

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

VOL 33, NO. 52 SEPT. 19, 2018

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

MARCIA LIPETZ
Local LGBT icon dies.
Photo by Hal Baim



6



GINGER GRANT
Baton legend dies.
Photo by Hal Baim

4

GRIEF
Mother of slain trans woman talks with WCT.
Photo by Matt Simonette

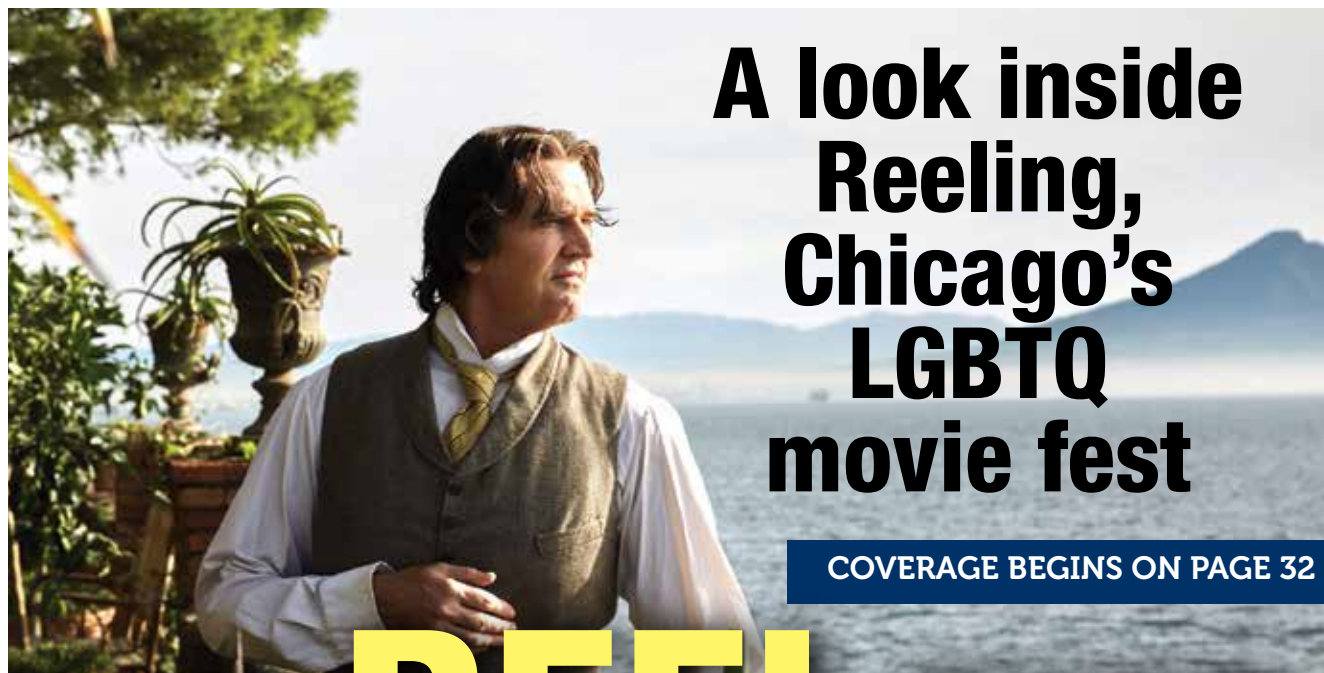


4



STAR-STRUCK
Sykes, Rippon speak at Chicago House event.
Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

40



A look inside Reeling, Chicago's LGBTQ movie fest

COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 32

THE REEL THING



Top photo: The Happy Prince. Bottom row, left to right: Freelancers Anonymous; My Big Gay Italian Wedding; Mapplethorpe. 'Italian' photo by Loris T. Zambelli; other photos courtesy of Reeling

INTRODUCING OUR NEWLY EXPANDED ARTS COVERAGE

WINDY CITY TIMES

ARTS + THEATER

WEEKLY

AVAILABLE THIS WEEK IN PRINT AND ONLINE FROM WINDY CITY TIMES

COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 13



@windycitytimes



/windycitymediagroup



@windycitytimes

www.windycitymediagroup.com



Election day is Tuesday, November 6. The 2018 midterm elections will decide who fills the seats in Congress. Make your voice heard and register to vote at Howard Brown Health.

HOWARD BROWN HEALTH 63RD ST.
641 W. 63rd St.
Chicago IL 60621

➤ September 17
9 A.M. - NOON
1 - 4:30 P.M.

➤ October 1
9 A.M. - NOON
1 - 4:30 P.M.

➤ October 15
9 A.M. - NOON
1 - 4:30 P.M.

HOWARD BROWN HEALTH CLARK
6500 N. Clark Street
Chicago IL 60626

➤ September 24
10 A.M. - NOON
3 - 5 P.M.

➤ October 8
10 A.M. - NOON
3 - 5 P.M.

➤ October 15
10 A.M. - NOON
3 - 5 P.M.



Center for
Education, Research
& Advocacy

A DIVISION OF HOWARD BROWN HEALTH

howardbrown.org/era

WINDY CITY TIMES

INDEX

DOWNLOAD THIS ISSUE

AND BROWSE THE ARCHIVES AT
www.WindyCityTimes.com



NEWS

Ginger Grant, Dejanay Stanton remembered	4
Local LGBT icon Marcia Lipetz dies	6
Baim to lead Reader; WCT leadership changes	8
Halem keynotes LGBTQ health symposium	10
Women's March announces expansion	11
Viewpoints: Baim; letter	12

ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS

Arts/diversions—NEW cover	13
Fall theater preview: LGBTQ productions	18
Fall theater preview: Destinos	20
Fall theater preview: Alexandra Billings	22
Uptown Underground suddenly closes	23
Fall theater preview: Classics	24
Music: Cris Williamson interview	25
Fall theater preview: Multicultural premieres; operas	26
Fall theater preview: Artemisia	27
Art: A closer look at the MCA	28
Art: Boystown's Jean Leigh Gallery	29
Pazdernik raises funds to fight HIV/AIDS	30
Chicago South Asian Film Festival has LGBTQ bent	31
Movies: 'The Queens' at Reeling	32
Reeling films reviewed	34
Books: BYP100's Charlene Carruthers	36
Fall book preview	38
Writer/performer R.C. Riley	39
Rippon, Sykes at Chicago House event	40
NIGHTSPOTS	41
Calendar	46

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



COLUMBUS DAY

Columbus, Ohio, is a destination with a lot to offer (left).

Photo of Richard Pryor mural by Andrew Davis

COUNTRY ROADS



Patrick Haggerty, of the groundbreaking LGBT country group Lavender Country, talks with WCT about his life, music.

Photo by Nate Burell

'SECOND' CITY

WCT reviews additional productions, such as Second Skin.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about West Side Story, Jim Parsons and Frank Ocean.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

SPAIN IS PART OF YOU

"A CULTURE, A LANGUAGE, A WAY OF LIFE. YOU LEARN SO MUCH MORE WHEN A COUNTRY BECOMES A PART OF YOU."

www.spain.info

Lucy and Hannah
#VisitSpain #CastileandLeon #Salamanca
#StudyInSpain #Erasmus #StudyAbroad

@spain @spain /spain.info spain

The Baton's Ginger Grant, remembered

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Entertainer Harry Hodges, a.k.a. Ginger Grant, passed away the week of Sept. 10 in Chicago. Hodges, performing under Grant's persona, was a longtime emcee at The Baton and a close friend of its owner, Jim Flint.

Flint called the death "a complete shock. I was devastated for several days."

Hodges had some health problems, but his death was unexpected and sudden, Flint said, adding that he and Hodges planned on going to Florida together in a few weeks. Hodges was buried in a private ceremony Sept. 14. A remembrance of his life is planned at the Baton on Oct. 1 from 7-9:30 p.m.



Ginger Grant.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

Flint said that Grant was "just everything to The Baton," and that he admired how she was so full of energy.

"She might have had a bad day, but then she'd get up on stage, and you'd never know it," he recalled.

As news of her passing spread, Grant's friends, loved ones, fans and admirers took to social media to express how much she meant to them.

Writer Owen Keenhan, who co-wrote *The Boy from Peoria*, a biography of Flint, with Tracy Baim, said of Grant on Facebook: "On stage she was a rare combination of raunchy and sweet with a charisma that was luminous. She exuded a warmth that made her an ideal emcee. Off stage she was gracious and smart. A one-of-a-kind performer and an incomparable person."

Activist Lori Cannon added, "I first met Ging in Milwaukee, decades ago ... where she was driving a truck, and me, driving a coach bus of North Shore couples on a restaurant crawl. ... Ging was backing out of an alley and not paying attention—after the minor fender bender, she and I became pals. ... She was a great gal and lot's o' fun. ... She'll be missed."

Entertainer Honey West recalled taking her mother to see the show at The Baton when Ginger Grant was emcee: "I remember the girls came up and said 'hi' to her and Ginger gave her a big hug. I am sending that hug to you now, my darling."

Hodges told Keenhan in an interview for *The Boy from Peoria* about how he launched his career at The Baton in the mid-'70s.

"I started coming here [The Baton] in either 1974 or 1975 on New Year's Eve," Hodges recalled. "I was amazed. It was a whole new world. Nobody cared how you were or your size or color. I was so entertained. ... It just looked like so much fun. I liked the entertainment and the theater of it."

He added that he and Flint "think alike. I think part of the reason we're close is we're both businesspeople, and I don't let business and friendship cross the line. I'm here when you need me. You need me to mop a floor, I'll mop a floor. ... That's my work ethic. With these shows and contests, a lot of times we're [Flint and Grant] the last ones out the door at night and the first ones here the next morning, and we may be fat and old but we still do it. We're not afraid to work and we're both doers. What I don't know, I will learn."

Hodges wanted a night at The Baton to be like a "fairytale," he said, adding that when he emceed, he wanted to get the point across that, "We don't care about the color of your skin or your race or gender or anything. If you have a problem with that, when you come in, you leave it all outside—just come inside and have a good time. It's magical in here."

Sept. 22 ball to honor Marsha P. Johnson

Mothers LaSaia Lauren and Jahari Mizrahi will present the "Pay It No Mind Ball" Saturday, Sept. 22, at 5110 S. Prairie Ave., 10 p.m.-3 a.m.

The free event will celebrate the life and contributions of Marsha P. Johnson, a drag queen/activist who was one of the prominent figures in the Stonewall uprising of 1969. Johnson, who died in 1992, had said the middle initial in her name stood for "pay it no mind."

See "Pay It No Mind Ball" on Facebook.



Slain trans woman's mother reflects on daughter's life, passing

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Valerie Griffin will always remember her late daughter—Dejanay Stanton, who went by the nickname Dada—as a free spirit who loved to both travel and shop, and was always respectful and affectionate toward her mother.

"She never left a room I was in without saying to me, 'I love you,'" Griffin recalled.

Stanton, who was also known socially under the name De'janay Lanorra, died by homicide sometime during the morning of Aug. 30. Her body was found with a bullet to the head at an alley at 40th Street and King Drive. The crime is still under investigation. Stanton was the 17th transgender female U.S. resident murdered in 2018.

Griffin spoke with *Windy City Times* the day before Stanton's funeral. Griffin's South Side home, where her daughter also lived, was crowded with close and extended family members who were helping her ready for the next day. She had just returned from the funeral home where she'd been helping to preparing Stanton's makeup.

"When I first saw her, it was a total shock," she said. "The make-up person's and my knees both buckled at the same time. We were about to pass out. I had seen her at the examiner's office on the 31st of August. She didn't look as bad as she looked when I just saw her."

Griffin learned of her daughter's death through the worst means possible: social media. As news spread on Instagram that a murder had taken place nearby, someone told a family member, and they all recognized Stanton's car in a photo.

"I looked at the car, because I memorized Dada's license plate," she recalled. "I said, 'That's her license plate.' It went on from there."

The Chicago Police Department initially misgendered Stanton, Griffin said, leading to some confusion; originally a male victim was identified at the scene. But Griffin said they resolved it quickly after she spoke with them. She added the CPD detective on the case had been cooperative, forthcoming and helpful. At the same time, she's resolved to make sure that the truth behind the murder is discovered and the perpetrator is brought to justice.

"They're not going to drop the ball on this," she said.

Griffin said that her daughter had occasional minor spats in her social circle, but steered clear of major problems and had had no trouble with the law.

"I have no bad memories of Dada ... and I don't know of anyone who can say bad things about her," she added. "How could anyone have that much anger, to take her life, so that nobody is ever going to see her anymore? What type of person does that?"

Stanton had two sisters and two brothers; she had a newborn niece whom she never got the opportunity to meet. Griffin also spoke at length



Valerie Griffin holding photo of Dejanay Stanton.

Photo by Matt Simonette

about her daughter's wanderlust.

"Dada loved to go to different cities," Griffin said. "She went to Las Vegas, Virginia, Nashville, Atlanta and Los Angeles. She got out to a lot of places. She was getting to the point where she was just starting to get out and enjoy life ... and she loved her family, and she loved to be flawless."

The day after Stanton's death, friends and family gathered for a vigil at the site of her death. Inclement weather prevented them from successfully releasing balloons to mark her passing, however. Griffin said she took that as a sign that Stanton was not yet ready to move into her next spiritual realm.

"I'm a firm believer in the spirits," she explained. "Dada was not happy and had not fully crossed over yet. She's wandering around here, wondering why she can't touch us. She doesn't understand—because I don't understand."

WINDY
CITY
TIMES

ARTS + THEATER

WEEKLY

artsandtheaterweekly.com



big orange ball

Saturday, 10.20.18
8 p.m. - MidnightPARK WEST
322 W Armitage
ChicagoGeneral Admission \$150
RIP \$300
At the Door \$175
All attendees must be over 21

On October 20, step into a world of light, sound, and spirits (and we aren't just talking about the drinks). As Howard Brown Health's fourth annual kick-off to the Halloween season, Big Orange Ball is shaping up to be a fantastic night of dancing, great beats by local DJs, a full bar, light bites, and tons of spooky surprises.



Howard Brown
Health

Making no small plans: Marcia Lipetz has died

BY TRACY BAIM

Marcia J. Lipetz, 71, a foundational person in the Chicago LGBT community, has died. A no-nonsense professional, she fought for women's rights and social justice since she was a teenager growing up in Louisville, Kentucky—and she was part of some of the more significant organizations in Chicago's LGBT community.

Lipetz's final battle was against a fatal cancer that sapped her energy and captured her full focus. She and wife Lynda Crawford coped with the day-in and day-out struggles of hospice in her final months.

In the early afternoon of Aug. 8, Lipetz spoke with Windy City Times in her Evanston condo. With a beautiful view of the Northwestern University campus and a deep-blue Lake Michigan framing her sofa, Lipetz was relaxed and melancholy, thinking back on her life and careers—surrounded by two energetic and loving rescue dogs, Callie and Keeper.

Two of the more critical organizations Lipetz helped lead are the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), where, in the late '80s, she was the first full-time executive director; and Center on Halsted (previously known as Gay and Lesbian Horizons, then Horizons), where she served on the board in the '80s, and later returned to be part of the team that worked on creating and building the Center on Halsted.

Lipetz also worked on the launch of Fred Eychaner's WPWR Channel 50 Foundation in the '90s—an entity she ran for 11 years. Now known as the Alphawood Foundation, it is a critical supporter of the arts, activism and LGBTQ organizations.

Lipetz later was president and CEO of the Executive Service Corps of Chicago, where she used her expertise and skills to benefit Chicago's non-profit community.

Most recently, Lipetz started Lipetz Consulting, and among her clients was the Chicago Community Trust, working as an advisor on the LGBT Community Fund.

Lipetz also chaired the board of the Donors Forum of Chicago (now called Forefront), and she served on the Illinois Attorney General's Charitable Advisory Council. Other boards she served on include the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and the United Way/Crusade of Mercy Chicago Council.

Her early mentors in the lesbian community were Pauline Bart, Jean Hardisty and Eileen Kreutz.

"One defining moment [for me] was serving as an openly gay delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention," Lipetz said of her life. "Walking onto the floor for the first time was a magical moment for someone who watched political conventions all of her life."

Early years

Lipetz was born in Louisville in 1947. Her parents were social workers and involved in anti-

racist work during the tumultuous '50s and '60s. As a Jewish family, they were involved in interfaith work, and Lipetz attended an integrated high school. She was active in civil-rights work at that school.

She graduated from Douglass College of Rutgers University and earned a master's degree in sociology from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University. She taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern and Spertus College.

At Douglass in the '60s, during the peak antiwar protest years on college campuses, Lipetz was involved in student government, including fighting a policy that said it was a violation for students to be involved in protests.

While she was at Ohio State, National Guard troops from her campus were sent to nearby Kent State to quell protests, resulting in the killing of four students in 1970.

From Ohio State she returned to Louisville to teach community college.

Lipetz said she did not really know she was a lesbian until age 24. Her first "coming out" experience was in 1973. "I was teaching a class in social problems and did a unit on homosexuality," Lipetz said. "It was the early days of feminism, and lesbian issues were controversial. I wanted to know more, and that was a hint of more to come."

The women's movement really attracted her attention, so Lipetz chose Planned Parenthood in Louisville as the first board of directors she would serve on. Her second board was the ACLU in her hometown. She said she enjoyed speaking and debating on women's choice issues.

Another proud achievement was being part of a group of about 40 people who got the ERA ratified in Kentucky in 1972. There was a male Democratic governor and a female Democratic lieutenant governor—and she signed the bill. Lipetz said they simply didn't have any reason to think they couldn't accomplish sweeping change, and helped to pass about 100 bills fighting for women's equality there.

When she moved to Chicago to attend Northwestern, however, she had a big wakeup call. She was schooled in the "who sent you" stranglehold of Chicago and Illinois politics, regardless of political party. It made it much more difficult to fight for change.

Her first professional job was working for the American Judicature Society, evaluating the criminal courts and the integrity of the American justice system. When federal funding for that important work dried up, she went to work for the University of Illinois Medical Center.

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Lipetz's connection to AIDS came early on in the epidemic. She volunteered with the Reproductive Rights Advisory Committee of the ACLU of Illinois, and then issues of HIV/AIDS bias started to pop up. While at UIC, the unit Lipetz worked



Marcia Lipetz (left) and Lynda Crawford.

for had created educational materials related to HTLVIII (what later was labeled HIV). So there were lots of educational materials available locally.

Lipetz and gay businessman Fred Eychaner co-chaired an ACLU task force to create a policy related to discrimination issues. Lots of bad information about HIV/AIDS filled the news and streets in that 1984–85 time period. The ACLU task force's approach was to "protect individual rights and liberties as well as public health."

"We developed the first policy in the U.S. for an ACLU, and that allowed us to accept a case for a physician at Cook County Hospital who had lost his privileges," Lipetz said. "Deaths were too numerous to count—gay men were diagnosed and died in 18 months, Black women in four months."

This work led to the creation of the local ACLU's AIDS and Civil Liberties Project. John Hammell was the first director of that project and the Gay and Lesbian Rights Project of ACLU. Hammell died of AIDS complications in 1995.

While Mayor Harold Washington's gay liaison Kit Duffy was the AFC's first executive director when the agency launched in 1985, Lipetz came on board as the first full-time ED, in 1987.

"This married my interest in philanthropy and my growing knowledge of HIV," Lipetz said. "There was this whole underground made up of nurses and social workers" fighting HIV/AIDS.

The big challenges included pushing to make sure Chicago was a part of the national dialogue since the coasts often received the most funding and attention; fighting between local organizations who were competing for funding; no consistent pipeline of funding; and very few private foundations were giving money to the cause.

As the AIDS Foundation's first full-time executive director, Lipetz, an open lesbian, helped bring the various parts of the LGBTQ and the HIV/AIDS communities together to battle a plague that was killing people within weeks or months of diagnosis. She helped to build consensus, secure

funding and develop a response to the pandemic.

Much of the structure that she and others created is still vital to AFC's work today, including the service providers council. "The blueprint was there," Lipetz said. "AFC would be the gatherer of funds, to disperse to other agencies, to pick up the gaps, and to enhance others, for example with the case management collaborative."

"We brought the community together to make the decisions on funding. We were the demilitarized zone."

That doesn't mean there were no controversies. There were plenty, including among the populations most impacted by the disease. She said AFC's approach was to just not take the bait.

As a woman working on HIV/AIDS, she noted that a great number of other women stepped up to help because so many gay men were either struggling with the disease, or helping their partners and friends.

"AIDS had a huge impact on all of us," she said. "We watched as the community members shriveled, and we felt helpless about what to do. We coped with the constant death. I purposely touched and hugged everyone I could—because there were so many fears about touching people with AIDS. I went to as many memorials as I could, and I just dug down and did the work."

But then, it just "got too expensive," she said. "We created a parallel care delivery system, and there was not enough money to go around. Too many groups started, some were vanity projects. And race issues, about distribution of resources, began to effect the work. When FQHCs [Federal Qualified Health Centers] started to get involved in care, that really helped."

The stress was real. "I lived and breathed AIDS for more than three-and-a-half years," Lipetz said. "It was killing me, the pressure, the personal attacks, vendettas—it was not healthy. I left on my own, with three month's notice. I spent a lot of time pulling together materials for the next leader."

Amy Maggio was interim ED, followed by Karen Fishman as the next executive director of AFC.

Foundation work

Lipetz said her interest in philanthropy probably stems from her parents and the Jewish tradition of charitable giving.

After her AFC work, she went to a consulting project for WPWR Channel 50, which was looking to grow its reputation in public affairs. The station was owned at the time by Eychaner, whose own philanthropy was starting to increase. Lipetz said she was mindful that a foundation might develop from her work there.

The funding would go to a "progressive agenda" and for the things many foundations won't fund, such as operating budgets and advocacy, plus also funding of the arts and children's projects. They also would focus on women's domestic violence issues.

"We started with small grants," Lipetz said of the foundation. She started as secretary to the board and then became executive director of the foundation. She worked there for 11 years.

Center on Halsted

Lipetz first served on the Horizons board of directors in the mid-'80s, during the era when the agency hired its first full-time executive director, Bruce Koff. While she left the board when she took on the AFC job, fearing any conflicts of interest if Horizons applied for grants from AFC, she said she was always a supporter, attending galas and donating funds.

A few years later, when Patrick Sheahan was Horizons board president, he recruited Lipetz back into the fold. Her roles on the Center's board included vice chair and board of governance member.

"The time was right for a community center, a real center that included arts, recreation, meeting rooms, etc.," Lipetz said.

Lipetz joined a committee of the board first, and they operated independently, with no control by Horizons. Their mission was to explore the concept of a community center in the city. There had been several LGBT centers since the '70s, but the last, Rodde Center, had closed in the early '90s.

Sheahan, Vicky Raymont, Julio Rodriguez and, later, Dave Helverson, Evette Cardona, Marcia Festen and a handful of others worked on focus groups, town halls and research for just what and where this center would be.

The committee became a full part of the board, and Horizons itself morphed into the Center on Halsted. The building at the corner of Waveland and Halsted opened in 2007, after years of heavy lifting by the committee, board, donors, politicians and other key players.

"I spent eight years working on this," Lipetz said. "After that, it was time for other voices. You need different leaders at different times. I knew they needed to diversify and get fresh voices."

Lipetz, for her years of dedication to Horizons and the Center, was honored with the 2018 Human First Award at the Center's annual gala.

Her most recent work was helping with the LGBT Giving Council at Chicago Community Trust. "I set up the systems," she said. "I was seen as professional and neutral. I helped make site visits

and make recommendations."

What matters now

About a year and a half ago, Lipetz started to get sick. It was adenocarcinoma. She and Lynda, together 16 years and married 13, coped with this final hurdle together.

Lipetz had two rounds of surgery and chemotherapy, but in August said there was nothing left to do. She went into hospice a few weeks ago. "I don't want to sustain the pain," she said, her black lab/dachshund mix in her lap.

"My friends have been very present," she said. "People take shifts."

Asked in 2007 for the Chicago Gay History Project what she felt her personal legacy is to the Chicago LGBT community, she said: "I guess I'm a builder—solid hard work that builds for the future—and I'm enormously proud of the work of the ACLU and the future of Center on Halsted."

She said her "defining moments" were: "Coming out to my sister; taking a partner home for the first time; buying our first house; being in a relationship with children; the Democratic National Committee; AFC's first fundraiser [a huge 1987 gala downtown featuring Angela Lansbury among many others]; testifying in Springfield; the Center on Halsted's ribbon cutting and being in the gym, theater, and youth space for the first time."

Receiving the Human First Award was a highlight for her. "I had that feeling that this was going to be it," she said. "I am happy, I do not feel I have a lot of unfinished business. I have been a feminist, a lesbian, Jewish, an academic, a philanthropist. I got to be all these things and more."

The Alphawood Foundation posted a statement on its website: "Alphawood Foundation honors the memory of Marcia Lipetz, our first executive director and a moving force in the creation of our organization. Marcia was a giant in our city and will remain forever in our hearts as we continue the work she started. We remember her with profound thanks."

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago sent a statement saying it was "saddened to learn that Marcia Lipetz has passed away. Marcia was a trailblazing social justice leader fighting for the rights of women, the LGBTQ community as well as those living with and vulnerable to HIV. As AFC's first full-time executive director and an honorary board member, Marcia was fundamental to AFC becoming the organization that it is today. This is a significant loss to both AFC and the Chicago community. We hope you'll take a moment to recognize the impact of Marcia and her decades of work to advance human rights."

See 2007 Chicago Gay History Project video interview with Lipetz here: <http://chicagogayhistory.org/biography.html?id=736>.

Lipetz asked that any donations in her honor should be made to the Center on Halsted or a progressive organization of your choice.

A memorial service for Dr. Lipetz has been confirmed for Sunday Sept. 23, noon at Chicago Jewish Funerals, 8851 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. Interment private. Shiva or a reception will follow the service at the funeral home.

This Week's Featured Properties



Ideally located on an oversized 30x140 lot on a one-way street in Lincoln Park, this custom Metzler-Hull solid-masonry house, designed by noted architect Dan Wheeler, reflects a rare & impressive attention to detail in its design, construction & finishes. Dreamy yard, three car garage.

2432 N. Surrey Ct.
\$2,550,000

. . .
. . .
. . .



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.

1457 W. Addison St.
\$1,995,000



Behind a classic facade and set on an oversized 25' x 150' lot, this dynamic modern sensation is the essence of Wicker Park: unconventional, wildly exciting, and filled with cool surprises at every turn. Best location across from park.

1829 W. Evergreen Ave.
\$1,950,000



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 at a great price-point.

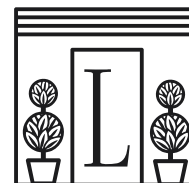
3530 N. Lake Shore Dr. #7A
\$549,000

. . .
. . .



Experience sophistication and high design in stunning east-facing, renovated showplace. Full-service co-op building with indoor pool and extensive work-out facilities.

3750 N. Lake Shore Dr. #4D
\$549,000



Brad Lippitz Group

773.404.1144
brad@bradlippitz.com
bradlippitz.com
3323 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL

For over 20 years, Brad has been a proud member and supporter of the community; no real estate broker in the city sells or gives back as much to the community.

