater, 956 Newport Ave. <http://m.bpt.>

me/event/3563164

Latina Continental, Miss & Plus Official Preliminary of The Continental Pageantry System. Doors open 8pm 9:00pm Baton Show Lounge 436 N Clark St Chicago <http://thebatonshowlounge.com>

Friday, Sept. 7

Latinx Heritage Month LGBTQ Gallery Opening celebrating Latinx Heritage Month with the art of Sandra Antongiorgi, singer, songwriter, and painter from Puerto Rico. 7pm performance by AfriCaribe professional dancers and musicians with traditional drumming and dance of several Puerto Rican 'Bomba' rhythms. Free 6:00pm - 8:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.santongiorgi.com/>

Jamaican Fruit & Flowers Artistic Experience A project by two Jamaican American trans men of color. Featuring Armani Dae, Cris Avery. Copies of Jamaican Fruit

on sale on Amazon and Kindle. 7:00pm - 10:00pm Mind + Hand, 5400 S Pulaski Rd. 2nd Floor <http://events.eventzilla.net/e/jamaican-fruit-flowers-artistic-experience-2138951662>

Saturday, Sept. 8

Peoria Pridefest 2018 One Voice. One Community. Bringing back PRIDE to the Whiskey City. RSVP online to get event updates. 11:00am Peoria RiverFront Events, CEFCU Center Stage @ The Landing in Peoria <http://www.peoriaproud.org/events/peoria-pridefest-2018-2>

Ride for AIDS Chicago, 15th anniversary Test Positive Aware Network's signature two-day fundraising event where local AIDS Service Organizations, LGBT organizations, and health allies participate to raise money for their own organizations. New route through three different states, ending in a new camp in Michigan. Time:TBA Starting point TBA

<https://www.tpan.com/rideforaids>
Chicago Classic Auto Show with Grand Marshall Larry Klairmont Celebration of automotive history, exhibiting more than 600 automobiles, including rarities, Through Sept. 9. events throughout and Women 'N Wheels Pavilion 10:00am - 8:00pm Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Rd., Rosemont <http://www.theclassicautoshow.com> Tickets: <http://www.showclix.com/event/chicago-classic-auto-show>

Wed., Sept. 12

Eric H. Holder Jr 82nd Attorney General of the United States (2009-2015) discusses the pressing issue of voting rights in the United States 7:00pm Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E Congress Pkwy; 312-341-2300 <http://www.auditoriumtheatre.org/shows/a-conversation-with-eric-holder/>

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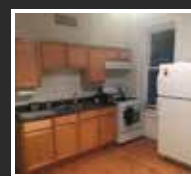
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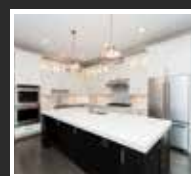
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