COMPASS

Compass Real Estate is a licensed real estate broker with a principal office in New York, NY and offices in all applicable Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdrawal without notice. No statement is made as to the accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footages are approximate. This is not intended to solicit property already listed. Nothing herein shall be construed as legal, accounting or other professional advice outside the realm of real estate brokerage.

Investment group buys Reader; Baim to be publisher

An agreement has been reached between the Chicago Sun-Times, owner of the Chicago Reader weekly newspaper, and a private investment group which has formed an L3C to purchase the Reader to ensure it remains a vital voice in the local media landscape.

Dorothy R. Leavell, publisher of the Chicago and Gary Crusader newspapers, will be chairman of the Reader board of directors. Board treasurer will be Eileen Rhodes, president of East Lake Management Group, and secretary will be Jes-

sica Stites, executive editor of In These Times magazine.

The publisher of the Reader will be Tracy Baim, co-founder and publisher of Windy City Times newspaper. Baim will be stepping away from day-to-day responsibilities at Windy City Times. Her WCT management team—Terri Klinsky, Andrew Davis, Kirk Williamson, Jean Albright and Matt Simonette—will be responsible for the weekly production of Windy City Times.

The major investors behind the Reader pur-



Tracy Baim.

Photo by Hal Baim

chase are longtime business leader Elzie Higginbottom and criminal defense attorney Leonard Goodman. A public fundraising and membership drive will also launch soon.

The new leadership team will take over the Reader in October 2018, with an official relaunch later this fall.

The Reader, founded in 1971, is among the last remaining alternative weekly newspapers that came out of the 1960s and 1970s counter-culture movements. The new owners will continue the strong tradition of cultural coverage and investigative reporting, focusing on both print and digital distribution channels.

"I am very happy to be part of the team saving this important media institution," said Leavell. "There is a great opportunity here to expand the Reader coverage throughout the city and near suburbs of Chicago." Since 1968, Leavell has served as editor and publisher of the Crusader Newspaper Group—Chicago and Gary, Ind.—after the death of her first husband Balm L. Leavell Jr., co-founder of both publications in 1940 and 1961, respectively. In 2017, Leavell, awarded many times over for her community and publishing work, was elected Chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a Black newspaper trade organization.

"The Chicago Sun-Times worked hard to save the Chicago Reader these past 14 months," said Edwin Eisendrath, CEO of the Sun-Times. "This deal is good for the Reader, good for the Sun-Times, and good for Chicago. It took some time to get right, as it became clear that more resources, including staffing, were needed to shore up the Reader for its next phase. All of us at the

Sun-Times are proud to turn the Reader over to this remarkable group of people who will make sure this independent voice is not lost."

"This is a very exciting challenge and opportunity," said Baim. "The Reader is an iconic media company and is a critical voice in Chicago. I look forward to continuing its tradition, and expanding its reach." In 1985, Baim co-founded Windy City Times, one of a handful of weekly LGBT newspapers remaining in the U.S. The author of 12 books, Baim has won numerous awards for her work as a journalist and publisher, including induction into journalism and LGBT halls of fame, most recently the Association of Women Journalists-Chicago Hall of Fame.

Legacy Project to induct Johnson, Tchaikovsky in Oct.

The Legacy Project has announced the fall inductions of transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson and Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky onto Chicago's award-winning outdoor LGBT History Museum "The Legacy Walk."

The inductions will take place on Saturday, Oct. 13, beginning with a pre-ceremony reception at 1-2 p.m. in the Harris Hall of Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., that will focus on Johnson's legacy with several guest speakers.

The reception will be followed by a brief outdoor ceremony at 2 p.m. in front of the Center, where the bronze memorial will be revealed. Following Johnson's induction, there will be a similar ceremony at 2:30 p.m. to welcome famed Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky to the Legacy Walk at 3311 N. Halsted St.

Both ceremonies will be followed by a "Dedication Celebration" at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

See LegacyProjectChicago.org.

Local journalist part of NLGJA board

NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists has announced its 2018-19 national board of directors.

Rick Stuckey, of NBC Chicago, is the secretary, joining CNN's Sharif Durhams (president) and Jen Christensen (vice president) as well as KGO-TV's Ken Miguel (treasurer).

Joining the board of directors is Chris Martin, of Bloomberg. Kristina Torres, of the University System of Georgia, and Sarah Blazucki, of U.S. Department of Justice, have been elected as at-large directors. They join directors April Hunt (Emory University), freelancer Senta Scarborough, Jeff Truesdell (of People Magazine) and Eric Walter (of KYW Newsradio).

The new members took office at the conclusion of NLGJA's 2018 National Convention on Sept. 9.

The new Windy City Times Leadership Team



Publisher Terri Klinsky
With Windy City Media
Group 23 years



Executive Editor Andrew Davis
With WCMG 23 years



Art Director and Associate Editor Kirk Williamson
With WCMG 17 years



Director of New Media and Circulation Director Jean Albright
With WCMG 24 years



Managing Editor Matt Simonette
With WCMG 5 years



Social Media Director Scott Duff
With WCMG 3 years

Co-founder, Board President and Majority Owner: Tracy Baim



@windycitytimes

Our new Twitter handle!

EI PAC to Rauner: Stop contributions to Erika Harold

The Equality Illinois PAC has asked Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner to stop contributing to Republican attorney general candidate Erika Harold's campaign and to demand a return of substantial contribution.

A statement from the PAC's chair, John Litchfield, said, in part: "Since Erika Harold is so out of step with Illinois values—the same values that are the foundation of LGBTQ-affirming legislation Governor Rauner has signed into law—the Equality Illinois PAC calls on Governor Bruce Rauner to suspend any further contributions to Erika Harold's campaign and to demand a return of his \$1 million donation to her campaign last month.

"We were shocked and dismayed by Governor Rauner's enormous contribution to Harold's campaign because he has been supportive of LGBTQ civil rights in the past, even when those in his party opposed him. This is an opportunity for Governor Rauner to live up to the best values of Illinois by not financially supporting a candidate who has a demonstrated record of supporting harmful policies for LGBTQ families."

The PAC cited Harold's alleged statement that "she would rather place a foster child in the care of an abusive straight couple than in the home of a loving same-sex couple." It also said that Harold "advocated for a constitutional amendment to deny same-sex couples like my husband and me the freedom to marry—even after Illinois had enacted its marriage equality law; and she has opposed workplace non-discrimination laws that protect LGBTQ people from being fired or denied a promotion simply because of who we are or who we love."

Trans anti-violence march Sept. 21

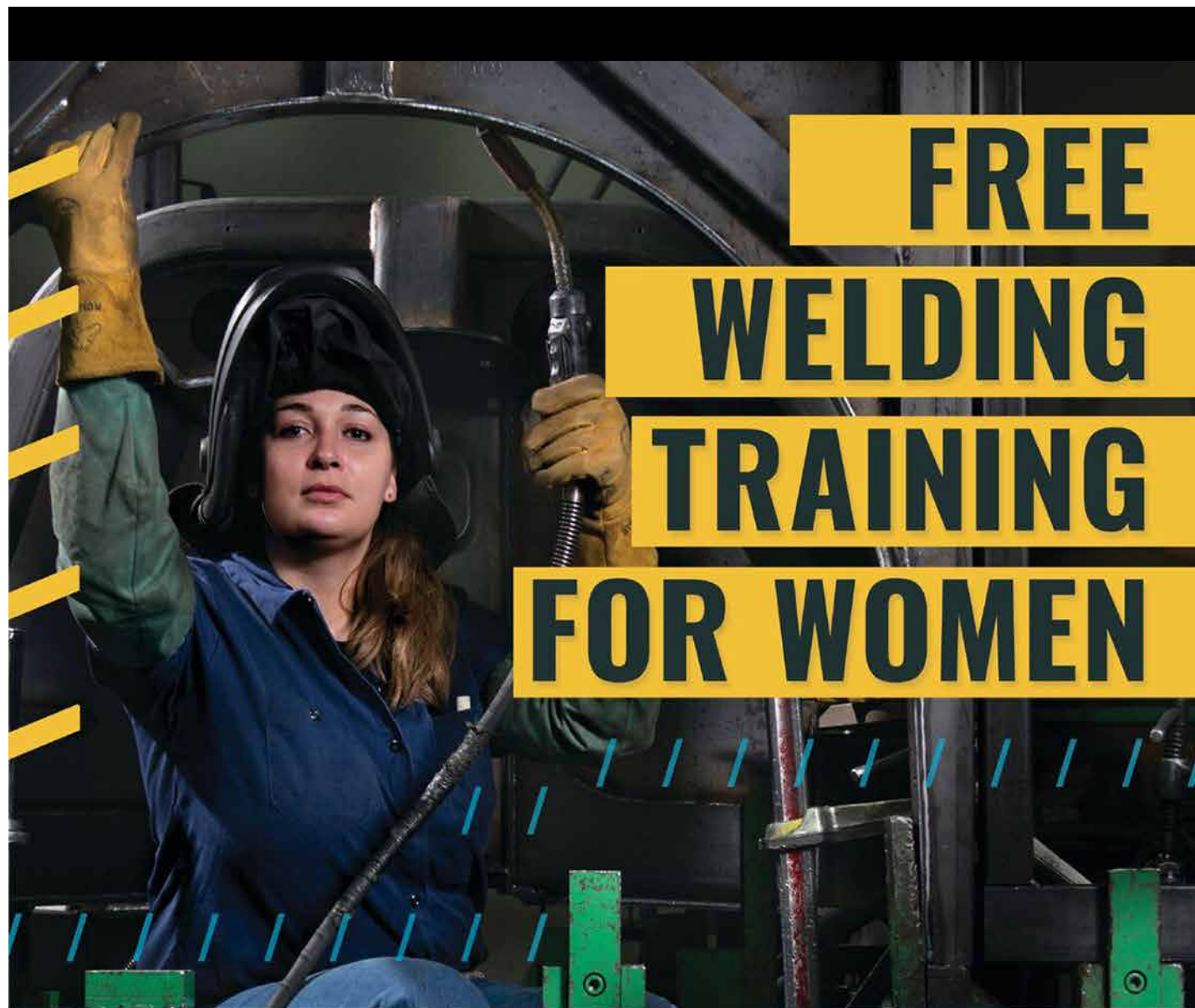
"SayHerName: A march to end the violence against trans women" will take place Friday, Sept. 21, 6-8 p.m., at Wabash Avenue and Wacker Drive in Chicago's Loop.

There will be a rally to commemorate the loss of transgender individuals (including Chicagoan Dejanay Stanton) to violence. Afterward, attendees will march to Daley Plaza to host a candle-light vigil.

See "SayHerName: A march to end the violence against trans women" on Facebook.

BREAKING NEWS
SPECIAL FEATURES
EXPANDED COVERAGE
ARCHIVES

WindyCityTimes.com



**FREE
WELDING
TRAINING
FOR WOMEN**

**LEARN THE SKILLS NEEDED TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT
IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.**

FREE 12-WEEK HANDS ON TRAINING PROGRAM

Learn More at our Weekly Information Sessions

1st & 3rd Wednesday of the Month @ 10:30AM

2nd & 4th Wednesday of the Month @ 5:30PM



CONNECT WITH CHICAGO WOMEN IN TRADES:

Facebook.com/ChicagoWomenInTrades

ChicagoWomenInTrades2.org

312.942.1444

2444 WEST 16TH STREET | SUITE 3E

CHICAGO IL 60608

2018 MIDWEST LGBTQ HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

Jessica Halem keynotes LGBTQ health symposium

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Jessica Halem, a former Chicagoan and Harvard Medical School's first-ever LGBT program director, gave the keynote address, "Honor the Dead and Fight for the Living," at the Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium Sept. 15 at Malcolm X College.

Halem started her career working for then Rep. Bella Abzug after graduating from Sarah Lawrence College. Among her other career accomplishments are 15 years performing comedy, transforming Howard Brown Health's Lesbian Community Care (formerly Cancer) Project during its early years and serving on Barack Obama's first LGBT Advisory Committee. She is the recipient of many awards and is a member of the Tegan and Sara Foundation board of directors.

Howard Brown Health (HBH) President and CEO David Ernesto Munar thanked Malcolm X College for hosting the symposium in the wake of the citywide hotel workers strike (JW Marriott was the original location) while HBH Center for Education, Research and Advocacy Vice President Andie Baker unveiled the center's new voting drive campaign—Who's Seats? Your Seats!

"This year, more than ever, we are reminded of the urgency of the issues that we face," said Baker. "It is time to mobilize and get to the polls."

Halem roused the crowd with her facial expressions and bawdy sense of humor as she took the stage. Her humor caused bursts of laughter throughout her talk.

"Howard Brown, you are crushing it," Halem said at one point. "You have to really love the community you serve to be up this early on a Saturday morning. I am inspired by all of you and the work you do."

Halem said she was born a radical Jewish feminist lesbian, added that every LGBTQ person has

been "surviving and thriving in the face of great adversity since most of us were born."

In terms of the work she does, Halem said places like Harvard Medical School have a history of inertia that is weighing them down and making it hard to enact the changes LGBTQ people are clamoring for with regards to training and overall cultural competency. Halem explained that the lack of diversity in leadership is a part of why these institutions are slow to change.

Halem said that she wanted to talk about honoring the dead and fighting for the living because far too often this is not the case because of how one talks about health. She explained that people do not ask why people, for example, smoked or drank too much alcohol or ate too much or took care of everyone else and not themselves. Instead, Halem said, they talk about risk factors and this does not help anyone get at the root of the issue.

"We need to have real conversations even within our own LGBTQ community about this issue," said Halem. "Queer women especially do not take care of themselves enough, including going to the doctor, and that has to change. Everyone needs to take two hours out of each day to take care of their minds and bodies."

Figuring out what is working and improving on what is not working is the key, she added.

Halem explained that in medical schools sex and gender, and the differences between the two, are not being taught, and that only five hours of class time is spent talking about LGBTQ people and their issues. She said they instead spend a lot of time talking about what is "normal" i.e., the threshold with which everything is measured and that excludes LGBTQ people's lived experiences.

"What would medicine look like if, for the past



Jessica Halem
at Midwest
LGBTQ Health
Symposium.
Photo by Carrie
Maxwell

100 years, LGBTQ people were the doctors studying their own communities patients," said Halem. "What if LGBTQ people were the standard that everything else is measured by in medicine."

Resilience is something Halem said she is obsessed by. She said New Orleans is not resilience because of Hurricane Katrina but because of what the city has had to deal with historically.

"It is not about the hits you take, it is about how quickly you can bounce back," said Halem. "White cisgender heterosexual rich men do not have the same resilience because they do not have to deal with the things the rest of society has to face on an everyday basis."

One thing that Halem does as a part of her job is to recruit LGBTQ people into Harvard Medical School. She said that 17 percent of this year's incoming students are LGBTQ.

"The most important thing that should happen in medicine is to get the patient and provider to talk openly with each other," said Halem. "Also, LGBTQ people need to go to their healthcare provider on a regular basis and be honest with them about their lives."

Halem called on the audience to seek some pleasure and joy in their lives and quoted Audre Lorde: "When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

A Q&A session followed.

HBH and the Center for Education, Research and Advocacy were the symposium's presenters.

Visit WindyCityMediaGroup.com to read more summaries of symposium events.

Local priest's planned burning of rainbow flag shut down

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In a Sept. 2 Sunday bulletin, Resurrection Catholic Church Pastor Fr. Paul Kalchik announced in a postscript to his reprinted Homily message that a Rainbow flag found in the church, along with parishioner's pledge cards mixed with incense, would be burned in front of the church as a sacrilege during a prayer service following the Sept. 29 Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael 4:30 p.m. Mass.

Windy City Times received this information in an anonymous email to the editor.

Resurrection Church, located in Chicago's Avondale neighborhood at 3043 N. Francisco Ave., is the result of a 1992 merger of St. Veronica and St. Francis Xavier churches.

However, the Archdiocese of Chicago leadership was made aware of this event and told Kalchik he could not move forward.

In a statement to Windy City Times, Archdiocese of Chicago Communications and Marketing Director Anne Mascelli said on behalf of the Archdiocese, "We can confirm that the pastor has agreed not to move forward with these activities."

In addition to the now-nixed rainbow flag burning announcement, Kalchik's Sept. 2 Homily message called for the restoration of the Orthodox Roman Catholic Church as well as this statement: "We cannot let the current troubles

keep us from our mission to go make more disciples for the Lord, nor should modern day distractions like global warming, LGBT 'rights' or even immigration issues ever take precedence over that mission."

Kalchik's Sept. 2 Homily and post-script was also published on the Church Militant website founded by Saint Michael's Media President Gary Michael Voris.

When reached for comment, Kalchik did not respond to queries about this now-canceled Rainbow flag burning.

"We are grateful that the Chicago Archdiocese quickly and firmly rejects the words of this pastor and his intended 'ritual' which are inconsistent with Catholic values and beliefs," said DignityUSA President and Dignity/Chicago member Chris Pett. "It appears that this pastor was hijacking the parish to promote an extreme, ultra-conservative agenda promoted by the Church Militant group which is not officially recognized by the Church and is rejected by most Catholics. National polling over the past number of years consistently shows that a majority of Catholics support LGBTQ people and our issues. While we continue to challenge the institutional Church to reject its harmful and incorrect teachings about homosexuality, we are glad to see this decisive action on behalf of all LGBTQ Catholics."

To view the Homily, visit web.archive.org/web/20180910175651/https://uploads.weconnect.com/mce/b19dc177a07ce563e09b457f13bf5a673ddfbba1/9.2.18.rbg.pdf.

On Sept. 18, Windy City Times received word that the situation may have changed. Visit WindyCityMediaGroup.com to get updated information.



AVER Banquet
Saturday, Sept. 22,
6:30pm

This year the Chicago Chapter of AVER (American Veterans for Equal Rights) is hosting the Annual National Convention of AVER in Chicago at the Center on Halsted. Come join us and celebrate with national leaders in LGBT rights for the military at the Convention Banquet.

**Ann Sather Restaurant • 909 W Belmont Avenue • \$40 per person
Open Bar, Silent Auction, and Buffet Dinner Program to Follow**

**Register at www.averchicago.org/national-convention
Pay online using the DONATE button on the home page
For more info Call Jim Darby at 773-752-0058**

Women's March Chicago announces event expansion

BY VERNON HESTER

On Sept. 12, at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Columbus Drive in Grant Park, board members from Women's March Chicago (WMC) and representatives from partnership organizations announced expansions and new features to its upcoming March to the Polls event on Saturday, Oct. 13.

"The stakes are sky-high this November," said WMC Board President Jessica Scheller in a previous press statement. "We need every single woman—from first-time voters to great grandmothers—along with every single ally to take to the streets and converge on the polls. We have been practicing for months. Now it's time to channel our outrage and energy and truly make our voices heard through our votes in greater numbers than ever before."

October's March to the Polls event will feature a First Time Voter Experience (FTVE), a special area for new voters where they will mingle with elected officials, community leaders, long term voters and others while enjoying VIP treatment. This section of the event is in partnership with

Chicago Votes, a partner organization that specializes in youth outreach and mobilization.

March to the Polls will also feature a new expansive Voter Village that will run along Columbus Drive and serve as a hub for activists and will feature festival style booths hosted by political candidates, businesses and activist organizations including The League of Women Voters of Illinois, Moms Demand Action, The Young Women's Christian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, The Coalition Against Handgun Violence, The Rainbow Push Coalition, Gun Sense in America, The League of Women Voters of Chicago, The Illinois Council on Women and Girls, Action Illinois and Chicago Women Take Action, among others.

Following an energetic rally with entertainment and prominent speakers, including famed civil-rights activist Heather Booth, the event will encourage attendees from Cook County and the City of Chicago to literally march to the polls and utilize the early voting sites in downtown Chicago.

The March to the Polls rally site, FTVE and Voter Village area will open at 9 a.m., with entrances along Columbus Drive at Congress Parkway and Balbo Drive.



Women's March Chicago members.

Photo by Vern Hester



Suburban Healthcare You Can Trust

157 S. Lincoln Ave., Ste. K, Aurora 630.264.1819
1665 Larkin Ave., Elgin 847.695.1093

Open Door offers primary medical care, behavioral health and substance use as well as specialized services to eliminate disparities for patients who:

- are concerned about sexually transmitted infections;
- are living with HIV/AIDS;
- identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender

STIGMA FREE SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Primary Medical Care
- HIV Specialty Care
- Behavioral Health & Substance Use
- STI Testing & Treatment
- PrEP
- Hormone Administration & Monitoring

odhcil.org





EMPOWER YOURSELF

WITH A CAREER IN THE
CONSTRUCTION &
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**ENROLL IN OUR FREE 12-WEEK
TRAINING PROGRAM**

LEARN MORE AT OUR WEEKLY INFORMATION SESSIONS
1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH @10:30AM
2ND & 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH @5:30PM

CONNECT WITH CHICAGO WOMEN IN TRADES:
[Facebook.com/ChicagoWomenInTrades](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoWomenInTrades)
ChicagoWomenInTrades2.org

312.942.1444 2444 WEST 16TH STREET | SUITE 3E CHICAGO IL 60608



viewpoints


**Tracy
BAIM**

Change is in the air

Windy City Times is marking its 33rd anniversary this month. As co-founder and publisher, I could not be more proud of what this paper and related sister publications have accomplished. I know we have not been perfect, but we have given our hearts to this passion project for so many years.

Now it is time for a change.

A few weeks ago, I was asked by the incoming owners of the Chicago Reader, the city's weekly alternative newspaper since 1971, to come on board as publisher. It was an offer I could not refuse.

But the reason I could accept is because Windy City Times will be in great hands with our leadership team. Terri Klinsky has been with WCT for 23 years, and she is moving up to become publisher. Andrew Davis started as a freelancer 23 years ago, became managing editor 12 years ago and is now executive editor. Kirk Williamson, with us starting 17 years ago, is art director and associate editor. Matt Simonette, a senior news reporter and assistant editor, will now be managing editor. Jean Albright, my life partner for 24 years and with the company almost as long, is web director, calendar editor and circulation manager. And Scott Duff is our social-media guru and senior account executive.

There are actually more than 50 other people who help us, from hard-working delivery drivers to salespeople, business people, vendors, writers, photog-

raphers and editors, including theater/dance editor Catey Sullivan. Martie Marro is our website host extraordinaire.

For me, this is certainly bittersweet, but I am still majority owner of Windy City Times, and will guide it from afar. I just will not be part of the day-to-day running of WCT.

A native Chicagoan, I started as a part-time reporter, typesetter, photographer and sometimes-delivery person at GayLife newspaper in June 1984, right out of college. All I have ever wanted to be was a journalist. To be one, I knew I had to also know all aspects of what it took to produce a newspaper. So I have been adapting to new tools and technology my entire career, in order to do what I love. I have ventured into event organizing (Gay Games VII, the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality, etc.), sales, marketing, social media and conference planning. I have worked on youth homeless issues intensely for five years, including most recently on youth storage lockers and tiny homes.

All of these skills and connections have given me the confidence to attempt what may seem impossible. To try to re-launch the Reader into a financially solvent and culturally relevant print and online publication that will serve the needs of a city as diverse as this one.

I love what I do. Every day for the last 34 years, I have been able to wake up knowing that I have a mission, even if it has almost always been a struggle. The struggle is not really about the work load. I love working hard. It's my main addiction. I don't smoke, drink alcohol, do drugs or even coffee, but I am addicted to telling stories, to amplifying voices, to covering the people and places of this amazing city we can love and still want to improve. The struggle is usually about the funding—the question of how we fund this kind of work.

What is most exciting to me about taking the experiences, skills and connections I have and layering them over a new publication is that in many ways I have felt frustrated in wanting to do larger social justice and cultural coverage of this city—constrained by parameters of the work at WCT. We cover the Chicago LGBTQ community in-depth, and are able to sometimes go into larger coverage, without losing our core focus.

Now, I am moving to the major league. The Reader covers a wider swath of the city and suburbs, and that presents exciting new opportunities to look at the intersections of all communities. That includes across all races, religions, geographies, genders, sexual orientations, classes and more. There is so much right with this city, but also so much wrong. We are depressingly divided along so many lines. We have invisible borders everywhere. This city and its leaders have neglected massive segments of this town, and there are so many neighborhoods and people in crisis.

We can do better. There is always room for a better and more informed approach. Media are part of this. The Fourth Estate is a key pillar in a civil society. Without the media, in its many forms, watching taxpayer dollars, elected officials, institutions, foundations, corporations and other entities, corruption grows unchallenged.

Windy City Times and the Reader both play roles as watchdogs and amplifiers. I have been lucky to do this work in the LGBTQ community for 34 years. Now, I am excited to apply that knowledge to the larger landscape of this city.

Put me in coach—I'm ready.

Tracy Baim can be reached at publisher@chicagoreadercorp.com. Terri Klinsky is at terri@windycitymediagroup.com. Andrew Davis is at andrew@windycitymediagroup.com.

letters

Calling out Kavanaugh

Open item from the National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund:

It took courage for Professor Christine Blasey Ford to publicly come forward with her accusations of physical and sexual assault at the hands of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and his friend Mark

Judge. While the #MeToo movement has shed light on the high prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault attacks, telling your story is never easy. The severe backlash that is already underway against Ford is a stark reminder of the treatment Professor Anita Hill endured almost 30 years ago.

This country already has a self-admitted sexual-assault perpetrator sitting in the White House. Chairman Grassley and Majority Leader McConnell must

exercise due diligence to ensure a perpetrator is not seated on the Supreme Court. If Senate leadership fails to postpone the vote and take the time to fully investigate the nominee's actions, their gross disregard for women and survivors will be undeniable."

*Sincerely,
Rea Carey, Executive Director
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund*

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

WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL. 33, No. 52, Sept. 19, 2018
*The combined forces of Windy City Times,
founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper,
founded May 1987.*

PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Andrew Davis

MANAGING EDITOR Matt Simonette

DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA AND WEB EDITOR

Jean Albright

ART DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kirk Williamson

SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTOR Scott Duff

BUSINESS MANAGER Ripley Caine

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Terri Klinsky,

Kirk Williamson, Scott Duff, Kathy Breit, Theresa

Santos Volpe, Kevin Siarkowski, Amy Matheny

NATIONAL SALES Rivendell Media,

212-242-6863

THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR Catey Sullivan

SENIOR WRITERS Jonathan Abarbanel, Mary

Shen Barnidge, Liz Baudler, Charlsie Dewey,

Ross Forman, Carrie Maxwell, Rev. Irene Monroe,

Jerry Nunn, Tony Peregrin, Angelique Smith,

Sari Staver, Sarah Toce, Melissa Wasserman

WRITERS Sarah Katherine Bowden, Ada Cheng,

Eric Formato, Joe Franco, Veronica Harrison,

Kelsey Hoff, Aaron Hunt, Eric Karas, Brian Kirst,

Billy Masters, Scott C. Morgan, Amelia Orozco,

Ariel Parrella-Aureli, Kerry Reid, Dana Rudolph,

Ana Serna, Karen Topham, Joseph Varisco,

Regina Victor, Sean Margaret Wagner, Lauren

Warnecke, Steve Warren, Lauren Emily Whalen

SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHERS Kat Fitzgerald, Hal

Baim, Tim Carroll, Ed Negron

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jean Albright

DISTRIBUTION Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Sue

and Victor

WEB HOSTING LoveYourWebsite.com (lead

programmer: Martie Marro)

PRESIDENT Tracy Baim

(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609

Editorial: andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

Sales: terri@windycitymediagroup.com

Calendar: calendar@windycitymediagroup.com

Circulation: jean@windycitymediagroup.com

Art/ad copy: kirk@windycitymediagroup.com

Theater: cateysullivan25@gmail.com

Copyright 2018 Lambda Publications Inc./Windy City Media

Group; All rights reserved. Reprint by permission only. Back

issues (if available) for \$5 per issue (postage included).

Return postage must accompany all manuscripts, drawings,

and photographs submitted if they are to be returned, and

no responsibility may be assumed for unsolicited materials.

All rights to letters, art and photographs sent to Windy

City Times will be treated as unconditionally assigned

for publication purposes and as such, subject to editing

and comment. The opinions expressed by the columnists,

cartoonists, letter writers, and commentators are their own

and do not necessarily reflect the position of Windy City

Times. Publication of the name, photograph, or likeness of

a person or organization in articles or advertising in Windy

City Times is not to be construed as any indication of the

sexual orientation of such person or organization. While

we encourage readers to support the advertisers who make

this newspaper possible, Windy City Times cannot accept

responsibility for advertising claims.

WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP,

5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, IL, 60640 U.S.A.

(MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday
OUT! Chicago's LGBTQ Visitor's Guide Online annual
Windy City Times Wedding and Events Guide Annual
Arts and Theater Weekly Online
www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



WINDY
CITY
TIMES

ARTS + THEATER

WEEKLY

OUR REVIEW OF
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORSAT DRURY LANE THEATRE IS JUST PART OF
OUR SPECIAL FALL THEATER PREVIEW ISSUE!

PAGE 16



Audrey II (puppeted by Matthew Sitz) and Will Lidke.
Photo by Brett Beiner

THEATER REVIEW

The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?

Playwright: Edward Albee

At: Interrobang Theatre Project at Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

Tickets: \$32;

InterrobangTheatre.org 312-219-4140

Runs through: Oct. 6

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

However steadfastly we may support the right of all people to love, couple and marry as they choose, most communities still designate a few zones “no-fly” to winged Cupid—children below a certain age, for example. Likewise forbidden are erotic activities involving live animals. Furry or feathered consorts may sleep undisturbed at the foot of your bed, but if your Fido or Felix crawls beneath the covers, you risk the censure of co-

habitants, peers and legal authorities.

This contradiction forms the basis for Edward Albee’s exploration of—take a deep breath, now—the accidental circumstances transforming an unlucky mortal into a social pariah and, just maybe, a tragic hero. Like many of his predecessors, our protagonist is a “decent, liberal, right-thinking” citizen, a faithful husband with an African-American wife, a gay teenage son and a circle of friends who freely engage in casual adultery. So what is the crime that so violates the morals of this tribe? Well, upon returning from a drive in the country, our paragon claims to have been seduced by what might, in pagan myth, be a pastoral goddess, but, in our modern secular post-Freudian society, can only be labeled a goat—a nanny goat, to be specific, dubbed “Sylvia” for her bucolic origins.

Is “Love Is Love” applicable in this case? Is a coquettish Caprine capable of informed consent? Does copulative anthropomorphism, however couched in romantic poesy, represent an abuse of power, privilege and/or hygiene? Albee argues



Tom Jansson and Elana Elyce in *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*

Photo by Emily Schwartz

neither for tolerance of interspecies sex, nor pity for those enamored of the unattainable, but, instead, extends an invitation—facilitated by his characters’ comic propensity for commenting on their own syntax, semantics and mechanics of discourse—to consider OUR individual boundaries, and why we erect them where we do.

No theater company could be faulted for stumbling occasionally in the course of navigating Albee’s slippery thesis and extravagant stage business—did I mention the classical and contemporary textual references, the trash-the-stage tantrums and the entrance of an actual barnyard you-know-what?—but the heroic efforts of director James Yost and the company assembled for this Interrobang Theater Project production render its 90 minutes in Rivendell’s Edgewater storefront a provocative and surprisingly funny symposium on the evolution of our cultural policies.

THEATER REVIEW

Crime and Punishment

Playwright: Chris Hannan, adapted from Dostoevsky

At: Shattered Globe Theatre at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 773-975-8150;

ShatteredGlobe.org; \$39

Runs through: Oct. 20

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Adapting a Dostoevsky novel for the stage requires a lot of condensation, but it might not seem that way in this two-and-a-half hour ver-

sion. Nonetheless at least one major subplot has been totally eliminated (the appearance in St. Petersburg and suicide of Svidrigailov), while the psychological cat-and-mouse game between the murderer Raskolnikov (Drew Schad) and detective Porfiry Petrovich (Patrick Thornton, perhaps a bit too affably cagey) has been greatly reduced, although it’s the central focus in many adaptations.

Adapter Chris Hannan instead gives the greatest weight to Raskolnikov’s growing involvement with the family of drunkard Semyon Marmeladov (Darren Jones), especially his prostitute daughter, Sonya (Ilse Zacharias), the novel’s redemptive figure.

Hannan’s version may include more of the parallel-and-subplots than most stage adaptations, but even so it’s a lifetime study to track and understand Dostoevsky’s complex (and changing)

ardor for social justice and reform on the one hand and spiritual orthodoxy on the other. No wonder Raskolnikov is conflicted! He’s an egotist with a martyr complex, a man whose emotional doubts undermine his intellectual convictions.

The hard-working ensemble makes the characters surprisingly colorful. Drew Schad artfully manages to convey Raskolnikov’s tortured psyche and many moods, at one moment arrogant and at another gentle, but always unable to accept the affection of others. Darla Harper is particularly sharp portraying the contrasting personalities of the murder victim and Raskolnikov’s mother.

Despite its length, this production remains consistently engaging and energetic, even in its quiet moments, as put together by capable veteran director Louis Contey. His concept of having Raskolnikov shadowed at every moment by mute alter egos is odd and adds little obvious value—

he’d be better placing devil and angel puppets on Raskolnikov’s shoulders—but all else is effective, aided by Christopher Kriz’s original music and sound design and Shelly Strasser’s generally-warm lighting.

Nick Mozak’s unit set creates a handsome and versatile base for the production. There’s nothing overtly Russian about it, but the warmth of wood suggests 1860s Petersburg in which only the grandest buildings would have been masonry structures. A few simple sticks of furniture, a few props (ya’ gotta’ have an ax, right?) and a portable door provide all other necessary furnishings. Best of all, the stage floor is painted with a Russian icon-style Madonna and Child image, which speaks volumes about the play’s key female/male relationships as well as Dostoevsky’s central theme of redemption.

THEATER REVIEW

Tangles and Plaques

Playwright: Kirsten Riiber

At: The Neo-Futurists at The Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland Ave.

Tickets: \$10-25; <https://neofuturists.org>;

773-878-4557

Runs through: Sept. 29

BY KERRY REID

Tangles and Plaques—at the Neo-Futurists, a Neo-Lab commission about the effects of dementia first seen in fall of 2017—has returned for a three-week engagement at the Neo-Futurarium.

Sourcing its name from plaques and tangles, deposits of protein that cause cell damage and death in the brain, Tangles and Plaques attempts to translate dementia into the language of theater. This is inherently successful in the structure of the play. Sections of the script are repeated and intentionally disorient the audience.

Neo-Futurists ensemble member and produc-

tion creator Kirsten Riiber wrote the show based on her work in reminiscence therapy (used to conjure the most relevant and clear memories to an aging person—those from that person’s childhood) at a local retirement home. Therefore, the meat of the show takes place in the “accumulated nostalgia-scape of seven artists on a budget.”

A memory, they assert, is alive, and they pull the viewer into not only the ensemble’s memories but their own. This nostalgia-scape consisted of some of the most striking collective memories the millennial generation has, such as Skip-Its, ribbon dancing and Britney Spears. There is a wonderful tactile moment where the ensemble sprays Axe body spray into the air, invoking sense memories in the audience. Ida Cuttler does the most serious and intentional macarena the world may ever see in this show. And, in true Neo-Futurist fashion, audience members are invited to the stage to offer their memories as content for the show, making for the kind of fun authentic involvement one can only find at the Neo-Futurarium.

In terms of design, ensemble member Jen Ellison has stretched the capacity of the Neo-

Futurists’ space and style, using every possible aspect of the space to tell this story. Practical lamps litter the world, illuminating various sections of the play space that are away from the stage. As they honed in on some of the more personal relationships to dementia, the lighting goes from bright washes to flashlights and spotlights, giving the audience a sense of fractured thought and fear. Although the end of play feels somewhat unfinished, there may be no way to effectively finish a play that is about an ongoing and frightening affliction that affects so many people.

The set consists of projections and a what could be described best as an altar to the ‘90s taking center stage. The performers, each more talented than the last, wear nostalgic Lisa Frank and Darth Vader shirts. One of the greatest things about seeing the Neo-Futurists is the sense of great personal sacrifice and reveal they invest in their work. It gives the feeling of being involved in their rehearsal process, and it means they treat this sensitive subject matter with great care. A sensory, immersive, electric experience, Tangles and Plaques is worth your time.

CRITICS’ PICKS

Radio Golf, Court Theatre, through Sept. 30. A gifted cast and director bring power to August Wilson’s final play, concerning African-American upward mobility in Pittsburgh’s gentrifying Hill District ghetto ... a slippery slope! JA

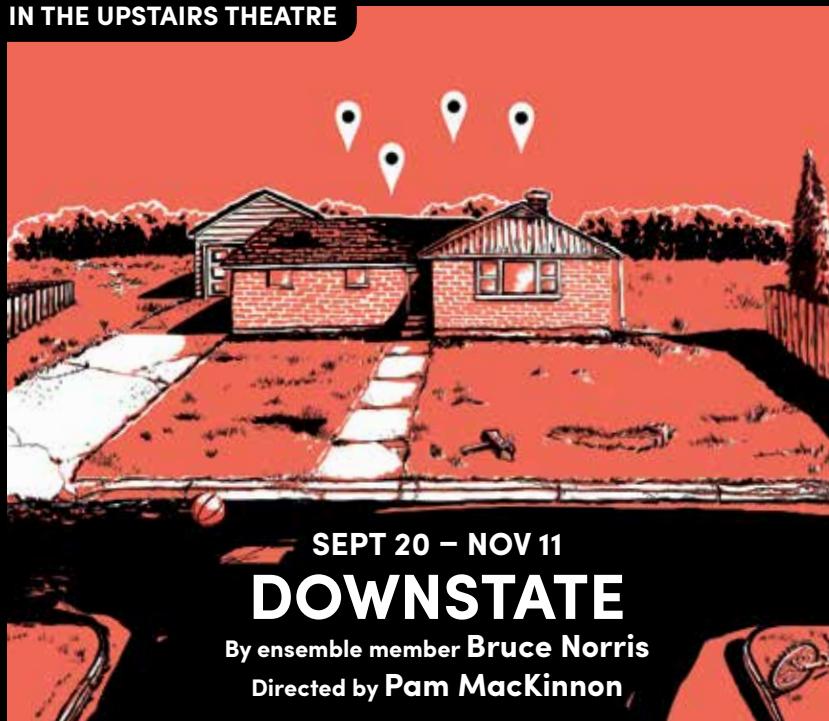
Vietgone, Writers Theater in Glencoe, extended through Sept. 29. One more week to see Qui Nguyen’s rock-and-rapping saga of the Viet Nam war’s aftermath, as viewed by the home team—theirs, not ours. MSB

Mind Reader, Mark Toland at the Greenhouse, open run. A mentalist show is, literally, what the audience brings to it, but Toland’s nerdy charm and ghostbusting candor makes it as entertaining as it is uncanny. MSB

—By Abarbanel and Barnidge

STEPPEWOLF

IN THE UPSTAIRS THEATRE



SEPT 20 – NOV 11
DOWNSTATE

By ensemble member **Bruce Norris**
Directed by **Pam MacKinnon**

What are the limits of compassion? A fiery and provocative new play by Bruce Norris, on its way to the National Theatre in spring 2019

IN THE DOWNSTAIRS THEATRE



NOV 15 - JAN 13
FAMILIAR
By **Danaï Gurira**
Directed by **Danya Taymor**

Pre-wedding stress explodes into a full-on family feud. A fiercely funny comedy-drama by award-winning playwright and actor Danaï Gurira



Find yourself here.
Memberships start at just \$100

Lead Production Sponsor
for *Downstate*



Lead Production Sponsors
for *Familiar*

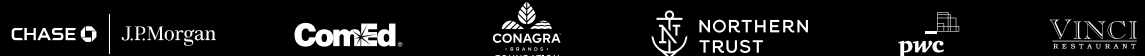


Tickets start at just \$20
steppenwolf.org
312-335-1650

2018/19 Grand Benefactors



2018/19 Benefactors



THEATER REVIEW

Scraps

Adapted by Anthony Whitaker
 At: The Den Theatre, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.
 Tickets: \$25; TheDenTheatre.com;
 773-935-6875
 Runs through: Sept. 29

BY KAREN TOPHAM

One of the most endearing characters from L. Frank Baum's Oz stories is the little patchwork girl.

New American Folk Theatre's production of Anthony Whitaker's original story Scraps tells her tale in a bright, inventive way. Directed by Jamal Howard, the play combines The Patchwork Girl of Oz with several other books (notably those dealing with Ozma and the Land of Ev) and makes grand use of an ensemble of eight actors playing multiple roles.



Brittney Brown and Charlie Irving in Scraps.
 Photo by Paul Clark

Scraps (Brittney Brown), like Baum's Tin Man (who makes an appearance), lacks a heart. In the book, she is a companion to the main character, Ojo the Unlucky (Preston Choi), in a search for a magical cure. Here, tired of her dull and repetitive life (shown in a brilliant opening), Scraps decides

to (literally) go where the wind may take her to find out what she is "meant" to be.

Choi and the rest of the talented ensemble (including JD Caudill, Kelly Combs, Jeffrey Hoge, Charlie Irving, Vic Kuligoski, and Kelsey Shipley) are ultimately there to support Scraps on her journey, one which children may enjoy as much as adults. Many of the side characters here are also or have been in search of the real meanings in their own lives. Ojo is desperately in love with Prince Evring (Kuligoski), who wants to requite his love but feels trapped by royal obligations. Dorothy (Irving again), now a Princess of Oz, doesn't quite understand what her life is supposed to amount to, but spends a great deal of it in an affair with Princess Ozma (Caudill), a transgender ruler ("part boy and part girl") who doesn't quite know whether she is in the right place as a princess either. (Although the same-sex relationships are not in the Oz books, Ozma's backstory is.) Even an enchanted book spends the play comically searching for the truth of its

existence.

In the title role, Brown is entirely endearing. Despite spending the majority of the play with her face hidden behind a mask, her ebullience and energy shine through, making Scraps (whom some of the others consider a bit of a joke) a fully

developed person in her own right, despite what she might believe. In someone else's hands, the role might have become caricature, but Brown is careful to take Baum's unusual creation as seriously Scraps takes herself.

With beautiful costumes by Zachary Ryan Allen and fun puppetry by Whitaker, along with Howard's quick pacing and this cast's clear joy of performance, Scraps is an enjoyable couple of hours. (The play's first act could be somewhat truncated and the intermission eliminated to get it down to an hour and a half, which is probably what the material demands.) It's unfortunate that, the night I saw it, very few people were in the audience. Inventive and fun, Scraps deserves better than the, um, scraps left over from other shows. Its warm-hearted message, campy style and strong acting make it a good choice for the entire family.

THEATER REVIEW

Little Shop of Horrors

Playwright: Alan Menken (composer),
 Howard Ashman (book and lyrics)
 At: Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury
 Lane, Oakbrook Terrace
 Tickets: 630/530-0111;
 \$55- \$65; DruryLaneTheatre.com
 Runs through: Oct. 28

BY AMELIA OROZVO

Well-dressed theatergoers traversing the plush chandeliered confines of Oakbrook Terrace's Drury Lane Theatre will find themselves trudging into Skid Row this fall.

There, in Mushnik's Flower Shop, Little Shop of Horrors (composed by Alan Menken, book and lyrics by Howard Ashman) awaits. Director/choreographer Scott Calcagno creates a magical and mystical world not unlike Jack and the Beanstalk: A place where vegetation offers promises of fortune and happiness. Only this time, there's no giant person. Instead, it's a giant plant that wants to eat humans.

A doo-wop trio—Chiffon (Melanie Loren), Crystal (Candace Edwards) and Ronnette (Melanie Brezill)—deliver narration and support with a swing, punch and a little kick in the pants. Expertly, they keep the story and the beat moving for a tightly packed two hours. The produc-

tion shimmies itself right into your heart with toe-tapping action, taking viewers on a journey through the pre-packaged, instant, just-add-water or, in this case, human-flesh American Dream.

The classic dark comedy stars the quirky and bubbly Audrey (played by the talented Kelly Felthous), and Will Lidke as the hapless horticulturalist Seymour. Shop owner Mushnik is revived in all his grumpy glory by Ron E. Rains.

Starring as the main green is Audrey 2, the ever-hungry and demanding plant that Seymour names for his beloved Audrey and must feed blood and flesh to in order to have love and riches.

Don't be dissuaded by the idea of a puppet being a leading man. Audrey 2 comes to life with the booming and commandeering voice of Lorenzo Rush Jr. and his bluesy Feed Me discourse. Maneuvering the bigger-than-life botanical jaws is Matthew Sitz. Together, the duo creates one magnificent creature whose presence is obvious, yet masterfully part of the milieu.

Audrey 2's offer of the American Dream is too good to pass up for Seymour, whose pre-Audrey quality of life is much like the plant food the hungry plant refuses to consume—worthless.

"Green," is all Audrey (the girl, not the plant) wants—a green space away from the tired gray world of Skid Row. Felthous's delivery is worthy of bringing on the waterworks amidst the hilarious idea of a talking plant. She keeps the audience rooting for the bubbly bombshell.

Steven Stafford plays a bully biker and sadist dentist along with a slew of other characters (both men and women), and skillfully coaxing both anger and laughter from theatergoers as quick as a flip of the switch.

The diverse cast delivers the punchy storyline showing the haves and the have-nots and the hard-knock life of someone with an address that could be Any Slum, USA. Also, the physical abuse aimed at the sweet Audrey is yet another taboo theme that strikes a heavy chord amidst the giggles and dancing.

Little Shop poses many questions, including whether leaving Skid Row behind is really a solution. Is this how gentrification of neighborhoods begins? After all, isn't it the people that make a community?

It's refreshing to see these themes on a stage. Ditto when Seymour, the unlikeliest of heroes, has the realization that Skid Row is his home. And maybe that's okay.



Audrey II (puppeted by Matthew Sitz) and Will Lidke.
 Photo by Brett Beiner

SPOTLIGHT

Out Brazilian concert pianist **Elider DiPaula** is launching a four-concert series that will bring out, internationally acclaimed musicians to Berwyn. The True Unity Classical Concert Series kicks off at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22, with German pianist Henning Vauth performing works by Schubert, Liszt, DeBussy, and Schumann, among others. Performances will be on the Steinway concert grand at Unity Lutheran Church, 6720 W. 31st St., Berwyn. The non-religious concerts are part of "Project 88" (named for the 88 keys on the piano). All performances



are free.; visit <https://www.unityberwyn.org/project88>.

Caption: Photo of DiPaula by Glitchell Photography

FALL DANCE PREVIEW

Flamenco, swans and Sri Lankan devils

BY AARON HUNT

Can you smell the intermingling of chalky rosin and glistening sweat? That means one thing: It's time to put that tingle back in your fingers and feet! Here, the top dance concert and events to see this fall.

—Hubbard Street's Collaborative World Premiere, Season 41 Fall Series: It's the music that carries the bodies that tell the stories, and this fall Hubbard can boast a live collaborative performance with Third Coast Percussion, banging out music composed by Devonté Hynes (aka Blood Orange). It will run Sept. 27-30. Hubbard Street Dance Chicago plays the Harris Theatre. Info/tickets: HubbardStreetDance.com

—Masks and Myths: Devils and Dancers from Sri Lanka: The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition hoisted Chicago into the worldwide consciousness. The Sri Lankan dancers will offer representation of African and Asian cultural expressions that were presented on the grounds of the world's fair, such as Balinese Gamelan, Japanese classical dance, and African drumming, while also incorporating reflections of contemporary influences. It will run Oct. 6-7. Sri Lankan Dancers plays the

DANCE

Logan Center for the Arts. Info/tickets: mask-sandmyths.brownpapertickets.com

—The Body Passages Series: Don't miss the culmination of a partnership between dancers and poets around the theme of activation. After an incubation period of 10 months, selected teams of poets and dancers will present their collaborations, seen through the spirits of artist that vary in age, experience, race, gender and sexual identity, and belief systems. It will run Oct. 12-13. Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble plays the Auditorium at Ebenezer Lutheran Church. Info/Tickets: Danztheatre.org

—Swan Lake: Even the neophyte dance enthusiast will be carried away when this storybook ballet transforms into a play within a play. Shades of Natalie Portman. A male dancer falls in love with the ballerina he is partnering. But a wealthy patron has his eye on her as well. What will be her fate? Choreographer Christopher Wheeldon's fresh imaginings, combined with Tchaikovsky's glorious underpinnings, will seal the audience's fate. It will run Oct. 17-28. Joffrey Ballet plays

The Auditorium Theatre. Info/tickets: Joffrey.org

—Flamenco Passion: The Spanish dance most familiar to many is the stuff of television's dance stars, partnering sitcom retirees looking for a reboot. Why not experiences it direct from Cadiz, with the smoldering dance superstar Eduardo Guerrero? Come for the contortions; Stay for the balletic influence. It will run Oct. 21. Compania Flamenca plays McAninch Arts Center, College of DuPage. Tickets/info: atthemac.org

—Live in the Momentum: So You Think You Can Dance choreographer Ray Leeper proves Chicago can when he creates a new, full-company work for one of Chicago's most noted contemporary dance companies. Leeper's worked with everyone from Snoop Dogg to Lady Gaga. Don't sleep on that ticket! It will run Oct. 26-27. Gus Giordano Dance Chicago plays the Harris Theatre. Info/tickets: giordanodance.org

—Futura: The Bauhaus aesthetic examined the intersection of living spaces and fine art, and choreographer Jan Bartoszek plays off that school-of-shapes to examine the ways in which dance is affected by its collision with 21st century living, particularly about confinement and freedom. It will run Nov. 1-3. Hedwig Dances plays The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago. Info/tickets: dance.colum.edu

—Ekili Munda |What Lies Within: A long-term, far-reaching dialogue between Chicago and Uganda has birthed a dance conversation that holds hands to break down barriers. As this forceful piece pushes the boundaries of the dancer's bodies and the audience's emotions, we all gain from this engagement with the African Diaspo-



Hubbard Street Dance member. Image courtesy of Carol Fox and Associates

ra. It will run Nov. 8-10. Red Clay Dance at The Dance Center of Columbia College. Info/Tickets: dance.colum.edu

—Traditional Mexican Dance: Celebrate Mexico's rich cultural heritage, showcased in the "rope dance" and the Deer Dance, along with the updated choreography for Fiesta en Jalisco and Danza del Venado with this world-famous company's colorful flourishes. It will run Nov. 10-11. Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernández plays the Auditorium Theatre. Info/Tickets: Auditoriumtheatre.org

La Bohème

PUCCINI

A KISS IN THE DARK LEADS TO ONE OF OPERA'S MOST HEARTWARMING LOVE STORIES

OCT 6 - 20 | JAN 10 - 25

Lyric 312.827.5600
LYRICOPERA.ORG

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Checking out the LGBTQ lineup

BY KERRY REID

From world premieres to revivals of old favorites, the fall season offers a complex lens on LGBTQ stories. Some draw inspiration from past works, while others come straight from the creators' own lives.

—*Homos, or Everyone in America*: Jordan Seavey's 2016 play tackles what it means to be young, urban and gay—at least for a subset of New Yorkers in the middle of the last decade. Two men, identified as “The Writer” and “The Academic,” negotiate the terms of their relationship in what’s been described as a millennial’s version of *The Boys in the Band*. Derek Van Barham directs Niko Kourtis and Pride Films and Plays artistic director Nelson A. Rodriguez, along with Jordan Dell Harris and Jessica Vann, in this Chicago premiere. Running through Sept. 30, The Broadway at Pride Arts Center. Info/tickets pridefilmsandplays.com

—*Scraps*: Inspired by *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, one of the later titles in L. Frank Baum’s series, this world premiere by Anthony Whitaker of New American Folk Theatre follows *Scraps* as she attempts to shed the quilt that she’s made of in order to become a “normal” person. Along the way, she discovers the colorful “patchwork” of racial and gender identity that makes up Oz—and our own world. Brittney Brown plays the title role under Jamal Howard’s direction, with seven other actors playing multiple roles. Through Sept. 29, the Den Theatre. Info/tickets newamericanfolktheatre.org

—*We’re Only Alive for a Short Amount of Time*: Gay monologist David Cale, whose works were fixtures of the old Goodman Theatre’s studio space, takes over the big stage in this world premiere “musical memoir,” directed by Robert Falls. As in his earlier fictionalized solo, *Redthroats* (presented at the Goodman 30 years ago), Cale anatomizes his childhood in an industrial English town with unhappily married parents, where he seeks comfort by singing alone in his bedroom and tending wounded birds in a backyard “animal hospital.” Sept. 15–Oct. 21, Goodman Theatre. Info/tickets GoodmanTheatre.org

—*The Artificial Jungle*: Camp master Charles Ludlam’s last play brings a noir touch (think *Double Indemnity* or *The Postman Always Rings Twice*) to his trademark pastiche style. Chester Nurdiger, a mild-mannered pet shop owner with a vixenish wife and a long-suffering mother, finds his world upended—and his life in peril -- when a sexy drifter comes to town. Shade Murray directs for Hell in a Handbag, with artistic director David Cerda as Mother Nurdiger, Ed Jones as Chester, and Sydney Genco and David Lipschutz as the scheming wife/drifter duo. Sept. 20–Oct. 28, Stage 773. Info/tickets HandbagProductions.org

—*Koalas*: Berwyn’s small-but-mighty 16th

THEATER

Street Theater presents the world premiere of Chicago-based playwright J. Joseph Cox’s drama, directed by Josh Sobel. Set in Fresno, California in 1999, Cox’s play centers on Ray Singer, who finds himself dealing with an unemployed brother, a gender-nonconforming child, and an escaped marsupial in his backyard. As he fights for visitation rights with his kid, Ray also has to confront the narrow notions of masculinity he inherited from his own dad. Sept. 20–Oct. 27, 16th Street Theater. Info/tickets 16thstreettheater.org

—*Indecent*: Despite decades of acclaim for plays such as *How I Learned to Drive* and *The Baltimore Waltz*, lesbian playwright Paula Vogel didn’t get a shot on Broadway until 2017. Sholem Asch’s controversial 1922 play, *God of Vengeance*, which was set in a brothel, and featured a love scene between two women that was finally cut in the original, forms the matrix for Vogel’s drama. In addition to restoring that scene in a series of variations, *Indecent* also celebrates the groundbreaking career of Asch, who was one of the most prolific and daring writers in the Yiddish canon. Gary Griffin directs. Sept. 21–November 4, Victory Gardens Theater. Info/tickets VictoryGardens.org

—*Les Innocents/The Innocents*: If you’re looking for an artsy haunted-house experience for Halloween, consider this (re)discover theatre production. Set in the Paris Catacombs in 1897, creator/director Ann Kreitman’s immersive “queer thriller” takes the audience through the spooky setting as if they were ghosts. Inspired by a real concert that took place at the Catacombs (which featured Camille Saint-Saens’ Catacombs-inspired *Danse Macabre*), the show melds themes of love, life and decay in a goth/mythic musical environment. Oct. 7–November 4, Preston Bradley Center. Info/tickets RediscoverTheatre.com

—*It’s Only a Play*: As Bart Simpson was forced to write on the blackboard once, “There are PLENTY of businesses like show business.” But try telling that to the denizens of Terrence McNally’s 1982 behind-the-Broadway-scenes comedy, in which a disastrous opening-night party allows for name-dropping, back-biting and schadenfreude galore. McNally updated the script for a 2014 Broadway run. This Pride Films and Plays production, directed by Jon Martinez, marks the first Chicago production since that revival. Oct. 11–November 11, The Broadway at Pride Arts Center. Info/tickets PrideFilmsAndPlays.com

—*The Last Session*: Composer/lyricist Steve Schachlin’s chamber musical first opened in 1997 in the wake of his AIDS diagnosis and near-death, which he wrote about in a blog. After he rebounded, he created this show with book writer Jim Brochu. The story follows Gideon, a former gospel-star-turned-pop singer/songwriter with



Nelson Rodriguez and Niko Kourtis in *Homos, or Everyone in America*.

Photo by Austin D. Oie Photography

AIDS, who is determined to commit suicide after making one last album. Refuge Theatre Project artistic director Christopher Pazdernik directs. Oct. 25–Dec. 2, Atlas Arts Studio. Info/tickets: RefugeTheatre.com

—*This Bitter Earth*: Racial tensions and the tug-of-war between the introspective artist’s life and that of the committed activist provide the dramatic conflicts in Harrison David Rivers’ two-character drama, which gets a local premiere with About Face Theatre under Mikael Burke’s direc-

tion. Jesse (Sheldon Brown) is a Black playwright from a working-class family whose white lover, Neil (Daniel Desmarais), a Black Lives Matter activist who was raised in wealth, calls him out for seeming apathy. Their four-year relationship unfolds in non-chronological order as they wrestle with race, class and the relative value their respective careers have in such fraught times. November 1–December 8, Theater Wit. Info/tickets: AboutFaceTheatre.com

Martha Wash in ‘WaistWatchers’ in Sept.-Oct.

WaistWatchers The Musical! makes its Chicago premiere at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St., beginning Sept. 13 for an open run, with a press opening Sept. 21.

Produced by Dana Matthow and featuring musical icon Martha Wash—known for singing the powerful anthem ‘It’s Raining Men,’ and “Everybody Dance Now”—the musical takes a light-hearted and hilarious look at women dealing with their relationship to food, friendship and fitness, while celebrating the power of female friendship on the journey to self-acceptance.

In addition to Martha Wash starring as Connie (Sept. 13–Oct. 28), the Chicago production will feature Sarah Godwin (Cindy), Seandrea E. Earls (Cheryl) and Katherine S. Barnes (MC). The creative team includes Matthew E. Silva (director), Alan Jacobson (creator, book and

lyrics), Vince Di Mura (music) and Dani Tucci-Jurraga (choreography).

Tickets start at \$45 each; visit WaistwatchersTheMusical.com or call the Royal George Theatre Box Office at 312-988-9000.

UrbanTheater to start ‘Not for Sale’ Sept. 21

UrbanTheater Company (UTC) kicks off its “lucky 13th” season with the world premiere of Guadalis del Carmen’s play *Not for Sale*—UTC’s first commissioned play—Sept. 21–Oct. 20 at Batey Urbano, 2620 W. Division St.

Directed by Sara Carranza, *Not for Sale* will also be presented as part of *Destinos*, the Second Annual Chicago International Latino Theater Festival. The festival will feature more than 14 plays from Chicago, the United States and Latin America in more than a half-dozen venues across Chicago.

See UrbanTheaterChicago.org.

THEATER REVIEW

The Shipment

Playwright: Young Jean Lee

At: Red Tape Theatre, 4546 N. Western Ave.

Tickets: <https://redtapetheatre.org>; free

Runs through: Oct. 3

BY SHERI FLANDERS

Written by Korean-American playwright Young Jean Lee, *The Shipment* is a minstrel show, but not on the level that one might expect. Minstrel shows traditionally had several elements: music, dancing, a “stump speech” (similar to stand-up comedy) and wrapped up at the end with a play.

Outside minstrelsy, audiences are allowed to entertain the thought that the talented folks on stage are better than us. The obsequious shuffling and self-effacing content of a minstrel show undercuts that authority, flipping the script by allowing the audience to feel superior to the performers.

Although minstrelsy has long faded into history, covertly the inverted audience/performer power dynamic still exists. When white, liberal audiences buy a ticket to a Black show, they expect to be educated and/or gently scolded, yet ultimately catered to. Wealthy arts patrons enjoy graciously reminding underprivileged actors exactly who pays the bills.

In *The Shipment*, the first act flips and body-slams that power dynamic. Marcus D. Moore delivers a jolly and blisteringly crude stand-up set, each joke more tasteless than the next. The punchlines are interspersed with an unvarnished critique of White America. Moore dares audience to leave if they don't like it.

There's nothing that liberals hate more than being perceived as not being able to take a joke. *The Shipment's* reverse psychology seals the deal forcing them to confront which is worse: raunchy jokes or their complicity in racism.

In *The Shipment*, the calculus of this moment falls short of being fully triumphant because sev-

eral jokes traffic in the worst stereotypes of Black women (voiced by a Black man, written by an Asian woman). Lee is unaware of her own blind spot of privilege. She stages liberation on the back of Black female bodies.

The second act depicts the tale of a downtrodden Black kid who struggles to overcome ... well, I won't ruin it. Lee strips this stereotype bare, revealing our insatiable desire for poverty pornography. Director Wardell Julius Clark could stand to tighten this section up, yet scores some truly hilarious moments while trafficking in the cliché of cliché.

Act three is arguably the most powerful, sophisticated and effective. A stark *a cappella* song in three-part harmony delivers the thesis in the form of a threat. This not entertainment. It is a promise.

This moment questions the ethics of a non-Black artist writing for Black actors. Lee has dumped gasoline on a fire that she will be able to watch rage out of control from a safe distance.

The fourth act is the most polished and developed, a bawdy play. Unfortunately this ending never had a chance of matching the savagery of the first act, sapping the impact of the final lines, resulting in an ultimately structurally flawed show.

This final fourth showcases the considerable acting talents of the ensemble. Sheldon Brown grounds the madness with calm, understated energy and vulnerability, Eric Gerard keeps perfect pacing as the dynamic nexus, Marcus D. Moore and Kiayla Ryann shift between passive and passive-aggressive to exceptional effect, and Hunter Bryan is infinitely watchable and charming. With a lesser cast, this show might have been unwatchable, yet the strength of this group elevates it to something compelling.

Ultimately *The Shipment* is avant-garde, messy, uneven and unfinished—a Trojan Horse, delivering savage bluntness and defiance instead of the usual safe messaging. It's an artistic confrontation that just might spill off of the stage.

Rescripted renews mentorship program

Rescripted has announced the second session of *The Key: Young Critics Mentorship Program*, which started Sept. 18 and hosted this year at Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.

Regina Victor (founder of the online arts journalism platform Rescripted and a Windy City Times theater critic) and entertainment critic Oliver Sava, created the 10-week training program for Chicago youth in arts criticism. In league with *The Chicago Inclusion Project*, *The Key* successfully launched last year at Greenhouse Theater Center with its first group of young writers learning the skills and industry knowledge needed to pursue careers in arts criticism.

Each biweekly meeting of *The Key* features review workshops, mentor lectures and guest speakers from different areas of the local arts community. *The Key* students also attend performances in Chicago and use these experiences to hone their reviewing skills.

Applications for *The Key: Young Critics Mentorship Program* are currently being accepted on Rescripted's website (rescripted.org/the-key/) through Monday, Sept. 10, for young writers 16-23. The session begins Tuesday, Sept. 18 and meets every other Tuesday through Nov. 27. For additional information and inquiries, email thekey.chicago@gmail.com.

Sketch Comedy Fest applications open

Stage 773 now has applications for *The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival's* 18th anniversary.

The nation's largest sketch-comedy festival will take place Jan. 10-20, 2019, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. The festival debuted in January 2002, with 33 local Chicago sketch-comedy groups; now, there are close to 170 groups performing almost 200 shows.

Applications are due Oct. 15, 2018; visit ChicagoSketchFest.com.



THREE-TIME
TONY AWARD
NOMINEE

BY PULITZER PRIZE
WINNING PLAYWRIGHT
PAULA VOGEL

DIRECTED BY
GARY GRIFFIN

INDECENT

“A Heart-Stirring
Reminder of the
Power of Art”

New York Daily News

VICTORY
GARDENS
THEATER

YOUR
WORLD
ON
STAGE

STARTS SEP 21

GET TIX: 773.871.3000 or VICTORYGARDENS.ORG

FALL THEATER: DESTINOS

'Destinos' theme is lifelong journey for founder Myrna Salazar

BY AMELIA OROZCO

Think Rita Moreno mixed with your favorite world-traveler aunt who brings you trinkets from far-away lands and mesmerizes you with stories of intrigue and adventure. That's Myrna Salazar, executive director and co-founder of the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA).

CLATA is in the spotlight this month, with Latinx artists from around the world joining forces for the second annual Chicago International Latino Theater Festival. Aptly named *Destinos* (or *Journeys*), the festival runs from Sept. 20 through Nov. 4. (See sidebar)

"(Latinos) constitute 44 percent of the student population in Chicago Public Schools and we have only two small theaters that have a home in Chicago," said Salazar. "Our stories need to be told. We have excellent talent, excellent playwrights. We want to generate new audiences." (Chicago is home to Teatro Vista and Aguijon Theater, both dedicated to producing works that reflect aspects of the world's vastly varied and intricate Latinx cultures.)

Salazar has been on her own journey since long before CLATA was formed or *Destinos* was even a vision. She's been lauded with numerous awards for her work in the Chicago Latino community (including kudos from the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) and has been a panelist for numerous discussions on diversity and equality. Still, some of her most pivotal accomplishments come from facing circumstances as trying as triumphant.

Born in Puerto Rico, Salazar's family moved to Chicago when she was nine. Her first glimpse of Chicago was Midway Airport.

Salazar found joy in her new life. Her stepdad was a *cuatro* (string quartet) musician, a poet and a lyricist who performed regularly at weddings and quincenaras. Salazar loved listening to him play.

By the time she was ready for high school, Sala-



El Patio (The Patio).
PR image

THEATER

zar wanted to attend public school. She no longer cared what the nuns had to say. For the first time, she found herself in a diverse student population, among young people with African-American, Mexican, Polish and Puerto Rican roots.

Did the newfound and exciting environment spark her creativity?

"No," Salazar said. "I got married. I married and stayed home." Being a wife and mother would have been the end of many typical stories for women steeped deep in traditional Latino culture in the 1960s.

But Salazar shattered the norm and recreated it as a beautiful mosaic.

"I come from a stock of very strong women," she said, crediting both her spirit and her upbringing. "Women are the driving force of any home whether you are Puerto Rican, Central American, or South American. We are the helm, the wheel, although much is said about Latino men being machista."

When Salazar married, she broke with tradition in a way that illustrated her fierce independent streak: She refused to take her husband's last name.

It was just as well: She eventually divorced her first husband, ridding herself of any further oppressive expectations. (Her second husband, the late Cesar Dovalina, was one of the founders of *La Raza*, Chicago's Latinx paper of record.)

As a single mother of two daughters, Salazar found ways to earn extra cash. She put her strong Latina voice to good use by doing voiceover work. She tried to create a modeling agency that would cultivate Latina models, "but Chicago was not ready for that," she said.

She evolved the company she'd created with her own money into Salazar and Navas Talent Agency. For 25 years, she placed Latinx artists in important roles and vital positions. In a May interview with *Voyage Chicago*, she estimates that she helped more than 300 Latinx actor and models get jobs, often working with client base of more than four dozen Fortune 500 companies. Today, under new ownership, the agency continues to thrive.

Salazar has long been a connector of people, helping to create relationships among Latinx artists looking to create something original that reflects their lives, cultures and traditions. That's reflected in her response to someone who didn't know that the National Museum of Mexican Art was right here in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. "It's a gem," she told them. "You better go see it."

"That's what I like to be able to do, connect more people. It's something that I take pride in,"



Rebeca Aleman as Frida Kahlo, and Kristen Magee as Sylvia Plath in *Musas*.

Image courtesy of Water People Theater

she said.

CLATA reflects that: Salazar worked with some of the city's most influential and well-established Latinx organizations to get CLATA off the ground. International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago (where she was Director of Development and Marketing for about five years), the National Museum of Mexican Art and the Puerto Rican Arts Alliance joined forces to create CLATA.

SIDEBAR

'Destinos' picks

Destinos: The 2nd Annual Chicago International Latino Theater Festival runs Sept. 20-Nov. 4. Produced by the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (see related story by Amelia Orozco), the festival will spotlight artists from Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States. Below are companies presenting shows with LGBTQIA themes. For a full schedule, visit CLATA.org, or call 312-631-3112.

—Sept. 20-23: *Musas/Muses* by Néstor Caballero

Presented by Water People Theater in a presentation with American Writers Museum and The Poetry Foundation, Caballero's piece imagines an encounter between two icons of contemporary art, Mexican painter Frida Kahlo and American poet Sylvia Plath. Steppenwolf's 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St.

—Sept. 27-29: *El Patio/The Patio* (North

Ask Salazar how it feels to have touched so many peoples' lives and she responds humbly. "Don't let me be the center point," she said. The focus, she insisted, should be on CLATA. "It's the Alliance, these young people," she said.

For the full schedule for *Destinos: The Chicago International Latino Theater Festival*, visit CLATA.org.

American premiere) by Oscar González, David Korish and Janko Navarro.

From Costa Rica's Teatro Abya Yala, *El Patio* offers glimpses of masculinity in different situations, exploring the impossibility of fulfilling the societal idea of what it means to be a man today. Steppenwolf's 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St.

—Oct. 4-7: *Quiero Decir Te Amo/I Want to Say I Love You* (North American premiere), by Argentina's Humo Negro.

A drama about a car accident and a chance encounter that leads to a series of love letters and an unexpected romance. Steppenwolf's 1700 Theatre, 1700 N. Halsted St..

—Oct. 5-6: *La Prietty Guoman/Pretty Woman* (U.S. premiere)

From Mexico City's Teatro de la Ciudad Cabaret, a cabaret style narration of the life of an exuberant, brown, indigenous transgender woman who is a fan of the film *Pretty Woman*. National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St.



We're
Only Alive
for a Short
Amount of Time

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **DAVID CALE**

LYRICS BY **DAVID CALE**

MUSIC BY **DAVID CALE** AND **MATTHEW DEAN MARSH**

DIRECTED BY **ROBERT FALLS**

A musical memoir of hope, family and transcendence

Growing up, writer/performer David Cale escaped his parents' fraught marriage by singing and tending to birds in his backyard animal hospital—until a tragedy changed everything. Lush songs and an intimate portrait of his mother unite in Cale's vivid testament of connecting to life when adversity is suddenly everywhere.

NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 21



Major Production Sponsor

312.443.3800 | GoodmanTheatre.org

GROUPS OF 10+ ONLY: 312.443.3820

GOODMAN THEATRE

Alexandra Billings.
Photo by Maryann Lopinto



FALL THEATER PREVIEW

From Schaumburg to New York, Alexandra Billings puts on a show

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Roughly 30 years ago, trans* actor/recording artist/pageant queen/activist Alexandra Billings was sentenced to death. The diagnosis: She was HIV-positive. She remembered the doctor's advice with the crystalline clarity: "He said 'I think what you should do is take your credit card and max it out. You won't be around to pay them off,'" Billings said.

Her partner (now wife) Chrisanne Blankenship wasn't having it. Years later, Billings recalled to Windy City Times Blankenship's response with a tone that could wither a rainforest. "So Chrisanne looks at him and says, 'Oh, she'll be around.'"

They then lived happily ever after.

Actually, there's a bit more to it than that.

From Schaumburg, with love

Billings, 56, is far more than merely "still around." With Blankenship by her side (42 years together, 22 of them married), she's making history on television (*Transparent*, *Goliath*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Grey's Anatomy*), film (*Romy and Michelle: In the Beginning*, *Stealth*, *Pretty/Handsome*) and on stage—all the while roaring as an activist, for LGBTQIA rights in particular and for humanity in general.

This month, the Schaumburg native who cut her teeth performing in Chicago everywhere from the Baton to the Steppenwolf makes her Broadway debut. As *Waxy Bush*, she's a gangster with an agenda in *The Nap*, a comedy about the very British game of snooker. Richard Bean's (*One Man, Two Guvnors*) madcap farce opens Sept. 27 at the Manhattan Theatre Club, directed by Tony-winner Daniel Sullivan.

"Alexandra is a force of nature," said Sullivan, before quickly qualifying, "I'm sure I'm not telling Chicago anything it doesn't already know. We're very lucky she came on board."

A tribe without a name

THEATER

Billings career is not a matter of luck. Her HIV diagnosis was followed by years of homelessness, addiction (heroin, opiates, alcohol, cocaine) and sex work. She began transitioning in the 1970s, decades before the world even had words for trans people. In the most fundamental terms—language that included a noun to claim as her own—Billings didn't exist back then. Except that she did. She knew it and Blankenship knew it. Chicago eventually caught on. It took the rest of the world a minute to catch up.

Today, Billings and her "tribe" are not only named, their names are in spotlights. There are at least five trans actors on Broadway. Miss Peppermint (runner-up, Ru Paul's *Drag Race* Season 9) has the lead in the new musical *Head Over Heels*. Non-binary actor Kate Bornstein and trans actor Ty DeFoe are in the ensemble of Young Jean Lee's drama *Straight White Men*. Trans actor Bianca Lee is understudying both Billings and cis-actor Johanna Day in *The Nap*.

"We're in all the genres. I don't think that's happened before," Billings said.

Hello, my name is Waxy Bush

Waxy Bush is also new. While *The Nap* played to acclaim in London, Billings is creating the role for the comedy's Broadway premiere. "What's great about *Waxy Bush*—I mean, besides her name obviously—is she's a trans character but being trans has nothing to do with the story. *Waxy Bush* just is who she is. She has all the power. She calls all the shots."

Billings knows full well what it means to not have "all the power." In the early '80s, she was arrested in Chicago for wearing "women's clothes" in public. She didn't understand why the cop was cuffing her. "He told me the law was if you were a man, you had to wear at least two

articles of men's clothing if you were in public," Billings said. As she succinctly puts it: "Back then, the very act of just leaving my house was revolutionary."

Miss Chicago Goes to Hollywood

Chicagoans who remember the epic success that was *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* or Billings' epic turn as Mama Rose in *Gypsy* know that merely leaving the house was Billings' thing. When she left, she made sure she eventually Arrived elsewhere, always with a Capital A, often with a Standing Ovation. Here is a Brief History of Leaving the House and Then Some:

At 14, Billings played Sebastian to Blankenship's Viola in Schaumburg High School's production of *Twelfth Night*. After graduating in 1980, Billings turned herself into Shante, a beauty queen who strutted her stuff through the gritty glamor of the pageant scene. She was won Miss Wisconsin, Miss New York, Miss Chicago, Miss Illinois and Miss Florida.

In her 20s and 30s, she scrubbed toilets in dinky dank theater dives with dubious adherence to city building codes. When she wasn't backstage, she was on stage, starring in shows that paid in "exposure" and a resume line. Eventually, she gained entry into Chicago Shakespeare (*Hamlet—The Musical!*) and *Steppenwolf* (*Time to Burn*, *Space*, *The Berlin Circle*). She cut records and gave countless cabaret performances, collecting Jeff and After Dark Awards in the process.

In 1996, she premiered a one-woman show about her life. "I'm not a woman," she told audiences in the ground-breaking *Before I Disappear*. "I'm a queen." *Before I Disappear* played to sold-out house here, in Los Angeles and Off-Broadway.

In 2005, Billings and Blankenship moved to Hollywood. Blankenship left her job at Macy's as Billings started racking up screen credits while teaching at Steppenwolf's west coast school and at the University of Southern California. In 2014, Billings booked *Transparent*, a then-unknown Amazon show. As Davina, she's back this year for a fifth season with *Transparent*. She made history last season, becoming the first trans actor to do a full frontal nude scene. Davina's backstory played out in Season 4: It included a snapshot of Billings in elementary school, and a flashback to Davina's career as a pageant winner and cabaret artist.

Of better angels and scrambled eggs

Self-doubt remains an issue, Billings said.

"Oh, please. I'm riddled with fear before making scrambled eggs. I'm, like, 'These eggs are going to be a disaster. I'm going to make this show a disaster. I'm a disaster,'" she said. "But here's what I do. Before I go on stage, I remember what I learned in Chicago. Be present. Be humble. Be truthful. Tell the story. In Chicago, I learned how to do the thing. How to be in the story. How to find the character. How to be in the thing."

As always, Blankenship plays a key role. "Very first day of *Nap* rehearsal, I was terrified. Filled with abject fear and a little on the weepy side," Billings said. "I'm a 56-year-old trans woman of color, living with HIV for decades. I shouldn't even be on this planet. Much less in a Broadway show."

"So Chrisanne says to me, 'That's great. Feel all

the stuff. But when you get to that theater? You tell yourself: You. Are. Home.'

"I think I have a lot of angels around me," Billings said. "I know how this sounds, but I think a big reason I have survived is because Chrisanne has been with me for centuries."

A tribe with a name

Early on in *The Nap* rehearsals, Billings was walking through Manhattan's tourist-clogged Midtown. She noticed a woman had stopped dead in her tracks to stare at her.

"If there's one thing I've learned about New Yorkers it's that if you're going to stop dead in your tracks on a crowded sidewalk, somebody better be dead," Billings said. The woman had a small girl clutching her hand. They walked up to Billings. The woman spoke. The little girl stared. "The mom looked at me and said, 'My daughter is part of your tribe. She wants to meet you,'" Billings said. Billings knelt down and shook the little girl's hand. They posed for "about 500" selfies. They all hugged, and melted back into the bustle.

Billings said she doesn't have regrets. But there is this:

"I was transitioning in the 1970s. I wish I had had live flesh and blood humans that were trans. That I could see, walking around the planet. I look at trans kids coming up today, and I see how much has changed. It's still hard, but it's so different."

"I come from a tribe where 85 percent of us died in the 1980s and 1990s," she said. "I feel a responsibility to leave a mark of some kind in our history books. Something no governmental administration can ever erase."

The not-so-great pretender

Erasure has happened before and is happening now, she noted. Ronald Reagan refused to so much as utter the word "AIDS" during the whole of his presidency. The current White House is systematically scrubbing mentions of LGBTQIA people from governmental websites and rolling back rights that were codified decades ago.

"I think this guy in the White House pretending to be president is giving us all a great mirror; he's showing how important it is not to take anything for granted. He is everyone's responsibility," Billings said.

"I get pushback when I say that. I get it mostly from liberals who say well, 'I didn't vote for him. He's not my responsibility.' To which I say, he is all of our responsibility. He's president because first we made him famous. We made him a star. America made him. We allowed him to happen."

"We've got to keep speaking. Loudly. With clarity and kindness and compassion," Billings said. "We have to make sure we don't lose the stories of those who came before us."

"Also," she added, "I want people to see *The Nap*. It's glorious and silly and I am surrounded by the most some of the most incredible humans on the planet."

The Nap opens Sept. 27 the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, 261 W. 47th St., New York City; call 212-239-6200 or go to ManhattanTheatreClub.com.

Burlesque community mourns abrupt closing of Uptown Underground

BY JAKE WITTICH

The speakeasy-style cabaret bar Uptown Underground was evicted Sept. 10, abruptly leaving performers to find a new home for their shows.

The venue, a staple in Chicago's cabaret and burlesque communities, owed more than \$100,000 in unpaid rent and back pay to landlord Thaddeus Wong, leaving him no choice but to order an eviction, he told Block Club.

Jenn Kincaid, owner of Uptown Underground, notified its performers of the eviction in an email on Sept. 11, apologizing for the abrupt closure.

"Yesterday, I was served with papers from building own-

THEATER

Jacob Green, a drag and cabaret performer known as Muffy Fishbasket, said he started performing at Uptown Underground when it opened in 2015. He said he watched the club grow from performing before crowds of three people to later receiving standing ovations after sold-out shows.

Green said he is mourning the loss of a performance space that fostered artistic growth for performers and strengthened city's burlesque scene.

"Uptown Underground was home," Green said. "That



The building which houses Uptown Underground.

Photo by Jake Wittich

ership to close Uptown Underground, effective immediately. While that was happening, the locks on the doors were changed," she said. "I have spent today pleading with the landlord to reconsider, but it is done. And so, our doors are closed. I am gutted."

Kincaid is working with the building's management to make time for people to collect personal items from the venue, and refunds and deposits are being worked out, according to the email.

Neither Kincaid nor Wong responded to Windy City Times' requests for comment.

Uptown Underground's sudden closure leaves its performers scrambling to find new spaces for their shows and its staff unexpectedly out of work.

Brittany Meyer, producer of "Strip Joker," a body-positive burlesque show that was held monthly at Uptown Underground, said they and other performers will struggle to find a venue as accommodating to burlesque shows as Kincaid's was.

"Uptown Underground was truly the only burlesque performance space in Chicago," Meyer told WCT. "Everything about that place was perfect for burlesque, from its regal stage, velvet curtains, multiple dressing rooms, full bar and security—[Kincaid] thought out every detail to make it safe and of quality."

Meyer said they are working on finding a new venue for "Strip Joker," but the show will have to evolve in order to accommodate its new space.

space and [Kincaid] helped me develop my cabaret persona and evolve as an artist. This was the only space dedicated specifically to burlesque, vaudeville and other things, and it was very accessible to the community. This is a big loss for our community."

In light of Uptown Underground's abrupt closing, members of Chicago's theater community have started organizing to find new homes for the bar's performances and jobs for its staff. Among them is now-New York resident Tamale Sepp, who created a Google form, in which people can submit leads on new jobs and venues. Its results will then be sent to all performers and employees on Kincaid's email list.

Jill Valentine, executive director of Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., said the performance art theater is taking resumes of people who lost jobs and booking shows in need of a venue due Uptown Underground's closure.

"When any theater in Chicago closes, it's sad for the whole community," Valentine said. "Not only were shows canceled immediately, but people lost jobs that day. Uptown Underground was a beautiful home, and I feel for Jenn Kincaid so much, so if we can help in any way, we'd like to."

The Block Club article is at <https://blockclubchicago.org/2018/09/12/uptown-underground-evicted-after-months-of-unpaid-rent-landlord-says/>.

CULTURE CLUB

Her Story Theater

MONGER

The Awakening of J.B. Benton
Husband.
Dad.
Hobbyist.

Written by Mary Bonnett
Directed by John Mossman

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 30

Greenhouse Theater Center 2257 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago, IL

Hell in a Handbag Productions Presents
From the creator of The Mystery of Irma Vep

THE ARTIFICIAL JUNGLE

by CHARLES LUDLAM
directed by SHADE MURRAY

STAGE773.COM
HANDBAGPRODUCTIONS.ORG

Sept. 20 - Oct. 28
Tickets: \$19-\$39
SHOWTIMES:
7:30pm & 3pm

"The Artificial Jungle" is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC

"The audience is likely to die laughing."
-The New York Times

STAGE 773
1225 W. Belmont Ave.

An epic boy-meets-girl-meets-America adventure!

VIETGONE

WRITTEN BY QUI NGUYEN
ORIGINAL MUSIC & MUSIC DIRECTION BY GABRIEL RUIZ
CHOREOGRAPHED BY TOMMY RAPLEY
DIRECTED BY LAVINA JADHWANI

NOW PLAYING

847-242-6000 | WRITERSTHEATRE.ORG

PICTURED: MATTHEW C. YEE/AND AUDORA ADKCHWATER. PHOTO BY SWERIO TRUGLIA.

WT
WRITERS
THEATRE

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Easy does it: A dozen classic plays and musicals

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

My gambit is to recommend revivals of works that have been staged and tested previously in Chicago and elsewhere, sometimes uncountable times over many centuries—in other words, the classics.

Several are quite new to be considered classics—Radio Golf and Rock 'n' Roll both are 21st-century plays—while others are burnished with age. New or old, they are worthy works of wit and wisdom which we warmly welcome! Shows are listed in order of production dates including preview performances. The first four shows already are running.

—Radio Golf: The final work in August Wilson's 10-play Century Cycle is set in Pittsburgh's gentrifying Hill District in the 1990s and features descendants of characters from several earlier plays. Wilson deals with serious issues, yet the play mainly is a comedy with an upbeat ending. Court Theatre offers an astonishing cast—James T. Alfred, Allen Gilmore, Ann Joseph, James Vincent Meredith, and Alfred H. Wilson—under director Ron OJ Parsons. Running through Sept. 30 at Court Theatre. Info/tickets: CourtTheatre.org

—Six Degrees of Separation: New York City's glitterati know that Old Money hires a driver while the Nouveau Riche hire a chauffeur. But how does this white elite respond when the son of a famous African-American celebrity charms them? Should they trust this total stranger? Veteran director Steve Scott tackles this award-winning John Guare comedy in Red Twist's intimate space, which will make you feel like part of the family, so remember that a pot of jam is the perfect gift. Running through Oct. 7 at Red Twist Theatre. Info/tickets: Redtwist.org

—Arms and the Man: This is one of George Bernard Shaw's most frequently-performed plays and it's one of his best; a charming romantic comedy that doesn't bog down in talk. Its utterly sane arguments against the glorification of combat and war continue to make sense in a world far madder than Shaw ever knew (although he did live through World War II). It's City Lit's first Shaw play, directed by the capable Brian Pastor. Running through Oct. 21 at City Lit Theatre. Info/tickets: CityLit.org

—Sweet Charity: Big dance show, great jazzy score by Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields, a book by Neil Simon and a sexy Cinderella story that almost ends happily—this is one of the great mid-century Broadway musicals. Alex Sanchez is the director/choreographer with Broadway veteran Anne Horak starring as perpetual optimist Charity Hope Valentine. Whether you're a "Big Spender" or you "Love to Cry at Weddings" you

THEATER

might enjoy this one. Running through Oct. 28 at Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire. Info/tickets: Marriotttheatre.com

—The Little Foxes: Blood may be thicker than water but it ain't nearly as thick as money and power, as this famous 1939 Lillian Hellman drama proves. Almost gothic in style, with its turn-of-the-last-century Southern setting and lurid plot, it features one of the greatest women's roles in dramatic literature, the cold-blooded Regina Giddens, made famous by Tallulah Bankhead. Running Sept. 28-Oct. 28 at the Citadel Theatre, Lake Forest. Info/tickets: CitadelTheatre.org

—Rock 'n' Roll: What do Pink Floyd, Vaclav Havel, Sappho and the Plastic People of the Universe (what, you don't know them?) have in common? Answers are in Sir Tom Stoppard's sprawling 2006 play about mid-century rock music and the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia. Spread over 30 years in two countries, it's about politics, philosophy, student-teacher relationships and the seditious influence of rock. It's a big show for the small Artistic Home ... but they've never lacked ambition. Staged by artistic director Kathy Scambiaterra. Running Oct. 3-Nov. 18 at The Artistic Home. Info/tickets: TheArtisticHome.org

—Flyin' West—Pearl Cleage's frequently-produced play takes us to 1898 Nicodemus, Kansas, where Western settlers stake claims to farmland under the Homestead Act. Only these settlers are African-American women. The play is based on fact: Nicodemus was (and still is) a legacy of Black migration from the South following the Civil War. Cleage's language is rich, poignant and sometimes pungent. Chuck Smith, the director, is a quiet master of his craft. Running Oct. 5-Nov. 3 presented by American Blues Theater at Stage 773. Info/tickets: AmericanBluesTheater.com

—La Boheme: Lyric Opera of Chicago has partnered with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (London) and the Teatro Real Madrid to create a new production of Giacomo Puccini's romantic favorite about the starving artists of 1840s Paris, although the costumes appear (in photos) to be more 1890s. If you know the enchanting 19th century covered shopping arcades of Paris, you'll feel at home with this handsome new production. Running (in repertory with other operas) Oct. 6-Jan. 25 at the Civic Opera House. Info/tickets: LyricOpera.org

—Gypsy: "Best damn musical I've seen in years," crowed critic Walter Kerr in 1959 responding to Arthur Laurents' masterful book, young Stephen Sondheim's witty lyrics and Jule Styne's dazzling music. Powerful E. Faye Butler is not to



Donovan Session and Bryan Renaud in *Six Degrees of Separation*.

Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

be missed as Mama Rose, a legendary role, as directed by Michael Weber. But here's the thing: Mama Rose was a real, historic person and she and her daughters were not African-American. Is Porchlight taking too much artistic license? Running Oct. 12-Nov. 25, Porchlight Music Theatre at the Ruth Page Center. Info/tickets: PorchlightMusicTheatre.org

—Hello, Dolly!: Another classic Broadway Golden Age musical arrives in October: the Tony-winning revival of Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart's Hello, Dolly!, created last year for Bette Midler and David Hyde Pierce. We don't get Midler, but ain't nothin' shabby about Tony winner Betty Buckley and gifted veteran Lewis J. Stadlen. Jerry Zaks, who's won more Tony Awards than he can lift, is the director. Put on your Sunday clothes and catch this one. Running Oct. 23-Nov. 17, presented by Broadway In Chicago at the Oriental Theatre. Info/tickets: BroadwayInChicago.com

—110 in the Shade: This 1963 musical by Tom

Jones (not the singer) and Harvey Schmidt, who wrote The Fantasticks, is based on The Rainmaker by N. Richard Nash (who wrote the musical's book). It ran a modest 330 performances on Broadway and is an under-rated show with a heartfelt, lovely score, and it remains true to the original play set in 1930s rural America. BoHo's intimate productions are a perfect match for this one. Running Oct. 27-Dec. 16, presented by BoHo Theatre at Theater Wit. Info/tickets: BohoTheatre.com

—Twelfth Night: For many kids, this mostly sunny romantic comedy is their first encounter with The Bard, never mind its monumental genderfuck aspects. In a rare Shakespearean foray, Writers Theatre is sure to have fun with all aspects of this familiar play, staged by artistic director Michael Halberstam who's assembling a top cast. Running Nov. 7-Dec. 16 at Writers Theatre, Glencoe. Info/Tickets: Writerstheatre.org

Paula Vogel in Chicago Sept. 20

Goodman Theatre will host its "Igniting Imagination: The Art of Great Teaching" education and engagement luncheon on Thursday, Sept. 20, with Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright/educator Paula Vogel.

Vogel will join Walter Director of Education and Engagement Willa J. Taylor in conversation about art of teaching and importance of mentorship in shaping young minds.

The event will take place at The Standard Club, 320 S. Plymouth Ct., beginning at 12 p.m. (with registration starting at 11:30 a.m.). Tickets start at \$250 each; call 312-443-3811, ext. 539.

Also, Vogel's latest work, *Cressida on Top*, will appear in the 15th annual New Stages Festival for a one-time-only staged reading on Saturday, Oct. 6, at 2 p.m. *Cressida on Top* will be part of the New Stages Festival, and free reserved tickets are now available; call 312-443-3800, or visit GoodmanTheatre.org/NewStagesFestival or the box office at 170 N. Dearborn St.

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Artemisia Fest fights for femme presentation

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Google Artemisia Gentileschi's 17th-century oil painting Judith Beheading Holofernes. Seriously. Do it. I'll wait. The image is emblematic of Gentileschi's art: Magnificent, lush and thematically violent. It was also revolutionary: In 1600s art and life, the male gaze wasn't a thing, it was the only thing. So much so that for centuries after Gentileschi's death, her work was attributed to her male contemporaries.

"Nobody believed a woman painted like she did," said Artemisia Theatre Artistic Director Julie Proudfoot. "Critics and history ignored her signature, and credited various men with her paintings. They tried to erase her."

Proudfoot isn't one for female erasure, not in the 17th century and not today. With the six-play Artemisia Fall Festival, she's putting plays about women in the limelight. "American theater clings to a white male perspective," said Proudfoot. "It does not embrace a feminist voice. And because of that, our culture is robbed of stories that aren't just great stories, they're universal." The fest's series of staged readings from Sept. 24 through Oct. 3 at the Edge Theatre, 5451 N.

Broadway.

Statistics offer dismal proof off Proudfoot's assertion. According to American Theatre Magazine, men wrote close to two-thirds of all the plays produced in 2017. Women wrote 26 percent. Gender queer authors were all but statistically insignificant, coming in at .004 percent, (less than one half of one half of one half of one percent.)

Proudfoot recalled having an epiphany when trans actor/writer/activist Delia Kropp (<https://www.thealdelia.com/hr.html>) spoke on a panel last spring.

"Delia said something that struck me so hard: 'I had no realization of how much privilege I had as a white man until I became a white woman,'" Proudfoot recalled. "It was an incredibly powerful moment."

Proudfoot often finds herself explaining that writing a female lead isn't enough. "I get submissions from writers who say, 'Oh, there are strong women in my play. Strong leads.' And they've written a strong hooker. Or a strong mother. Or a strong nice girl next door. We have more stories than that. Way more."

Shame, Proudfoot said, can silence those stories. Compared to rom-coms or sunny musicals,



Artemisia's Julie Proudfoot.

Photo courtesy of Proudfoot

plays that take on "unpleasant" topics like rape or domestic violence are few. "We're shamed out of talking about these things," Proudfoot said. "Until fairly recently, we've haven't even dealt much with stories of women loving other women—whether it's a love affair or a deep friendship or a family that doesn't fit traditional gender roles. The gender stratification runs thick and deep."

Shame played a tragically significant role in the life of Artemisia Theatre's namesake. As a young teenager, Gentileschi was raped by one of her father's coworkers, Agostino Tassi. Her father prosecuted Tassi for theft of household goods, the goods being Gentileschi's virginity. Tassi was found guilty. His sentence was not enforced. For the rest of her work, Gentileschi's work often ref-

erenced acts of violence.

Working in Hollywood in the '90s and early Aughts, Proudfoot saw countless contemporary versions of that story play out. "I was there when Harvey [Weinstein] was in power. I had friends who called the [actors' union] hotlines. I saw women destroyed," she recalled of her days doing national ad campaigns and shows such as "The Gilmore Girls," "The Practice," and "The Cradle Will Rock."

When Proudfoot returned to Chicago in 2005, she found herself repeatedly auditioning for the same roles in different plays: "Moms who were the moral center, bitchy character parts, neurotic career women. It got frustrating," she said. In 2011, she founded Artemisia Theatre, driven partly by the lack of opportunities for women and partly by the overwhelming dominance of female characters created from a male point of view.

Artemisia's annual festival stands as both entertainment and a reclamation of female stories. Of the six festival plays, Proudfoot will select one to be fully produced next season. Her specs for women characters are clear: "I want women complex enough to have an inner world and an outer world. Women who go through a process of discovery, who learn to master both of those worlds," she said. "I want women who ultimately have agency."

Artemisia's Fall Festival runs at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 24-Oct. 3 at the Edge Theatre, 5451 N. Broadway. For more information, go to <http://artemisiatheatre.org>.

NOW PLAYING
Quick wit and exceptional beauty propel Nell Gwynn from selling oranges on the streets of London's burgeoning theater district to starring on its stages. She captures the hearts of her audience—and King Charles II—in this joyous song-and-dance-filled romance!

Nell Gwynn
written by JESSICA SWALE
directed by CHRISTOPHER LUSCOMBE

OLIVIER AWARD
BEST NEW COMEDY

AMERICAN PREMIERE

chicago
shakespeare theater
on navy pier theater

312.595.5600 • chicagoshakes.com

UNDER 35? A GREAT PRICE FOR STUDENTS & YOUNG PROFESSIONALS.

CST \$20 FOR

Scarlett Strahlen, photo by Jeff Scortino

HOMOS,
OR EVERYONE IN AMERICA

WRITTEN BY JORDAN SEAVEY
DIRECTED BY DEREK VAN BARHAM

PRIDE FILMS & PLAYS

AUG 30 - SEPT 30 PRIDE ARTS CENTER PRIDEFILMSANDPLAYS.COM
#PRIDEFILMSANDPLAYS #PROUDOFFPP #WEAREFAMILY

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Multicultural world premieres dot fall theater season

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"Yo, what's up, white people?" chirps a character in the first minutes of Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone* [running at Writers Theater through Sept. 23], reminding us that our world is occupied by a diversity of races, cultures and genders. Not only do the world premiere plays in Chicago's Fall season reflect this, but they also number too many to list here.

These are a few to start you off, but keep your eyes peeled if you want to see the rest before the crowd:

—*Frankenstein*: Nobody had planned a festival for the anniversary of Mary Shelley's greatest hit, so it came as a surprise when the 2018-19 season was found to include no less than four adaptations of the horror classic. In this first one, Rob Kauzlaric's introspective re-interpretation recounts a young woman's fancies as she grieves for her father, recreating the late sire in her imagination. Running Sept. 17-Oct. 28 at Lifeline Theater, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. Info/tickets: LifelineTheatre.com; 773-761-4477

—*Second Skin*: Shivers and shocks are Wild-Claw Theatre Company's specialty, with both abundant in this fable of the sea-spawned selkies who walk among us in human disguise. Running Sept. 14-Oct. 13 at the Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. Info/tickets: WildclawTheatre.com; 773-697-3830

—*Lady in Denmark*: Dael Orlandersmith champions cultural inclusion with her solo portrait of an immigrant Danish widow in Chicago recalling happier times triggered by the songs of Billie Holiday. Running Oct. 29-Nov. 18 at the Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St. Info/tickets: GoodmanTheatre.org; 312-443-3800

—*The Safe House*: Chicago author Kristine Thatcher's exploration of intergenerational family secrets is only one of many plays by local playwrights (among them, Ike Holter, Calamity West, Fin Coe, Spenser Davis and J. Nicole Brooks) making their debut this fall. Running Nov. 2-Dec. 16 at City Lit Theater, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. Info/tickets: CityLit.org; 773-293-3682

—*Truman and the Birth of Israel*: A president nowadays nearly forgotten risks his legacy to support a minority in his own country. Running Oct. 15-Nov. 18 at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave. Info/tickets: GreenhouseTheatre.org; 773-404-7336.

—*Plainclothes*: Broken Nose Theatre, aka the company that brought you the Jeff-winning *At The Table* last year, now surveys the hazards of security duty at a sprawling mega-emporium. Running Nov. 12-Dec. 15 at the Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. Info/tickets: BrokenNoseTheatre.com; 773-697-3830

com; 773-697-3830

—*Not For Sale*: On the eve of Puerto Rican festival, the citizens of Guadalis del Carmen's neighborhood are invaded by newcomers proposing unwelcome changes in this you-are-there production by Urban Theater Company. Running Sept. 21-Oct. 20 at Batay Urbano, 2620 W. Division St. Info/tickets: UrbanTheaterChicago.org

—*Oxy*, Ohio: Side Project playwright S.J. Spencer reveals why Dayton, Ohio, is the opiate-addiction capital of the United States and how it got that way. Running Sept. 30-Oct. 14 at the McKaw Theater, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave. Info/tickets: TheSideProject.net

—*Downstate*: Bruce Norris turns his social commentary on the question of whether some crimes are beyond redemption through remorse,



Ann Sonnevile and Chris Hainsworth in *Frankenstein*. Photo by Suzanne Plunkett

punishment or exile. Running Sept. 30-Nov. 11 at Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St. Info/tickets: Steppenwolf.org; 312-335-1650

—*Frankenstein*: Manual Cinema's innovative puppetry takes up temporary residence of the

Court Theatre stage to explore the connection between life, art, family, community and society. Running Nov. 10-Dec. 2 at Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave. Info/tickets: CourtTheatre.org; 773-753-4472

FALL OPERA PREVIEW

Operas cover love, lust and lesbians

BY AARON HUNT

Replete with princes in crowns, queens in leather, women in love and womanizers in lust, the start to this year's opera season is rich with traditional blockbuster, off-Loop revolutionaries and superstar voices. Don't know where to start? Here's a curated list of the best of the best operatic possibilities.

—*Masque at Kenilworth/Trial By Jury*: This double bill starts with a mythical visit by Queen Elizabeth I to Kenilworth Caste. Then two nearly married men (tenor Joshua Louis Smith and countertenor Bruno Rivera) fight it out in court over one's breach of promise. Transgressive Theatre-Opera's interactive, cross-gendering production promises champagne, a pride cake and leather! Running Sept. 21-22. Transgressive Theatre-Opera plays the auditorium at Ebenezer Lutheran Church. Info/tickets: brownpapertickets.com/event/3577726

—*Patience & Sarah: A Pioneering Love Story*: An artist and a farmer's daughter meet and fall in love in 1816 and escape mendacity to live freely in what we hope will be sexy bonnets and a covered wagon, going west. Jenn Cox, one of the most sought-after directors in Chicago's storefront opera scene directs the tale, imagined from a true story Cox described as, "complex, and very, very simple," with characters who are, "rich and flawed." It will run Oct. 5-31. Third Eye Theatre Ensemble at Theater Wit; thirdeyete.com/

—*La Boheme*: Slip into a tuxedo or strap on a

ball gown and flaunt your opening night-drag at the first 2018/2019 season production of Chicago's answer to the international opera scene! Chicago-favorite soprano Danielle de Niese is Musetta, and handsome tenor Michael Fabiano makes his company debut as Rodolpho. It's the musical *Rent* with a full string section! It runs Oct. 6-Jan. 5. Lyric Opera of Chicago. Info/Tickets: lyricopera.org

—*Idomeneo*: A king, a prince and two princesses—who could ask for anything more? Internationally renowned, Evanston-born Matthew Polenzani returns in this Jean-Pierre Ponnelle-designed production, with Sir Andrew Davis on the podium. Such lyrical angst shall not be heard again. It will run Oct. 13-Nov. 2. Lyric Opera of Chicago; LyricOpera.org

—*Don Giovanni*: In the #MeToo era, the womanizing Don is a dangerous character to lionize. How to navigate it? Dress the enterprising Don in the suit of a Hollywood producer, add a starlet, a makeup artist, a photographer, a wronged wife ... and the sparks start to fly, present-day. It'll run Nov. 9-11 at Petite Opera Productions plays the Mary Wilson House Beyer Auditorium at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Info/tickets: PetiteOpera.org

—*The Long Christmas Dinner*: The 12-tone compositional theorist Paul Hindemith (who, for better or for worse, influenced the next generation of composers) set this opera to a libretto by Our Town's Thornton Wilder. A family's Christmas Dinner-dynamic is examined over a period of 90 years in this piece that skillfully asks more questions than it answers. It'll run Nov. 16-Dec. 1. Chicago Fringe opera plays the Studio Theater at Chopin Theater. Info/tickets: ChicagoFringeOpera.com

—*Iolanta*: Tchaikovsky, whose soaring music

graces so many ballets, wrote magnificent tunes for the opera as well. In this woefully neglected gem, a blind princess must choose whether to embark on a purported cure that will restore her lover to her if it succeeds or bring about his death if it fails. Performed in the original Russian, this is not to be missed. It'll run Nov. 10-18; Chicago Opera Theater at The Studebaker Theater. Info/tickets: ChicagoOperaTheater.org

—*Siegfried*: Lyric continues an exploration of Wagner's Ring Cycle that will lead to a full production of all four operas in direct succession in 2020. *Siegfried* doesn't break a sweat in front of dragons, but when he battles the magic fire surrounding the sleeping Brünnhilde, he learns about both fear and love. Soprano Christine Goerke is sure to crack more glass in her ongoing stint as Bugs Bunny's beloved. It'll run Nov. 3-16 at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Info/tickets: LyricOpera.org

—*Il Trovatore*: Verdi's gut-wrenching pyrotechnics are on full display in this rollercoaster of a plot that includes a child-burning gypsy and the famous Anvil Chorus. What will all those burly blacksmiths be wearing during that striking tune? Just about nuthin', we hope. Running Nov. 17-Dec. 9. Lyric Opera of Chicago. Info/tickets: lyricopera.org

—*When Adonis Calls*: A handsome young fan begs a famous, blocked poet's reciprocation of literary correspondence, and the roaring eroticism of this exchange brings down multiple barriers. How carnal a love can leap from the page? This Chicago premiere stars baritones Jonathan Wilson and Nathan Kistler, and two male dancers. It's set to run Nov. 30-Dec. 9. Thompson Street Opera Company plays The Broadway Theatre at Pride Arts Center. Info/tickets: ThompsonStreetOpera.org

Amateur, a trans memoir of masculinity, boxing and being a man

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Thomas Page McBee is many people: a husband, an uncle, a brother, a son. He's also the first trans man to fight in Madison Square Garden.

Amateur: A True Story of What Makes a Man (Simon and Schuster) is McBee's second memoir, the followup to the Lambda Award-winning *Man Alive: A True Story of Violence, Forgiveness, and Becoming a Man*. Like many trans individuals, McBee felt different his whole life. He also had to deal with his stepfather's sexual abuse and a complex relationship with his brilliant, alcoholic mother. In *Amateur*, McBee takes a hard look at masculinity and its effects on him as a trans man, as he prepares for a charity boxing match, having had no previous ring training. The result is a short but powerful glimpse into a man who, despite his muscles and beard, fears that his hard-won masculinity is leading him down a rougher path than he anticipated.

"Men keep trying to fight me," McBee told his brother in 2015, after almost getting in a physical altercation with a stranger after a simple misunderstanding involving McBee's phone camera.

By then, McBee had successfully transitioned and embarked on a relationship with his now-wife. He'd also lost his mother and still wasn't quite sure who his birth father was. To deal with these changes and the growing feeling that his own new masculinity was a complicated beast, McBee enters a world of smelly locker rooms, bulky gloves and fighting with one's own shadow. And his newfound insights are often surprising.

McBee's writing is both gritty and lyrical, putting the reader smack in the middle of sparring matches and ringside pep talks. Anyone who has seen Rocky or is familiar with the rise and fall of Mike Tyson (who McBee talks about extensively) will be drawn into the violent and strangely intimate world of amateur boxing. Though McBee and his fellow fighters are relentless in the ring, they touch gloves before and often hug after. Boxing is as full of support as it is smack talk and, well, actual smacking.

True to its subtitle, *Amateur* is an exploration of masculinity as much as a boxing memoir. McBee observes, with much discomfort, how his attitudes have changed since his transition. "You're like a guy, but better" is what many

BOOKS

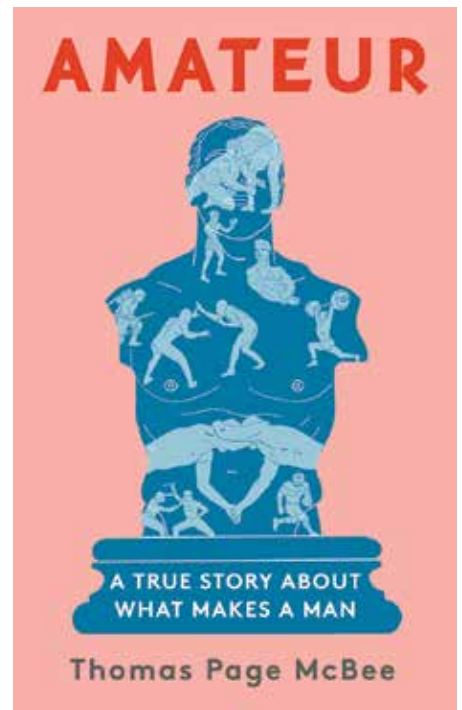


Thomas McBee.

Photo by Amos Mac

women told McBee pre-transition, and he realizes that his new body has changed how all genders view and treat him, as well as his own behavior. Though McBee, who is white, now enjoys security on city sidewalks and increased respect at work, he finds himself unintentionally talking over and disregarding the input of women—including, at one point, his own sister. Using copious research as well as his own experiences, McBee delivers a knockout punch of gender and societal rumination, paralleled with his own journey as a boxer.

Though I wish McBee would have delved more into his relationships with his mother and girlfriend, as well as his search for his birth father,



Amateur is a unique and self-aware take on masculinity, its problems and its potential. McBee's voice is as strong as his presence in the ring, and his willingness to pick apart his newfound privilege is a positive example for all men. *Amateur* is a deft peek into the inner life of one who has already transitioned to his true gender, and is now coming to terms with what that means.

THE "DON'T MISS" SEASON!
PORCHLIGHT
CHICAGO'S MUSIC THEATRE

S. FAYE BUTLER IN GYPSY
A MUSICAL FABLE
OPENING OCTOBER 12

Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder
STARRING MATT CROWLE
OPENING JANUARY 25 2019

A CHORUS LINE
OPENING APRIL 10 2019

porchlight
american musicals. chicago style.

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE AT
PORCHLIGHTMUSICTHEATRE.ORG

GYPSY AND A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE PHOTOS BY JOE MAZZA. A CHORUS LINE PHOTO BY SUZANNA MARS | SUZANNA MARS.COM



Take a
bigger
bite of your
Jewish
heritage

Spertus Institute serves up savory ways to explore Jewish history, culture, art, and current events. Visit us at spertus.edu for a schedule of upcoming events.

 **spertus**
יהודים

Spertus Institute is a partner
with the Jewish United Fund
in serving our community

Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership
610 South Michigan Avenue | Chicago | 60605
312.322.1700 | spertus.edu

MCA: Bicoastal and multidisciplinary

BY KERRY REID

Last year, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) unveiled Marisol, a restaurant and bar in the lower level of the museum, adjacent to the theater lobby. Created by Jason Hammel of Logan Square's acclaimed Lula Cafe with paintings by British artist Chris Ofili, it's a hip but accessible communal gathering place for both MCA patrons and people off the street looking for a place to unwind or recharge.

Creating that sort of community commons is one of the challenges facing many cultural institutions these days. But, at 51, the MCA seems up to the task of weaving together a multidisciplinary, yet accessible, approach to understanding the currents of contemporary art.

Among the recent changes, the museum announced three key staff promotions last month—all women of color. Naomi Beckwith, who joined MCA in 2011, is now the Manilow Senior Curator. The Hyde Park native and Northwestern University graduate takes over from Omar Kholeif. Marissa Reyes is the new Dr. Robert N. Mayer Director of Learning and Public Programs, where she'll coordinate everything from school partnerships to lectures to late-night events. And Helen Yi (founder of the eponymous women's design boutique) is the new director of retail experience. (That might seem like a fancy way of talking about a bookstore—unless you've experienced the cunning and broad array of books, media and objects on sale in the MCA shop.)

In talking to Katy O'Malley and Karrie Leung of MCA's press office, it's clear that the museum is interested in also changing the dialogue around the work presented. Sometimes that involves illustrating how the past influences the present. Sometimes that involves finding a balance between international voices and local artists. Or

ART

it can involve analyzing all the different media many contemporary artists use for telling their stories.

In the past-to-present category, MCA unveils a major exhibit, *West by Midwest*, in its fourth-floor space (Nov. 17, 2018-Jan. 27, 2019). The exhibit focuses on how numerous artists with Midwest ties migrated to the West Coast in the late 1950s and early 1960s—just as the interstate highway system made it easier for artists and aspiring artists to mimic the spirit of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. Those artists became in turn major influences on the roadmap of contemporary art.

Referring to MCA's current exhibition, *I Was Raised on the Internet* (through Oct. 14), O'Malley said, "*West by Midwest* is going to be such a drastic change." *I Was Raised on the Internet* traces the changes in how art is created and in how we interact with it since 1998, and, said O'Malley, "It really looks at the future and it's a little bright. *West by Midwest* is going to be something to study, I think. You're going to have all these intersections of all these artists who were raised in the Midwest who moved out West and the inspiration they gleaned from going out there and joining different schools."

Leung added, "It's not solely about the Midwest going West. It's also about how the evolution of the art scene in the West was true for the Midwest." In both cases, Leung and O'Malley note, artists were seeking an escape from "the echo chamber of movements and ideas and competition" that marked the New York art scene of the era.

Among the featured artists are Omaha-born Ed Ruscha, who became a leading light of the Pop



Amanda Ross-Ho's *Cradle of Filth*, 2013, in the MCA's *West By Midwest*.

Photo courtesy of the artist; Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York; and Shane Campbell Gallery

Art movement after moving to Los Angeles; Judy Chicago, who took the name of her hometown and became famous for large-scale works such as *The Dinner Party*; and sculptor/painter Billy Al Bengston, a Kansas native whose work drew upon California "Kustom Kar" and motorcycle art of the late 1950s.

"It underscores how they mutually influenced each other," said O'Malley. "One of the most fun parts is seeing the photographs of the artists hanging out together in front of a Thunderbird or whatever." The exhibit will be divided into

six sections and features more than 80 artworks, many drawn from the MCA's permanent collection by curators Charlotte Ickes and Michael Darling. Each section maps the connections between the artists through exploring practice (how the artists made their work), place (the spaces they shared, such as art schools), and people (the overlap in personal and professional circles that influenced their development).

The internet will still play a role in this show, though. O'Malley noted that in place of a printed show catalog, the MCA will offer an extensive "microsite" online with additional materials about the artists and their times.

The MCA's performance series, created by original curator Peter Taub, who served in that role for 20 years, has been headed up since last fall by Chicago native Tara Aisha Willis, a dancer/choreographer/academic. Willis and assistant curator Grace Deveney team up for the ongoing *Groundings* series, which kicks off on Nov. 3.

Groundings brings in artists who work in dance, music and performance art (selected by Willis) who develop performance pieces inspired by works chosen by Deveney from the permanent collection that somehow illustrate aspects of movement. The series is structured around week-long residencies with rehearsals open to the public that culminate in a public performance. O'Malley describes it as "a fun convergence that's happening between performance and visual art. It's also thinking about how the performances we program can branch out from just the theater space by programming in the galleries, out in the lobbies, and in talkbacks after shows in the lobby."

The international profile Taub built for the MCA performance series continues—the first artist up on the stage is Rwandan dance artist Dorothee Munyaneza's *Unwanted* (Oct. 3-4 and 6-7), a choreographed meditation on rape as an instrument of war. (Munyaneza was a child in 1994 when the worst atrocities of the Rwandan civil war occurred.) O'Malley describes Willis as being interested in work that offers "very topical and diverse perspectives for Chicago, as well as offering voices from outside the city."

Increasingly, O'Malley and Leung note, the MCA is focusing on artists who work across many media. In June of 2019, they'll unveil the first major exhibit on Chicago-raised artist Virgil Abloh (who designed Serena Williams' U.S Open "tutu" uniform). Abloh, the former creative director for Kanye West and the artistic director for Louis Vuitton's menswear collection, works in fashion but graduated with an engineering degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology and is known for his ability to synthesize work from the worlds of graphic design, music, architecture and visual art.

Said O'Malley, "We have this focus on accessibility from a physical and conceptual way. The idea is that we don't want barriers for entry to people. We want to reach general audiences who haven't been turned on to contemporary art yet because they think it's not for them."

"The multidisciplinary sense is that if artists are working in one medium, they are often working in another. I think if our audiences are interested in one medium, we can turn them onto another."



The MCA at night.

Photo by Peter McCullough, © MCA Chicago

Jean Leigh runs Boystown gallery for everyone

BY KERRY REID

Jean Leigh always had a clear vision for what she wanted her Halsted Street gallery to be: “I wanted a gallery where you could walk in and get something, rather than walking out brokenhearted.” Since 2005, Leigh Gallery has been featuring artists across a wide spectrum of media—from paintings to prints, jewelry to pottery—at prices that won’t break the bank.

If there’s a unifying theme to the work Leigh seeks out, it’s “pleasantries and escapism.”

But that doesn’t mean the work is all flowers and fluffy kittens. You can find photography by “storm chaser” David Mayhew that verges on the apocalyptic in its depictions of nature’s power. Roger Heide’s color-plane horizons in oil are, as Leigh put it, “flawless”—blocks of color suggesting seashore views stretching out to infinity that take on different subtle gradations of light and shadow as you move around them.

Leigh herself worked as a pen-and-ink artist for many years. One of her works—a drawing of the Cana Island lighthouse in Door County—hangs in the Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay. But the eyestrain of working on such detailed pieces under magnification took her away from creating her own work to showing and selling other people’s art. And she’s now one of the last galleries standing in the North Halsted area.

“I love being around art. Always have. So I thought, ‘I’ll just open a gallery.’ I called 40 people to open this place and said ‘If I open a gallery in Chicago, will you come?’ And all 40 of them said yes. Not it’s up to 80.”

Leigh has spent a lot of time on the art-fair circuit. And that also influenced her approach as a gallerist. “I set it up like an art fair so you’re getting almost all mediums in one small space. You don’t get to see pottery in too many places.”

An eye-catching display of pottery by Norbert White shows off his approach to porcelain. “He glazes, then carves all these pieces out to take the glaze away,” explained Leigh. She pointed out that his attention to detail includes carving on the bottom of the platters and vases he creates.

White is also a bartender at Sidetrack—which highlights Leigh’s emphasis on supporting local artists as much as possible. It’s not strictly about altruism. She also noted that it’s convenient to be able to get more work from an artist who lives locally if she sells out of her current inventory. And it also means that buyers have a good chance of meeting the artists whose work they are acquiring.

Being in Boystown also means that work with an LGBTQ appeal does well. Leigh pointed out paintings of the iconic rainbow pylons on Hal-

ART

sted Street by Michael Barnett, as well as works referencing the Pride, Bisexual, Transgender and Leather flags. While such pieces may be commonplace for the neighborhood, Leigh said “I get guys who come in from Russia or wherever and they say ‘Oh my god, you have a gay flag in your window!’ They come in here because art is cool and it’s a safe friendly place compared to where they’ve come from. It’s mind-blowing to hear that kind of story over and over again. Even when I go to art fairs in places like Highland Park, my wife reminds me that I’m in this gay bubble here. You forget because you’re so immersed in it.”

A piece by Nate Freeman in ARTNews last year noted how many “middle-class” galleries are closing in New York City—a phenomenon which has hit some Chicago galleries as well. For Leigh, part of her survival strategy is that, “I didn’t go racy and political and all that stuff. You can go to Pilsen to get that stuff, or you can go other places. I thought, ‘Let’s just cover it so there’s something for everyone in this area, because this area is so diverse.’ You’ve got to make it so every-



Celebration 36 x 36, by Roger Heide.
Photo courtesy of Jean Leigh

one can find something they like.”

She also features diverse work from the artists themselves. Painter Armando Pedrosa’s work includes “cool surrealist houses” in vibrant colors, as well as his “urban grit” series—textured abstract pieces incorporating rusty bits of found objects against a backdrop of darker hues.

Because she’s so hands-on (Leigh jokes, “I have no life. I’m here all the time”), she takes special pleasure in helping first-time buyers find something special that is “meaningful to them, rather than their being told it’s meaningful.



Jean Leigh.
Photo courtesy of Leigh

That’s a big deal.” She added, “There’s nothing stuffy or stuck-up or any of that stuff here. It’s good quality work at affordable prices and that’s my thing. I’ll have people come in and say, ‘Oh, I can’t afford anything.’ I’ll ask them, ‘Did you look at the prices?’ And they go ‘Oh!’”

Making that personal connection means that, in a way, everything she sells carries not only the history of the artist, but the memory of the experience of buying it. Leigh said, “I bought a piece in Provincetown. And it was such a horrible experience that every time I look at it in my living room, I think, ‘grrrr.’ It left a bad taste. Whereas with other places, it’s like, ‘Oh, I had such a fun time with them and they were so nice.’ And then it makes me smile to look at it.”

Leigh’s accessibility extends to non-human patrons as well. On the day we chatted, she broke off from our conversation to bring a dog biscuit

to an adorable black pug, who stops by daily with his owner.

Even as the neighborhood demographics change—Leigh noted she sees more married straight couples now alongside gay men—she finds support from the community.

“I think they get it,” Leigh said of her neighborhood patrons. “They know to support local and they really do.” For her part, she continues to seek out new talent. The weekend before we chatted, she had scouted some new prospects at the Lakeview East Festival of the Arts. Other than talent, what Leigh looks for in an artist is someone who is “sane and pleasant.”

And if seeking that sunnier side of the street is wrong, Leigh doesn’t want to be right. “Honestly, we all need happiness and escapism. Everything here makes you kind of smile.”

Chicagoan raises money and pride walking to fight HIV/AIDS

BY ROSS FORMAN

Christopher Pazdernik was filled with fear and shame that day in 2009 when he learned he is HIV-positive.

"I was so embarrassed and terrified; I had no idea what was going to happen next," he said. "At first, I had to come to terms with it myself, just like I did with my sexuality, and honestly, that took a few years. Once I started telling more than just my close friends and family and talking about it more in public, it just got easier and easier."

Flash-forward to 2018—Pazdernik is a staunch advocate for the HIV community as a whole, spawned by his "lightbulb moment" when he was on the train and saw an advertisement for AIDS Run & Walk Chicago. He immediately thought he should participate.

"That first year [participating in the event, which is now five years ago], seeing so many people out walking together, fighting against this disease that I live with every day, was just overwhelming. And beautiful. And I've never looked back," he said.

Pazdernik is on the Ambassador Committee for the annual AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, and has organized his own team for the event, which will be held Saturday, Sept. 23, at Soldier Field. The event includes a 5K and 10K run, and a 5K walk, starting with the opening ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Pazdernik is doing the walk.

Pazdernik, who was one of Windy City Times' 30 Under 30 in 2016, serves on the Community Advisory Board at Howard Brown Health, including the past two years as chairperson, and he produces a benefit concert for Howard Brown Health every year, called Chris' Birthday Belt Fest, which features dozens of his friends, who just happen to be musical theatre performers from Chicago, with one other from Wisconsin.

"This fall, I'm also directing a musical set at the height of the AIDS crisis, *The Last Session*, for my company, Refuge Theatre Project, and we'll be using that production to bring awareness and raise funds for all the terrific HIV/AIDS organizations here in Chicago," he said.

Pazdernik, after learning he was HIV-positive, attended support groups at the Broadway Youth Center which, he said, "[were] critically necessary to me."

He remembers "breaking down and crying during my first session saying, 'I'm never going to want to have sex again.' Over time, it got better. But I needed to be there and hear other people's stories and know I wasn't alone during those early years.

"Now I try to be that kind of beacon and support for other people."

Pazdernik, 32, lives in North Center and primarily works as a freelance artist in musical the-

SPORTS

atre as a director, choreographer, audition coach, casting director and producer. He also does numerous speaking engagements since moving to Chicago in 2008. Plus, he serves as the artistic director for Refuge Theatre Project and he joined the staff at Porchlight Music Theatre earlier this year as the Company Manager & Casting Associate.

He is originally from Neenah, Wisconsin, and is celebrating 10 years living in Chicago this month.

"I am so excited to spend the day with many of my good friends [during the AIDS Run & Walk Chicago]; the time I get to spend with them during the walk is really special to me," he said. "[I have] overwhelming gratitude [for the event]—for my friends who walk with me, for my friend Donica Lynn who sings at the opening ceremonies every year, for all the organizations including the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and their efforts to fight AIDS, and for the opportunity, once a year, to feel like my status makes me part of a community, rather than an outsider."

Pazdernik's team, Option Up, always walks in honor of all the sensational musical theater artists who died at the height of the AIDS crisis. "This year, I'll be thinking about Broadway composer Michael Friedman in particular, who passed away a year ago due to complications from HIV/AIDS," he said.

One of his favorite past AIDS Run & Walk Chicago memories was the 2016 event—when it was pouring rain, and yet none of his friends skipped the event.

"We all walked together in the pouring rain and sang lots of show tunes about rain, [including] *Don't Rain on My Parade*, *A Little Fall of Rain*, *Stranger to the Rain*, *River in the Rain*, the list goes on," he said.

Pazdernik has raised \$5,000 each year for the past three years for the event, and he's shooting for the same total this year in hopes of pushing his grand total to \$20,000 for the programs at AFC, "and that feels really special," he said.

Pazdernik knows he will, once again, be all tears after the AIDS Run & Walk Chicago when he sees the AIDS Quilt.

"There's this thing called survivor guilt, which is very real for me—I don't feel worthy to live at a time where living with HIV is possible, when so many before me weren't given that opportunity," he said. "Why them, and not me? It's rough [seeing the AIDS Quilt], but it helps me connect to the past, which fuels my fire to fight for the future."

To donate to Pazdernik's fundraising through the annual AIDS Run & Walk Chicago, go to: http://events.aidschicago.org/site/TR/RW/RW18?px=1140022&pg=personal&fr_id=1480.



Christopher Pazdernik.
Photo courtesy of Pazdernik

Wrestlers group honors Chicagoan

Wrestlers WithOut Borders has selected the 2018 winners of its two highest honors: the Dermody Citizenship Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award. The winners and five new inductees to the WWB Hall of Merit were celebrated at the Gay Games in Paris.

Berlin's Michael "Mitch" Ertel was named winner of WWB's Dermody Citizenship Award and Sydney's Barry Webb the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Being inducted to the Hall of Merit will be Cameron Inthapangna of Melbourne, Gus Scheerbaum of Philadelphia, Rob Smitherman of Chicago, Josh Watkins of San Francisco and Nick Zymaris of New York City.

"The 2018 list of inductees into the Hall of Merit is one of the most diverse in terms of contributions to WWB's mission," said WWB Chair Chris Lorefice. "We're also pleased to be giving the Dermody Citizenship Award to Michael 'Mitch' Ertel from Berlin, who has contributed so much to making the Einsteiger club in Berlin so successful, been extremely active in LGBT sports in Europe, and puts on a phenomenal wrestling camp each year that welcomes many international LGBT wrestlers. Barry Webb, who was already in our Hall of Merit, helped keep Harbour City Wrestling Club alive and relevant through many tough years to become the rising powerhouse it is today."

Inthapangna is one of the founding members and officers of the Melbourne Wranglers, which competed in its first Gay Games in Paris.

Scheerbaum, Watkins and Zymaris have been important leaders in their respective clubs, with Zymaris also reviving the popular Hillside Wrestling Weekend and Watkins serving as a wrestling official.

Smitherman is not a wrestler, but was of invaluable assistance to WWB as a sports coordinator in Gay Games VII-IX, served as a WWB delegate to the Federation of Gay Games, and has volunteered in WWB's fundraising efforts.

Fujikawa is first male professional golfer to come out

Tadd Fujikawa, 27, is the first professional male golfer to come out as gay.

According to Outsports, Fujikawa said he came out because the stories of so many other LGBTQ athletes coming out before him helped to inspire him, and he wants to do the same for others.

In part, he posted on social media, "I don't want this to be focused on me. I just want to spread love and acceptance to others who are in a similar situation. If anyone out there is struggling, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. YOU ARE LOVED AND YOU ARE ENOUGH... AS IS, EXACTLY AS YOU ARE!"

He told Outsports, "The love and support have been overwhelming. I'm so glad that I came out. I can finally be the best version of me."

The Outsports article is at <https://www.outsports.com/2018/9/12/17847740/gay-golf-tadd-fujikawa-athlete-come-out>.

LGBT-themed films abound at 2018 CSAFF

BY ADA CHENG

The Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF), founded in 2010 and organized by the Chicago South Asian Arts Council, takes place this year. This festival, the largest of its kind in the Midwest, will present more than 70 films at the Showplace ICON Theater and Columbia College in downtown Chicago as well as AMC Oakbrook Center on Sept. 20-23.

The festival showcases films from nations across South Asia, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, as well as the global South Asian diaspora. More than 100 artists, including notable filmmakers, directors and actors such as director Sarthak Dasgupta

LGBT films at CSAFF 2018

Evening Shadows explores how a mother, Vasudha, copes with her young gay son's revelation of his sexuality in a small town in Southern India. Bound by traditions and morality, she has no one to turn to dispel her fears and doubt, confronting the conservative patriarchal society and its rigid cultural traditions as well as her dogmatic husband.

Monogamish follows Sagar and Nishi—sexually fluid, Indian companions of sorts who are not in a 'typical' relationship with one another. Although the intimacy and connection they have are undeniable, they are not partners and they are not cheating. Sagar is already in a committed relationship and all three parties are aware. This film explores the dynamics and strength of these two non-traditional couples, where agreements are made and boundaries are challenged.

Noblemen is about a teenage boy's coming to terms with his sexuality. Shay is picked on constantly, with the main perpetrators being Arjun, the tall athletic sports captain, and his best friend Baadal. Shay and Pia, the spunky daughter of the new junior school principal, are cast as Bassanio and Portia in the Founder's Day production of Merchant of Venice. Indignant, Baadal vows to get Shay's part at any cost and turns to his buddy Arjun for help. Events take a sinister turn when Shay walks in on Arjun, Baadal and their cronies on a debauched night.

Rani, a pre-feature short by Hammad Rizvi, is about a Pakistani transgender woman who sets out to take care of an abandoned child.

Mehndi, a pre-feature short by Sudeshna Sen, is about two young girls who, on the threshold of womanhood, pass a secret designed to alter their lives forever, amidst the bright colorful flurry of an Indian bridal shower.

FILM

and actor Amrita Bagchi, will attend screenings and answer questions during the four-day event.

Jigar Shah, CSAFF's festival manager, said he is proud of this annual event's growth in breadth and scope, adding, "CSAFF has always been a front-runner in showcasing South Asian talent and independent cinema, but this year I'm excited to unveil ten world premieres, seven North American premieres, and eighteen films making their Chicago premiere."

These films depict issues and concerns important to South Asians around the globe, such as gender, sexuality, family, culture, religion, identity, immigration and belonging within the diasporic community. Shah, who wears many different hats—including artistic director, community



CSAFF festival manager Jigar Shah. Photos courtesy of CSAFF

leader, board member, and Bollywood choreographer—is fervent about culture, arts and movies because he "wants to promote South Asian culture, talent and perspectives through films, art and discussions."

The festival this year contains some features that are relevant to the LGBT community, Shah noted, adding that, "This year we have an amazing lineup of LGBTQ films that I am very proud to present. One of the films is Monogamish. Both the director and the actor will be here attending the screening. Really good LGBTQ film. It shows the dynamite strength of two nontraditional couples. It's an amazing film."

Another LGBT film, Evening Shadows, is a story about a young gay man trying to come out to his mother in a small town. Shah points out that this film is particularly significant given the recent ruling on Section 377 in India. The British introduced that law into the Indian Penal Code in the 1860s to punish "unnatural" sexual acts; it was most often enforced in cases of consensual sex between men. On Sept. 6, the Supreme Court in India ruled to decriminalize consensual gay sex.

"It is a really good film," he said. "This just happened two days ago in India. It was a big day for the community. So Evening Shadows is important, considering the difficulty for people to come out in India."

Shah said that ultimately he hopes that CSAFF will "provide a platform to showcase talents that might otherwise be overlooked."

For details, locations and film schedule, see csaff.org/film-guide/.



Tarell Alvin McCraney. Photo by Deana Lawson

Steppenwolf to run 'Ms. Blakk' in May

Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company is replacing its previously announced production of Tarell Alvin McCraney's Wig Out! with the world premiere of Ms. Blakk For President—about the life of real-life drag queen Joan Jett Blakk, who is the country's first Black drag-queen presidential candidate, Playbill.com noted.

McCraney had been previously scheduled to return to the Chicago stage in Wig Out!, but will now star as the lead in Ms. Blakk For President, which Tina Landau will direct. Performances will begin May 23, 2019, ahead of a June 3 opening.

McCraney (co-writer and executive producer of the Oscar-winning film Moonlight) will make his Broadway debut Dec. 27, 2018, with his play Choir Boy.

The Playbill article is at <http://www.playbill.com/article/steppenwolf-adds-tarell-alvin-mccraney-and-tina-landau-ms-blakk-for-president-to-2019-season>.

Architect to discuss local projects Oct. 2

Mark Sexton—co-founder of the firm that designed the Millennium Park's Crown Fountain (2004) in collaboration with artist Jaume Plensa—will tell the story behind the fountain and other projects in the 40-year history of Chicago-based Krueck + Sexton Architects on Tuesday, Oct. 2, at the the University Club, 76 E. Monroe St. (The venue has changed.)

The evening will start with a 5 p.m. cocktail reception followed by Sexton's presentation at 6 p.m.

Another important Chicago project by Krueck + Sexton is the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies (2007). Also, the firm recently completed restoration work on two Mies van der Rohe masterworks: the 860-880 Lake Shore Drive apartments and Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Admission is \$25, and \$20 for Frank Lloyd Wright Trust members; University of Chicago alumni, faculty and staff; and AIA Chicago members. Student admission is \$5. For more information, visit FLWright.org/thinkingintothefuture.

Holly Near in Chicago Sept. 28

Musician Holly Near will perform Friday, Sept. 28, at Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln Ave., at 8 p.m.

Near is celebrating her first album in three years, Peace Becomes You, and she's building on 40 creative years and 30 recordings. Near has been recognized many times for her work for social change, including honors from the ACLU, the National Lawyers Guild, the National Organization for Women, and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Admission is \$28-\$30 each.

See OldTownSchool.org and HollyNear.com.



From EXPO Chicago. Photo by Andrew Davis

EXPO Chicago Sept. 27-30

EXPO Chicago: The International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art will take place Sept. 27-30 at Navy Pier's Festival Hall.

The seventh annual exposition will host 135 galleries from 27 countries and 63 cities, and introduce diverse programming. Said programming will include the /Dialogues panel series, featuring artistic discourse with leading artists, curators, designers and arts professionals on the current issues that engage them; IN/SITU, featuring large-scale sculptures and site-specific works; EXPO VIDEO, highlighting a dynamic screening program for film, video and new media works; and more.

Just a few of the exhibitors will include Anglim Gilbert Gallery (San Francisco), BorzoGallery (Amsterdam), Stephen Daiter Gallery (Chicago), Fort Gansevoort (New York), Kavi Gupta (Chicago), Rhona Hoffman Gallery (Chicago), GALLERY HYUNDAI (Seoul), Kalfayan Galleries (Athens), Galerie Kornfeld (Berlin), Galeria Javier Lopez & Fer Frances (Madrid), Praz-Delavallade (Paris; Los Angeles), Ronchini (London) and Wexler Gallery (Philadelphia).

See <https://www.expo-chicago.com/>.

NUNN ON ONE: REELING

'The Queens' holds court at Reeling

BY JERRY NUNN

The Queens will be coming to Reeling Film Festival this year in a new film about the Miss Continental Pageant.

Filmmaker Mark Saxenmeyer takes viewers behind the scenes as a camera crew documents the trials and tribulations of several people competing for the crown in the pageant's 2011 edition. Among those personalities featured is Baton owner Jim Flint, whose legendary Chicago club figures prominently in the film. Flint created the pageant in 1980.

in the documentary to support an hour and a half.

WCT: Why not make a documentary about Jim Flint?

MS: That would be different. In a sense it is, with it being about The Baton and Miss Continental, both of which he created. He's a major player, but we focus on performers, four from The Baton and four from Miss Continental. Maybe [Windy City Times Publisher] Tracy Baim's book Jim Flint: The Boy from Peoria could be turned into a movie.

WCT: What are your thoughts on his statement in The Queens: "I'm not advertising sex



FILM

so much time and money to win a crown that most people have never heard of. Then I realized we all have different goals and dreams. When I was younger it was [my goal] to win an Emmy and that is something I will never forget because Shirley Temple Black handed it to me.

WCT: What do you want audiences to get out of The Queens?

MS: Hopefully, because you are a human being, you are drawn to the winner experiencing their dreams coming true.

WCT: There is the other side too, for the people that don't win.

MS: It is heartbreaking. When they announce the top 12, they kick everyone out into the alley. They go from the glory of being onstage to being escorted out the backdoor. Talk about a dichotomy of emotions!

WCT: Why wasn't [first Miss Continental

WCT: So you will be at the screening at Reeling?

MS: Yes.

WCT: Anyone else?

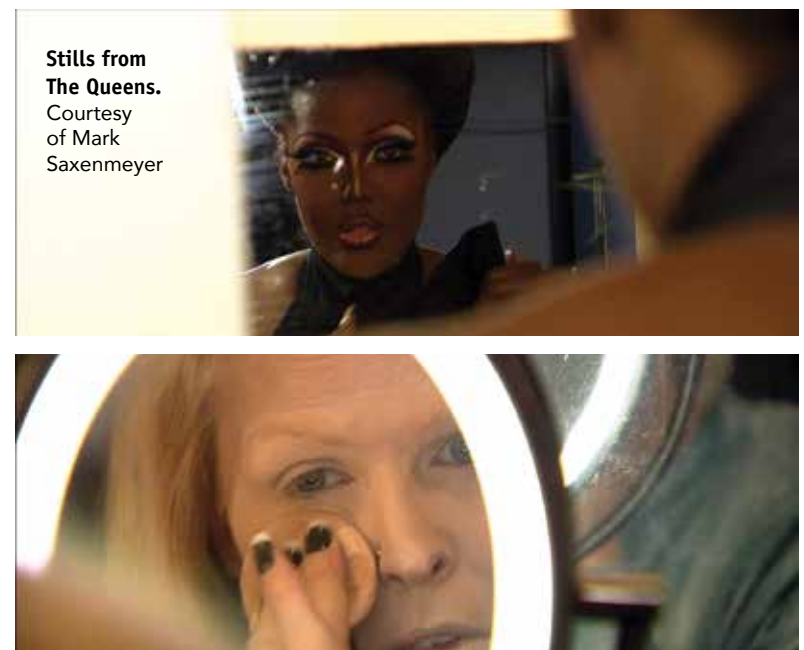
MS: I know Mimi Marks is coming. This will be the first time she has seen the film. Naysha Lopez is coming, but she has seen it before. She loves it.

Jim hasn't seen the movie and I don't know why.

The Queens shows the warts and all. It shows the tragedies and backstage stuff. There is a dark side, so not necessarily something to play on a loop at The Baton. It is ultimately a celebration of the art form and what they do.

Visit ReelingFilmFestival.org for information on tickets with The Queens screening at Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St., on Monday, Sept. 24, at 9 p.m. Saxenmeyer later told Windy City Times that he is adding an epilogue noting the September 2018 passing of performer Ginger Grant.

Stills from
The Queens.
Courtesy
of Mark
Saxenmeyer



Saxenmeyer is executive director of The Reporters Inc., the company that produced The Queens. The Emmy Award winner is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and has worked with ABC, Fox and CBS. His previous documentaries include The Rites of Passage and Experiment: Gay and Straight, with more docs currently in the works.

Windy City Times: Did you think of other names for this documentary besides The Queens?

Mark Saxenmeyer: I guess Beauty Queens, but I wanted it to have the name "queen" from gay people calling each other that, but in a positive way. It was originally going to be just on The Baton, because I loved it. I had never been to a Miss Continental pageant. In 2011, I wanted to do something at The Baton as a reality show. We shot a sizzle reel, but everyone I sent it to wanted to make ridiculous changes. They wanted to bring in a younger, hotter stand in and we were not having that. They also wanted more drama.

We decided to convert into a documentary and make it more authentic. There was enough drama

changes?"

MS: That's the controversial part of it. There are a lot of transgender individuals and activists that take great umbrage to some of the rules that are in play at The Baton and Miss Continental. They feel they are archaic, regressive and problematic—that the whole notion of how one identifies as transgender can't be decided by a cis gender individual who runs a beauty pageant.

I am not making any judgment in this film. I am just presenting this subculture of transgender life and bringing it to light. It is a world that many people know nothing about. Most straight people don't know this world existed.

WCT: What did you learn from Miss Continental?

MS: I literally watched every pageant. ... I feel like I am a Miss Continental expert now. I know who was in each one, how many times, how close they got and the tragedy behind some of the stories. It is really fascinating. I was attracted to going behind the scenes.

It's amazing to me that someone will spend

titleholder] Chili Pepper in the documentary?

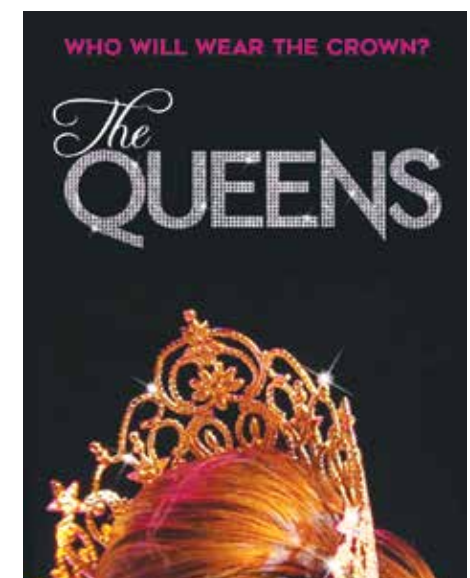
MS: She didn't want to participate. She didn't sign the waiver. With The Baton and Miss Continental, she is the iconic figure. I tried to tell her how beneficial it would be, but in the end what could I do? You can see on the parade float and in rehearsal she is not there. Jim said it would be hard to shoot around her, so to not come.

WCT: What are your thoughts on [Baton regular] Ginger Grant passing away?

MS: Ginger was the hilarious heart and soul of The Baton for decades. Her interactions with the audience calmed the uncomfortable, quieted the hecklers and made everyone feel part of the party. Her transformation from Harry Hodges to Ginger Grant every night was nothing short of brilliant artistry.

WCT: You covered a lot of material, including people stealing items backstage.

MS: In the interviews, they told me of sabotage and things going missing. Sure enough, when we were there, a woman lost her bag and I don't think it was ever found.



Poster for The Queens.

Design by Jackie Weinberg



2018 Reeling film fest lights up Chicago screens

This photo: From the Studio 54 documentary. Clockwise from below right: Mapplethorpe; *The Happy Prince*; *Freelancers Anonymous*.
Studio 54 photo by Adam Schull, all other photos courtesy of Reeling

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Reeling—Chicago's film festival dedicated to illuminating the diverse facets of the LGBT community—kicks off its 2018 edition on Thursday, Sept. 20, and festival organizers are promising a wide range of entries this year.

Festival founder Brenda Webb, who's also executive director of Chicago Filmmakers, which produces the event, said in a statement that, "This year's programming has a strong historical bent, with films ranging from portrayals of literary figures from the 1800s to reflections on LGBTQ culture of the 1970s and '80s; but the festival also embraces the 'now' as we present diverse contemporary stories and introduce the work of new and emerging artists who may be sharing their first films with our audience."

Among the locally produced festival entries will be *Freelancers Anonymous*, a lesbian-centric screwball comedy that opens the festival the evening of Sept. 20 and includes Alexandra Billings (*Transparent*) in its cast. The film, which focuses on a woman who quits her dead-end job and tries to refocus her life while at the same time managing her relationship with her demanding fiancé, stars Lisa Cordileone and Natasha Negovanlis and was directed by Sonia Sebastian.

A locally produced documentary, *The Queens*, charts the production of the 2011 Miss Continental beauty pageant and stemmed from an initial attempt at producing a reality series based on the show, which has long been associated with

FILM

Chicago's Baton Show Lounge. In this issue of *Windy City Times*, entertainment writer Jerry Nunn discusses with filmmaker Mark Saxenmeyer how the project came to fruition.

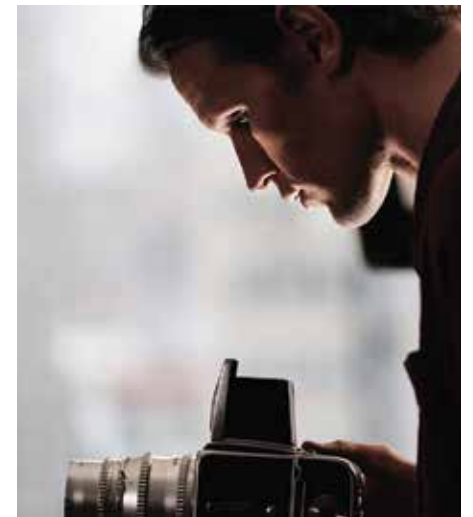
Actor Rupert Everett (*Another Country*; *My Best Friend's Wedding*) is scheduled to visit the festival Sept. 27 in support of his directorial debut, *The Happy Prince*, a biographical drama about the life of Oscar Wilde. The film stars Everett as well as Colin Firth and Emily Watson. Other high-profile Reeling titles include *Mapplethorpe*, a drama about the controversial but groundbreaking artist that stars Matt Smith (*The Crown*; *Dr. Who*), and *Studio 54*, a documentary that features that nightclub's co-owner Ian Schrager in conversation about what really went on behind the scenes

behind one of the most infamous velvet ropes in history.

The festival will also present a restored version of the 1985 drama *Buddies*, long unavailable for viewing, which was the first full-length motion picture to address the AIDS crisis.

Festival organizers have as usual included a number of international films, with entries from locales as varied as Hong Kong, South Africa, Netherlands and Finland, and will present a number of short film programs as well. Film critic Steve Warren weighs in on a number of Reeling's films in this week's *Windy City Times*.

Principal festival venues include Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St.; Davis Theater, 4614 N. Lincoln Ave; and Chicago Filmmakers' headquarters, 5720 N. Ridge Ave. For a complete schedule and ticket information, visit <http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2018/>.



My Big Gay Italian Wedding.
Photo by Loris T. Zambelli

Reeling 2018 reviews



BY STEVE WARREN

For complete festival information including locations, and to buy tickets, visit reelingfilmfestival.org.

Canary (★★★) (Sept. 21, 7 p.m.)

In South Africa in the mid-'80s, a smalltown boy (cue Bronski Beat) is drafted into the (white) army. Because of his musical talent, Johan (Schalk Bezuidenhout) gets into a special military/religious chorus, the Canaries. Enough of the members are gay that most of the others don't care, but Boy George-idolizing Johan isn't sure what he is. The army makes a man of him—a self-loathing homosexual man—in this fine musical drama with elements of comedy and romance. You may get whiplash from the plot's sharp turns, but it's worth it.

Snapshots (★★1/2) (Sept. 22, 5:15 p.m.)

Just because I'm not woman enough to appreciate a movie like *Snapshots*, doesn't mean there's anything wrong with it. A lesbian love story that begins in 1960 unfolds in flashbacks as the memories, triggered by a batch of old photos, of one of the women in the present.

Rose (Piper Laurie in one of her career-best performances) is hosting her daughter Patty (Brooke Adams) and granddaughter Allison (Emily Baldoni) at her lake house for a weekend. As happens whenever families get together—at least in the movies—secrets come spilling out. Not all of them can be revealed here.

Unknown to her family and maybe her late husband, young Rose (Shannon Collis) was wooed and eventually won by “free spirit” Louise (Emily Goss) while both were married to men and the couples hung out together. (They even danced to “The Twist,” and it's too bad the budget didn't allow for Chubby Checker's version, or at least Hank Ballard's.)

Allison has her own problems. Her husband has

a new job in Chicago so she'll have to leave St. Louis or him. And she's pregnant and doesn't know if she wants to have a child, though her conservative mom won't hear of the alternative. Patty has a story too. Her husband died of natural causes a few years ago, shortly after she found out he'd been cheating on her.

The flashbacks can be confusing for old movie buffs, because the red-haired Goss looks more like Piper Laurie did when she was romancing Rock Hudson onscreen back in the day, than Collis, who plays Laurie's younger self here.

“Based on a true story,” *Snapshots* comes off as soapy, and seems long and repetitious for its 95-minute running time.

Riot (★★★) (Sept. 22, 7:15 p.m.)

We've had two films titled *Stonewall* and others that referred to the event. It's time our Aussie kinfolk got a taste of their own LGBT history, even if it gets down under the skin of conservatives; so this movie throws it on the barbie.

Similar in tone to last year's *BPM*, *Riot* combines personal dramas within the larger context of a political movement. Set between 1972 and 1978, it's nostalgia for some and a history lesson for others.

The opening is a spoiler, scenes from the first Gay Mardi Gras in Sydney that the rest of the film is building toward. The main characters are real people who were involved in creating the event, which has continued annually ever since.

Lance Gowland (Damon Herriman, currently playing Charles Manson for Quentin Tarantino) is one of the more active activists in CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution), one of the groups fighting for our rights. He falls in love at first sight with the more conservative Dr. Jim Walker (Xavier Samuel). Leading the lesbians is outspoken Marg McMann (Kate Box), who will have to fight to keep her daughter.

The meetings are more gender-inclusive than

I remember ours being in the early '70s, where women either fought to have their issues recognized or left and formed their own groups. There's just a hint of this early on. Otherwise things are the same, including squabbling over every point and an inability to prioritize the laundry list of demands.

The problems are familiar: the need for decriminalization of homosexuality in the midst of gay bashing, bullying, suicide, job loss upon exposure, expulsion from a “Christian” college, family rejection, custody battles, raids on gay establishments and police brutality, the last turning a party into the riot of the title.

Over the years, the demonstrations for gay rights lose their steam as they often produce negative results. In 1978, someone comes up with the idea of having a Mardi Gras, an “International Celebration of Gay Solidarity”; while the first one doesn't all go smoothly, it sets the tone for the future.

I have mixed feelings about reliving those good old bad old days, even from this safe distance; but we should all know about them, and this film does a good job of recreating them.

Just Friends (★★★) (Sept. 22, 9:15 p.m.)

Being gay is no longer an issue in much of the world, so potential fictional lovers need other obstacles to overcome. The mother of Dutch Jew Joris (Joshua Stradowski) wants to build a wall to keep Syrian immigrant Yad (Majd Mardo) away from her son, even though her own mother (Jenny Areal) played Cupid to bring the guys together. An extraneous scene of real-world problems suggests an area of incompatibility that's shrugged off as something else for love to conquer for a happy ending.

Call Her Ganda (★★★) (Sept. 23, 1:15 p.m.)

If you're searching for reasons to feel proud of being an American, this is not the film for you. Artfully assembled by director P.J. Raval, it's a

FILM

documentary about the 2014 murder of a Filipina trans woman, Jennifer Laude, and its aftermath.

The accused killer is U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton, who met Jennifer in a bar and took her to a nearby hotel, where the discovery of her male genitalia sent the 19-year-old into a rage. He admits to choking her but says she was alive when he left.

Things are complicated in the Philippines, where a large U.S. military presence compromises Filipino authorities in matters of jurisdiction. A Visiting Forces Agreement shifts the odds in favor of the U.S. and prior to Pemberton, no American had been convicted of crimes, including rape and murder, against natives on local soil.

A “Justice for Jennifer” movement snowballs, with some demonstrators using the occasion to call for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Philippines. The latter demand is a promise in the 2016 campaign of President Rodrigo Duterte, who is later praised by Donald Trump despite (because of?) his human rights violations.

The film focuses on Jennifer's mother, known as Nanay, who had depended on her daughter for financial support; her attorney, Virginia Suarez; and journalist Meredith Talusan, a Filipina trans woman who had emigrated to the U.S. but went back to cover the case.

Jennifer, called “Jeffrey” in court and many press reports, has a sister with a gay son. Pemberton is said to be close to his own lesbian sister. Marc, Jennifer's German fiancé, expresses no problem with how she made money. Apparently he's a satisfied customer who decided to marry her.

There are a lot of facts to absorb if you're not familiar with the story, and a lot of opinions—including some disgusting social media posts in support of Pemberton. Raval gives you time to process it all by slowing down periodically to focus on people or scenery while soothing music plays.

Lest fans of Gandhi or Gandalf misread the title, “Ganda” is the Tagalog word for pretty, which is how Nanay describes Jennifer. Footage of the victim in happier days proves she's right.

Devil's Path (★★★) (Sept. 23, 7:15 p.m.)

For quite a while, *Devil's Path* is a can't look at it/can't look away kind of movie. You keep wondering whether it's going to get good; then it does and—wow! It surprised me so many times I'd feel like a hypocrite if I didn't recommend it. Noah (Stephen Twardokus) tells us he has always felt safe in the woods, but not around people. He looks like he's afraid of everything. But the part of the woods he hangs out in (filmed in California's Russian River area) has a lot of people because it's a notorious gay cruising spot. “Sometimes I like to watch,” he admits.

One day Noah sees a good-looking guy, “Patrick” (J.D. Scalzo), and sets out to meet him. Patrick pegs Noah as a “midwestern small town guy who believes in love,” while he's just there for a quickie with no strings, so no thank you: “Love is a chemical reaction of the brain. It's not real.”

After Noah's attacked by one guy and he and Patrick are chased by two others, they wind up

lost in an area where two young men recently disappeared. Their pursuers are still after them so they go deeper into the woods until they don't know the way out. Noah's content to spend the night there, but Patrick wants to get out before dark.

Got the picture? Good. Now forget it, because most of it isn't true. It's a setup that sets you up for the twists to come.

Twardokus, who wrote the screenplay with director Matthew Montgomery, gives a terrific performance, although he looks a bit older than I imagine Noah is supposed to be. Scalzo makes a fine foil for his partner's histrionic gymnastics.

Devil's Path is a little indie that could...and does.



Wild Nights with Emily.

Courtesy of Reeling

Wild Nights with Emily (★★1/2) (Sept. 23, 3 p.m.)

Molly Shannon plays the older version of the reclusive poet Emily Dickinson in somber, ghostlike fashion, leaving the real acting to Susan Ziegler as Susan, Emily's sister-in-law and lover. Adapting her own play, Madeleine Olnek incorporates wonderful bits of subtle humor while the main plot wanders in time, taking too long to explain how the narrator, Mabel (Amy Seimetz), fits in. It's not as dull as I found Terence Davies' Dickinson-centric *A Quiet Passion*, but not as original as Olnek's marvelous *Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same*.

My Big Gay Italian Wedding (★★★) (Sept. 24, 7 p.m.)

Remember when movies used to be fun? This one still is. Even with some seriousness just below the surface—well, on the surface actually—it qualifies as a screwball comedy because there's enough silliness to turn the balance in the direction of fun.

Italians Antonio (Cristiano Caccamo, who reminds me of the young John Leguizamo) and Paolo (Salvatore Esposito) are actors living in Berlin. They're in love. With each other. Antonio proposes to Paolo and invites him home for Easter to meet his parents.

The wacky characters who are mostly there for comic relief are introduced early on. The guys

share their Berlin flat with Benedetta (Diana Del Bufalo) and a new flatmate, Donato (Dino Abbrescia). Then there's "creepy" Camilla (Beatrice Arnera), who used to be Antonio's girlfriend and won't take "gay" for an answer, even though he dumped her three years ago.

Donato was caught by his wife and daughter the first time he dressed in drag, and in middle-age he's having an identity crisis. He's afraid to be left alone so he accompanies the others to scenic Civita di Bagnoregio, where Antonio's father, Roberto (Diego Abatantuono), is the mayor.

Roberto is considered a liberal on immigration, being desperate to populate the dying town any way he can; but he proves homophobic when Antonio officially comes out. Anna (Monica Guer-

ritore), the mother, knew all along. She immediately starts planning the wedding, insisting: a) It will be there in Civita; b) Paolo's mother will attend (a problem since she hasn't spoken to him since he came out three years ago); and c) her husband will conduct the ceremony. When he refuses, she throws him out of the house and lines up a monk to do it.

It's not mentioned that Italy only approved same-sex "civil unions" two years ago and still outlaws same-sex marriage. Perhaps it was thought that would change by the time the movie came out, or that it would make Italians more receptive to the idea.

It's all light and breezy, and Benedetta turns out to have vocal skills, leading to a big climactic musical number (in English, so you can sing along).

Festivals can get too serious, so a treat like *My Big Gay Italian Wedding* is especially welcome.

A Moment in the Reeds (★★★) (Sept. 25, 9:30 p.m.)

There are worse ways to pass a couple of hours than watching two hot young men fall in love. If you don't fall in love with both of them, as I did, they're different enough types that you're almost certain to at least fall for one or the other.

Leevi (Janne Puustinen) is a Finnish blond who takes a break from working on his thesis in Paris to visit Jouko (Mika Melender), his widowed fa-



A Moment in the Reeds.

Courtesy of Reeling

ther, who is preparing to sell the family's summer cottage in the Finland countryside. Jouko represents the worst aspects of many gay men's fathers. It's not clear whether he knows or just fears that Leevi is gay, but he encourages his son to date women and join the army. When he mentions that he's hired a handyman to help get the house in shape, anyone who saw *God's Own Country* in last year's Chicago International Film Festival will know exactly where we're going.

Tareq (Boodi Kabbani) is a recently-arrived Syrian refugee, an architect who's content to have found work renovating houses. Jouko hardly tries to hide his prejudice, and we see the warning light go off in his head when Tareq mentions he's more into arts than sports.

Still Jouko soon has to go off to work and stay away overnight (an underexplained and somewhat incredible aspect of the script, but who doesn't want him to leave?), setting the stage for the inevitable to happen. There are a few lengthy sex scenes, mostly shot well above the waist with just an occasional glimpse of what's going on below. A location neither man has been happy in suddenly becomes a romantic paradise.

Between the "action" scenes there's a lot of talk as the guys get to know each other and we get to know them. Tareq's description of the immigrant experience and his dilemma about what he can do for his family back in Syria should resonate with Europeans and Americans alike as each country debates how/if to help refugees.

Debuting writer-director Mikko Makela doesn't play favorites but treats both fine actors to countless screen-filling closeups and allows them to improvise some of their dialogue, which is in English except when Leevi talks to his father and helps him communicate with Tareq.

Despite the fine acting and a story that's relatable, even in a foreign setting, not everyone will be able to adjust to the film's languid pace. It's art, not sports.

Adonis (★★) (Sept. 25, 7 p.m.)
Sometimes even a professional critic has to admit he doesn't know what he's watching. I haven't seen writer-producer-director Scud's first six features, so he may be an acquired taste.

I will say Adonis is good to look at, and not only because of the more than 30 naked men who appear in much of it, giving the impression Hong Kong is a clothing optional country.

The story spans the 30 years of Yang Ke (played as an adult by Adonis He Fei), but in random order. There's a recurring scene where he's naked in the woods, surrounded by 30 men who are also naked except for face paint and masks. There are flashbacks to Ke's early life with his mother.

The actual story begins when, after his theater troupe goes bust owing him six months' wages, Ke is ripped off in a job as a naked street model but finds a friend in Wang Qiang (Justin Lim), who becomes his agent.

Pimp is more like it. He gets Ke gigs at what looks like a Cirque du Soleil gay whorehouse that gives their clients what they want, often involving S/M. The job we see the most of (another recurring scene) involves Ke tied to a cross (naked) and being gang-raped by, yes, 30 men.

Unless I misheard, Ke describes two different sexual experiences as his "first," and both occur after he's starred in a porn film. He also finds true love, but we don't know about this until he tells Wang; we only catch a couple of brief glimpses of his beloved. Adonis is not a romantic movie.

A stronger through line would help connect all the scattered bits and major set pieces, and a familiarity with Buddhist philosophy might clarify some aspects of the film involving Ke's morbid curiosity about death and fate.

Scud is scheduled to appear at the festival screening. I'd like to be a fly on the wall at the Q&A. I'd have at least 30 questions for him.



Adonis.

Courtesy of Reeling

BYP100's Charlene Carruthers on being Black, feminist and queer

BY IMANI RUPERT-GORDON

Despite the fact that, in Chicago, Charlene Carruthers and I are neighbors, the only time we can find to have this conversation is with 800 miles between us, which perfectly sums up Carruthers' schedule recently.

As her whirlwind book tour for her popular and unbelievably timely book *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* takes her all over the country, trying to find time to talk to the author and activist has become a bit of a challenge. Settling in for a conversation—her on a rainy morning in New York City, this writer holding it down in Chicago—it was actually very pleasing at how difficult it is to talk to a friend, and what that means for the impact this book is already having.

Windy City Times: How did you know that you were ready to write this book? How did you know that right now that you had something to offer the community?

Charlene Carruthers: I knew it was the time because I was right in the thick of organizing in one of the most vibrant movements we've had in decades in this country. Being a part of that I just knew that there was a lot that I needed to say to make some interventions [about] what I saw wasn't going well or what could be better or sharper. I really wanted to honor a number of the innovations that we've made, innovations we've made in BYP100 [Black Youth Project 100], innovations we've made in the broader Movement for Black Lives and it just felt like there was a lot that was being put out there about our work and a lot of it wasn't coming from us. I wanted to add to the growing chorus of people who were articulating the theory behind our work, the practice of our work in my own words. And so, I just felt like it was time. I didn't ask for permission. No one said 'you can go out and write this book now.' It was a choice. I knew, I felt in my gut that it was time to do it. I knew I was going to be moving into the next phase of my own life and as I did that I wanted to [use] *Unapologetic* as a way for me to both personally reconcile with the past and set the tone and foundation for what I do moving forward.

WCT: The book contains so much about your work from BYP100—what you've learned, mistakes you've made, what you gotten right, and what's going to inspire you and really inform your future. What is it going to be like for you to step away from BYP100?

CC: In so many ways I've begun transitioning out of this role and the book has allowed me to give myself space and other people to give me space to focus on this part of the work. It's difficult. I've been going through a whole grieving process. It's going to be redeveloping a new political identity because this has been so closely connected to my political identity for the past five years, five years that felt like 10 given the pace that we've been moving in. It's going to

Charlene Carruthers.
Photo courtesy of Carruthers



BOOKS

be different because I've never closely aligned myself with an organization the way that I've closely aligned myself with this one publically, so it's going to be an adjustment. It's also going to be an adjustment for other people who are used to looking to me for answers and I'm not the person and I'm going to redirect them [and say] 'I'm not the one. These are the people you need to talk to and to respect their leadership.'

WCT: So lastly about BYP100, what's next for them?

CC: Well BYP100 just went through about a nine-month process of developing our strategic plan and that was all member-driven. It's called *The Freedom Forecast* and we have three pillars: Organizational Capacity, Community Building and Black Political Agenda. [We're] really focusing on increasing our membership base and also engaging in politics in a way that we continue to move forward issues and not focus on candidates. And then third, deeper community building with organizations in the places that we are geographically grounded in. We have two new co-directors, Janae Bonsu and D'atra Jackson. Those two young women are going to lead our organization into the next five years. They are dynamic, disciplined and committed to this. I'm excited about all that is to come for them and the organization with them in leadership.

WCT: In your book you dedicated an entire chapter to Chicago's importance in radical Black activism. In the Chicago model [a chapter in your book] you talk about movements that shape our present movements, movements that you weren't present for, movements that you helped determine the strategy. What do you think that Chicago in particular has to teach us as organizers and activists or as aspiring organizers and activists?

CC: There's so many things to learn from Chicago. Some of that includes, what does it mean to organize in a city that the majority are actually Black and Brown folks? And people in elected office are often times Black and Brown folks. And don't always act in our best interest. So how do you actually contend with representative politics that don't necessarily result in transformation for our people? I think the other thing to learn from Chicago is what it means to double down for a campaign that takes over a decade to win, or decades to win and that people come and go, there's various entry points for people, so much changes, evolves, and to be in something for the long haul. And then, I think also to learn from Chicago is the value of cultural organizing and that we don't do anything without there being an element of culture no matter where that culture emerges from and so many different groups of people in Chicago. And I guess fourthly, people can learn from Chicago what it means to have a local movement that is both national and global in scope. Nationally connected and globally connected.

WCT: You spend time in the book discussing movement work and the importance of the Black queer feminist lens specifically as a praxis and you still cite instances of misogyny and sexual assault showing up in movement

work as well. Can you share your thoughts on restorative and transformative justice and the responsibility of movement collectives to take part in these practices?

CC: Restorative justice and transformative justice are the hot topic. What I think many people miss for so many reasons, because I think the intentions are generally good, but so many people miss the amount of time and resources it takes

to actually do the work in this way because it doesn't cost us any money to call the police. It doesn't cost us any money, personal money necessarily to ignore an issue, at least we may not think of it that way. At the same time, for us to actually deal with something, it takes time, it takes money, and it takes skill and so much of what it takes to do restorative and transformative justice work is just not easy. It requires

us to bend and flex ourselves in ways that many of us have never bent or flexed ourselves before. And so it's hard and I don't want people to think for one moment that this is the easy route. This is the route it takes us unlearning everything that most of us have been taught about how to deal with conflict, violence and harm and it's no simple feat. That's the biggest thing for me. Secondly is that if people want to, which I think people can and they should commit to this kind of work is that they literally have to make a commitment for the long haul and choose to invest resources in that work.

WCT: So what's next for you?

CC: Well there's two things. The first is, I want to start a training center for organizers and general leadership development and that's going to really focus on meeting some of the capacity needs that our movement has because we've been in a moment where we haven't had nearly as many spaces as we need to develop our leaders because our organizations don't have the capacity to do all that. We are expected to both organize everyday and provide all the trainings that are necessary for people to be effective and that's beyond the scope of what most organizations can do at the scale that we need to do it at, and so I want to help meet that capacity need. The second thing that I want to focus on is really my passion and my joy for food and cooking and I want to do my work and communicate with people about my values about the communities I'm connected to through food. I just enjoy doing that and I want to reach a much broader audience of people with something that I love and I just know good food and I want to take that to a different level because I do believe that people can be politicized over plates and over food in ways they won't necessarily be politicized by reading my book because they won't ever read it but, they'll maybe watch a show about food.

WCT: Is there anything else that you'd like us to know?

CC: I think it's really important to know how important it is for white folks to read this book and to follow the leadership of radical Black feminists. And to emphasize that this is a book for them to read and to also to take note and get more curious about following leadership of Black LGBTQ folks who are radical Black feminists.

Women & Children First will host the book launch celebration for Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements Tuesday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m. For this event, Carruthers will be joined by Barbara Ransby and Janae Bonsu for a panel discussion. This event will be held at the Logan Arts Center, 915 E. 60th St. Attendees who purchase a book with their ticket will pick up the book at the event. All ticket holders are invited to the official book release after-party. See <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3594536>.

Imani Rupert-Gordon is executive director of Affinity Community Services, based on Chicago's South Side.

BOOKS

BYP100'S Charlene Carruthers gets 'Unapologetic'

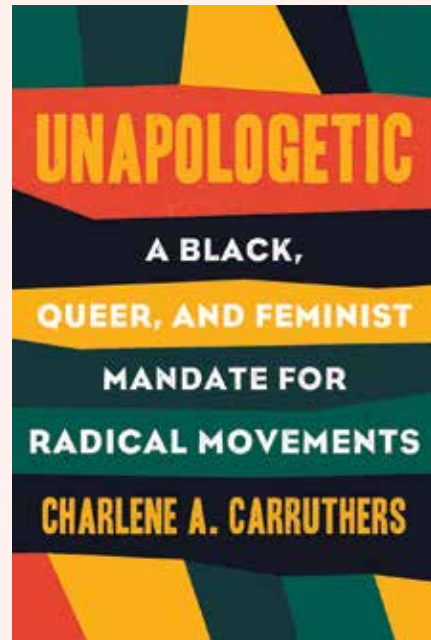
REVIEW BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

First-time author Charlene Carruthers' *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* was published in August by Beacon Press.

Carruthers is the co-founder of Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), a national organizing group that has been at the vanguard of the movement for Black lives. While the text includes lessons learned and anecdotes of key members within BYP100, it is not a full account of the organization. Instead, she shares personal experiences as case studies that serve as a guide for organizers and activists. For people who are not steeped in organizing work, this book offers an opportunity to learn about influential figures, challenges in movement spaces, and winning strategies within the movement both in Chicago and nationally. For example, Carruthers boldly writes about confronting a co-chair of the Chicago chapter accused of sexual assault and the survivor-led process that emerged.

The book argues the origins of the movement for Black lives, but it is important to situate the context in which this wave of organizing flourished. The murders of unarmed Black people by law enforcement are part of a long history of struggle. The senseless killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman was a moment of politicization. After Zimmerman's 2013 acquittal, activist Alicia Garza coined #BlackLivesMatter and created the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement with fellow organizers Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi. In *Unapologetic*, readers get insight and study from an organizer within the Black freedom movement that experienced a political landscape that included a Black U.S. president.

The election of the 45th President of the United States awakened more people's consciousness to social justice, inspiring mass mobilizations around immigration, women's rights and healthcare, to name a few. The surge and interest in civic engagement provide seasoned activists and established groups an opportunity to welcome new members into their ranks. The documentation of *Unapologetic* is an essential piece for the development of future leaders interested in engaging in movement work



through a Black queer feminist framework.

Carruthers contribution is an invitation for social movements to embrace a culture of comprehensive political education and accountability. "Anyone committed to collective liberation must acknowledge ignorance," she writes. Adding that all people concerned with justice must seek learning opportunities about issues that do not directly affect or impact them.

Throughout the book, Carruthers asks, what is your self-interest in the liberation of people who are marginalized? The book is a reflective piece about what brings people to the work in the first place. She confirms that our stake in the work is what invigorates us for the long haul. *Unapologetic* is a promotion of the rich body of work by Black scholars, artists and writers that speak to systemic oppression. If Carruthers accomplishes her goal, *Unapologetic* will inspire a renaissance of movement stories by some of today's most prominent activists and organizers from various movements.

Women & Children First will host the book launch celebration for Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements Tuesday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m. For this event, Carruthers will be joined by Barbara Ransby and Janae Bonsu for a panel discussion. This event will be held at the Logan Arts Center, 915 E. 60th St. Attendees who purchase a book with their ticket will pick up the book at the event. All ticket holders are invited to the official book release after-party. See <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3594536>.

Lise Weil reading Sept. 29 at Barbara's

Lise Weil will be reading from and discussing her new memoir, *In Search of Pure Lust*, on Saturday, Sept. 29, at 4 p.m. at Barbara's Bookstore, 111 N. State St.

In Search of Pure Lust is a chronicle of Weil's immersion in the lesbian feminism of the 1970s and '80s. Weil also takes the reader through a series of torrid relationships that tend to mirror the tumultuous political currents of the times—until a dive into Zen practice begins to turn things around for her.



Weil is an award-winning editor and translator. Born and raised in Chicago, she moved to Montreal in 1990.

See <https://www.barbarasbookstore.com/>.

Chelsea Clinton at W&CF Oct. 21

Former First Daughter Chelsea Clinton will be at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., on Sunday, Oct. 21, at 1 p.m. to sign copies of a book for kids entitled *START NOW! You Can Make a Difference*.

In the book, aimed at children 7 and older, Clinton breaks down the concepts of health, hunger, climate change, endangered species and bullying so that readers can understand the world around them, as well as how they can make a difference in their own lives, their communities, and the world at large.

Clinton is also the author of the best-selling picture book *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*.

Visit <https://chelseaclintonchicago.brownpapertickets.com/>.

Checking out the fall literary scene

BY KELSEY HOFF

Book lovers have a lot to look forward to this fall; literary festivals will bring small presses and authors from all over the country to Chicago.

The annual Chicago Lit Crawl brings readings, presentations and performances to Andersonville Saturday, Sept. 22, and the Chicago Book Expo returns to Columbia College Chicago Monday, Oct. 1. Pilsen Community Books hosts their first annual fair Oct. 5-7. Volumes Bookcafe celebrates famous Chicago-born poet Shel Silverstein's birthday Tuesday, Sept. 25 with a Shel-a-bration featuring magicians, musicians, poets and performers.

2018 has been a great year for Chicago authors, and fall releases and events will keep the literary momentum going.

Poet Eve Ewing releases her nonfiction book *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* in October with a launch party Thursday, Oct. 18 at the Chicago Teachers Union. The book covers the 2013 closing of 53 Bronzeville schools and its aftermath.

Julian Randall's *Refuse*, winner of the 2017 Cave Canem Poetry Prize, navigates the mythos of Blackness, Latinidad, family and sexuality during the Obama administration. Randall will discuss his forthcoming book with Tara Betts at Seminary Co-Op in Hyde Park Friday, Sept. 21. *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* by Charlene Carruthers launches Tuesday, Sept. 25 in the Screening Room at the Logan Arts Center; the event includes a reading, book-signing and panel discussion with special guests Barbara Ransby and Janae Bonsu.

Haymarket Books is releasing three books by

Chicago poets: H. Melt's *On My Way To Liberation*, Britteney Black Rose Kapri's *Black Queer Hoe* and Jose Olivarez's *Citizen Illegal*.

Women & Children First will host many of fall's most exciting book launches, including a joint reading by Kapri and Olivarez Friday, Oct. 5.



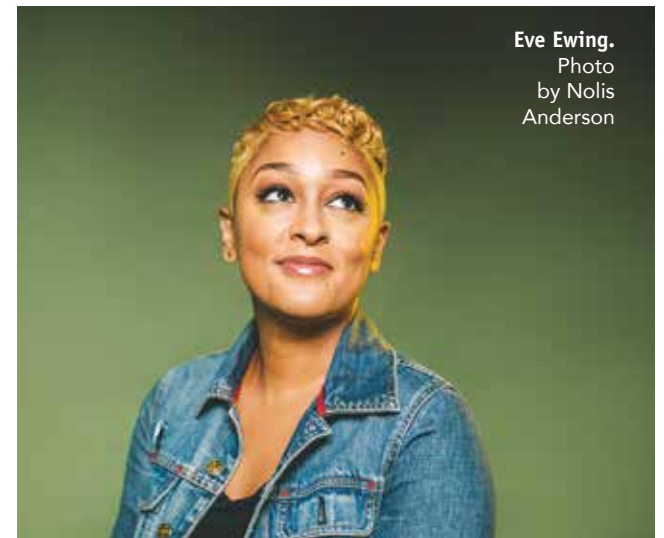
Kristiana Rae Colon.
PR photo

Daniel K. Hertz will read from his new book *The Battle of Lincoln Park: Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Chicago* Friday, Oct. 19. Anne Balay's *Semi Queer: Inside the World of Gay, Trans, and Black Truck Drivers* launches with a reading Friday, Sept. 28. Photographer Jess T. Dugan and Vanessa Fabbre, social worker and assistant professor at Washington University, will be present for a panel discussion of their book *To Survive*

BOOKS

on *This Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults*, along with participants Gloria Allen, Mickey Mahoney and Alexis Martinez on Sunday, Sept. 30. *Night Moves* by Jessica Hopper debuts on Thursday, Sept. 20; this memoir reconstructed from journal entries of a Chicago DJ circa 2004-2009 reflects on Hopper's beginnings as a rock critic.

Oct. 13-20, the Lit & Luz Festival brings together renowned authors and visual artists from



Eve Ewing.
Photo
by Nolis
Anderson

Chicago and Mexico City in cultural exchange and conversation with readings, discussions, artist talks and performances. The Poetry Foundation will host an event during the Lit & Luz Festival Wednesday, Oct. 17, and MAKE Literary Productions will host a bilingual conversation between the two featured Mexican authors Fernanda Melchor and Julián Herbert at The Hideout Friday, Oct. 19.

Literary exhibits allow bookworms to interact with their favorite reads in new ways: A Johnson Publishing Story continues through Sept. 30 at Stony Island Arts Bank, featuring more than 15,000 items preserved from the Johnson Publishing Company. Founded in Chicago in 1942, it was best known for periodicals *Ebony* and *Jet*,

which helped define and popularize a Black aesthetic and identity around the globe.

In November, The American Writers Museum will open a temporary exhibit featuring Bob Dylan in addition to the current exhibit, Frederick Douglass: *Agitator*, which is open through December. The Dylan exhibit will focus on his enduring influence on American culture, music and writing, as well as his historic Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016. A Fender electric guitar that he played at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 will be on display, and a series of intimate events featuring current singer/songwriters in genres from hip-hop to folk begins in September.

Readings around the city will highlight Chicago's writers: Local Author Night at The Book Cellar in Lincoln Square features Rebecca Harwell, Keith O'Brien, Frances de Pontes Peebles and Kathleen Rooney on Wed., Sept. 19. C. Riley Snorton and Joshua Chambers-Letson will read from their books *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* and *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life at Women & Children First* on Wed., Oct. 3. Boston author Robert W. Fieseler will visit Unabridged Bookstore for a conversation with Owen Keehnen regarding his book *Tinderbox: The Untold Story of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation* on Wed., Oct. 10.

Service to the Dance Field Award.

Single tickets are \$250 each, and tables for 10 guests are \$2,500; visit seechicagodance.com/gala-0 or call 312-846-6357.

See Chicago Dance gala Sept. 25

See Chicago Dance (SCD)—the dance industry's nonprofit marketing and advocacy organization—will host its fourth annual gala Tuesday, Sept. 25, 6 -10 p.m., at City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St.

The event will celebrate Chicago's thriving dance community and honors two individuals who have been important to its success. Shirley Mordine, founder and artistic director of Mordine & Co. Dance Theater, will receive the Legacy Award recognizing her artistic leadership; and Angelique Power, president of the Field Foundation of Illinois, will receive the Distinguished

Galesburg to host 'One State Together'

The Illinois Arts Council Agency (IACA) and Arts Alliance Illinois announced that the next One State Together in the Arts conference will be held in Galesburg, Illinois, on Oct. 22-23.

Additional pre-conference events for the Illinois Local Arts Network on Oct. 21 will kick off the 10th occasion of this statewide convening for the arts, culture and creativity.

See OneStateIllinois.com.

Activism meet-ups,
personal book recommendations,
weekly events, Kids Storytime, and more!
There are so many reasons to support
Chicago's only feminist bookstore.



**WOMEN &
CHILDREN FIRST**

5233 N. CLARK
CHICAGO, IL 60640
(773) 769-9299

womenandchildrenfirst.com



Writer/performer R.C. Riley on queer identity, #MeToo

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Writer and performer R. C. Riley's journey toward full acceptance of her queer woman identity has gone through many stages and now she is embracing that label in a big way. That journey was painful for Riley because many people in her world did not recognize her sexual orientation.

"Years ago, I dated women and even had a wedding ceremony in 2004 before marriage equality was codified into law," said Riley. "After

that relationship ended, everyone in my world acted as though it never even existed, that she was a non-factor in my world. No one asked how I was doing, if I missed her, nothing. So instead of forcing others to recognize how sad and lonely I was I went silent and started dating men.

"Over time, withholding my true self from myself became more and more challenging. This time I will not give anyone an opportunity to assume I am straight, or ignore the fact that I am attracted to women and was born this way. I

decided to come back out and with a bang now, because I am tired of being silent about my lived experiences."

Recently, Riley has performed her solo show, *Wrong Way Journey*, on college campuses and local theaters, including Steppenwolf. She explained that the show is about her life from high school through her 2004 wedding ceremony and how she never felt like she belonged anywhere.

Riley said the show includes hilarious and angry conversations with God. She explained that despite the fact that parts of the faith community has shunned her she still has faith in and a relationship with God.

The show also delves into the time when Riley was raped and the after-effects, including blaming herself and trying to hurt herself.

"When I was in college, a 'friend' from high school came to visit me and—instead of going to the movies and dinner—he raped me," said Riley. "It was as horrific for me as that sentence sounds. While I do not share his name, we do share many Facebook friends, so I assume that

BOOKS

when one of our mutual Facebook friends posts or likes one of my events, where I tell what he did to me his stomach probably groans. On the other hand, maybe it does not even phase him at all. Frankly, I do not care. What I care about is sharing my story so that other people will know that no matter who they love or how they love, God loves them and it is not their fault."

Riley has always loved to read and write, so becoming a performer came naturally to her. Initially, she wanted to be neurosurgeon. However, when she got to Northwestern University she was weeded out of chemistry, so she switched to psychology. She worked at the University of Chicago Hospital in the Psychiatry department right after graduation and stayed there for six years.

"I used to tell one of my co-workers at the hospital all of my crazy life stories and he would crack up at the way I was telling the stories," said Riley. "One day he said, you should put those stories on stage, or make them into a movie. His comment never left my mind. Journaling about being a sexual assault survivor as a part of my therapy also helped me realize I had a lot to say and this led me to becoming a performer."

Riley's work has been recognized by Chicago's ABC and NBC news outlets.

"I thought I would be nervous but walking around downtown with NBC's LeAnn Trotter was a lot of fun," said Riley. "I was also asked to perform snippets of my solo show during that interview. The ABC interview with Stacey Baca was live, which was a completely different feel but still a positive experience. Working with NBC Chicago's Marion Brooks on the Survivor's Project (<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/More-Come-Forward-to-Share-Their-Stories-in-NBC-5s-Survivors-Project-486744861.html>) was more emotional, however, because it was about the details of the assault and how it affected me."

When Riley is not performing, she works in performance improvement at Rush University Medical Center.

Regarding the group whose panel she will be moderating Sept. 20, Riley said, "Out in Tech is a non-profit organization with a focus on offering activities/events/panel discussions with LGBTQ+ community and leaders in the technology industry."

Riley will be moderating an Out in Tech technology and travel panel discussion Sept. 20, 6:30-9 p.m., at Chicago's Orbitz offices, 500 W. Madison St. Suite 700. The event is free and for people 21 and over. To RSVP, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/out-in-tech-chicago-travel-tech-tickets-49512823187>.

On Tuesday, Oct. 30, at 7:30 p.m., Riley will be appearing at Volume Book Cafe's monthly storytelling event, Am I Man Enough?; visit <https://www.rcrileyempowers.com/>.



R.C. Riley.
Photo by Ty Keith L. Nelson



@windycitytimes



/windycitymediagroup



@windycitytimes

www.windycitymediagroup.com



Sykes, Rippon speak at Chicago House event

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Being one's "authentic self" was the theme as comedian Wanda Sykes and athlete Adam Rippon headlined Chicago House's 2018 Speaker Series and Luncheon entry on Sept. 14 at the Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

Chris Hush of NBC-5 emceed and moderated the event, and discussed his decision to be out of the closet in his professional life. As a gay reporter in Florida, he was deeply affected by the 2016 shootings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, which he covered for three months.

"When I got to Chicago, I decided to break down those walls," Hush said.

Hush spoke with Sykes and Rippon about the challenges they faced about being out in show business and figure-skating, respectively. Sykes said that, when it came time to make a decision about whether to let the world know she was a lesbian, "I was willing to roll the dice, go ahead, and see what happens."

Rippon said that he was afraid of being perceived as weak, but ultimately decided he could never feel strong if he could

never be willing to show the world every part of himself. He added that his mother for a time encouraged him to not come out publicly; she'd lost many friends to HIV/AIDS and had difficulty reconciling those memories with her son's sexuality.

He added, however, that, "After I came out, my mom has been my number one and biggest supporter."

Sykes spoke about difficulties with her family as well: "Their reaction is what made me more hesitant to come out to the public. ... [But] what we do in our own community is, if our own family turns against you, you build your own family."

Chicago House CEO Scott Ammarell, in opening remarks, spoke about slight changes the organization had made to its logo and identifying colors, which are now bolder. He also discussed demonstrations occurring at the Chicago Hilton and other hotels around the city that day. He said that the decision to go ahead with the luncheon was not meant as a commentary on the labor issues, and encouraged Hilton management to resolve its issues with its workers.

Attorneys/activists Nabeela Rasheed and Ray Koenig also spoke at the gathering.



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)



LGBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

aquafest

cruises
from
\$699 pp

Mediterranean

June 29, 2019

from
\$939pp

7-day Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona on MSC Seaview

GAY PRIDE - Rhine River Cruise

July 27, 2019

from
\$1499

7-Night Rhine Cruise CELEBRATE GAY PRIDE POST CRUISE IN AMSTERDAM

Canada - New England

October 8, 2019

from
\$699pp

10-Night Canada Cruise on MSC Meraviglia

Halloween Western Caribbean Cruise

October 27th - November 3, 2019

from
\$899pp

FREE drinks & Tips

18th Annual Halloween Western Caribbean on Norwegian Breakaway

African Safari

November 30, 2019

from
\$4899pp

10-Night African Safari with A&K

(800) 592-9058 - AquafestCruises.com

Blythe Baird: Young and hungry



Blythe Baird.
All photos courtesy of Baird, used with permission

BY ANA SERNA

Blythe Baird, a “mostly lesbian” author, spoken word performer and unstoppable creative force, is the poster child for successful, young artists. Originally from Palatine, a northwestern suburb of Chicago, Baird is currently living in St. Paul, Minn. On top of performing spoken word, she teaches introductory spoken word and poetry slam classes for children ages 13-17 in Minneapolis. She also hosts online editing sessions with writers.

Baird works on other artistic ventures, such as acting, “just for fun” but “poetry is my main jam,” said Baird. She has acted in short films, as well as a documentary directed by Abby Thompson, a student she knew from her time at Hamline University in St. Paul. Her collaboration with Thompson led to *The Fat Girl Who Got Skinny* (2015), an award-winning short film that Thompson directed, based on a poem of the same name by Baird.

“I like poetry better [than acting] because I was in control of the narrative I was pushing,” said Baird. “I wanted to have authorship over the stories that I was telling and I knew that I had stories to tell.”

Button Poetry is publishing her second book, *If My Body Could Speak* (2018), which will be available “very soon,” according to Baird. She said the release date has been set for a time in the very near future, but has not been made public yet. Baird plans to tour her book nationally shortly after the release.

Baird’s previous book, *Give Me a God I Can Relate To* (2015), is out of print after “breaking up with her publisher” and the only copies remaining are selling for upwards of \$150-\$200 online from third-party sellers.

“What I wanted to do with [If My Body Could Speak] is combine the best work from [Give Me a God I Can Relate To] since it’s not available now and put in new work that I’ve been doing,” said Baird. Many of her poems have gained popularity across Button Poetry and will be included in the upcoming book. They were left out of *Give Me a*

God I Can Relate To because Baird was only 18 when it was published, “...so those were more high school,” she says. As for her current work, Baird simply says she is proud of her love.

“I feel [love] is a very soft thing in a very sharp world. I have gotten so much joy out of my relationships with women and non-binary people,” said Baird. “I think because my [sexuality] is such an integral part of my identity, it’s part of the lens that I write all my poems from.”

“I felt like a fish out of water, just trying to figure out this world,” said Baird about coming out as lesbian during the end of her high school experience. Since coming out, other poets have guided her on her journey as a young, queer writer. Those women were Sierra DeMulder and Siaara Freeman.

DeMulder was Baird’s camp counselor at Slam Camp, a youth summer performance poetry intensive workshop in Fort Lauderdale. “I started writing because I saw Sierra DeMulder perform and I was really impacted by her performance. I was very moved and felt so many things,” said Baird of the first time she saw her now-mentor perform spoken word. “I was very struck that a poem could elicit such a tangible emotion from me. I was, like, ‘I want to do that.’”

“There are so few spaces where teenage girls are allowed to feel powerful. I was allowed to go up there and be unapologetic in my power,” said Baird, recalling what first drew her to spoken word performance. “I didn’t care about a lot of things. Then when I started writing, everything mattered because I was going to write about it. Things began to carry more weight for me and I became more observant,” said Baird. According to her, creative writing transformed a part of her that was apathetic before.

“Ever since then, she’s been an extreme guide to me,” said Baird. She calls DeMulder her mentor, as she goes to her for anything, from business advice to emotional support. “She just moved back to Minnesota and lives around the corner from me.”

Similarly, Baird first met Freeman at Pink Door, a small writer’s retreat that has historically at-

POETRY/SPOKEN WORD

tracted some of the more powerful names in spoken word. “I felt really supported ... by the older people in poetry during my time there. I met Siaara and we just really clicked.” Freeman is also lesbian and has taken Baird under her wing. DeMulder and Freeman’s support includes coaching on writing, performing and holding an audience—something invaluable to a young artist.

“I still learn so much from them every day,” said Baird. “I was a fan before I was a friend, so it’s really cool to be able to have such a close relationship with someone that I looked up to so much.”

Throughout her growth as a writer, Baird seems to be following in her mentors’ footsteps. “Both of them are like my poetry big sisters. I think I still would have accomplished things without them but with their support and guidance I felt very confident in my own power,” said Baird. “When I was younger a lot of people my age in high school didn’t feel like they could do professional things when they were teenagers. My mentors got me out of that mindset. You can be doing all this now. You don’t have to wait until you’re an adult to be a writer. You can do this hustle right now.”

“I feel very driven to let young people know that they are powerful, capable and significant ... that their voice is worth listening to and their stories are worth telling,” says Baird. “A lot of times, it’s hard for a young person to feel that their experiences mean something and I think that I always want to spread the message that your voice does matter.”



Poetry in the air: Chicago poetry events Fall 2018

BY KELSEY HOFF

This fall, “local author” shelves of Chicago’s indie bookstores will be flooded with titles that “disturb the comfortable and comfort the disturbed,” as the old adage says art should.

In almost all of these new works, lived experiences are taken apart and examined to complicate notions of gender, sexuality, race, class and immigration, concerned with both identity and politics, often finding them inseparable.

September brings three new collections from Chicago press Haymarket Books, including *On My Way To Liberation* by H. Melt, *Black Queer Hoe* by Britteney Black Rose Kapri and *Citizen Illegal* by Jose Olivarez. Kapri and Olivarez will read from their new books at Women & Children First Friday, Oct. 5. Chicago Poet Julian Randall won the 2017 Cave Canem Poetry Prize with his collection *Refuse*, which he will discuss with Tara Betts at Seminary Co-op Friday, Sept. 21. Jacob Saenz will be joined by Fred Sasaki and Krista Franklin at his launch and reading for *Throwing the Crown*; Franklin also has a forthcoming title, *Under the Knife*, from Chicago’s Candor Arts. Poets Tara Betts, T. Clutch Fleischmann and Kenyatta Rogers will read with Ruben Quesada Thursday, Nov. 15 at his launch of *Revelations* at Unabridged Bookstore.

Poetry is not limited to the page: events, exhibits and performances bring verse to surprising locations all over the city. Fall’s largest poetry event by far, 10,000 Poets for Change, takes over literary spaces nationwide with readings promoting peace, sustainability and justice. A searchable database on the 100TPC blog contains information on local events. Though it’s not usually a competitive sport, The Book Cellar will host a Poetry Pentathlon Saturday, Sept. 22 with five events including “The Signature Poem” and “The Rant.”

Dancers put poetry in motion in the annual Body Passages Series at Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble. This year, 11 poets and dancers selected for the 10-month Artist-in-Residency program were paired into five groups to collaborate and develop their own artist-led project centered around the theme of “activation.” The culminating performances will take place Friday, Oct. 12

Turn to page 43

POETRY from page 42

and Saturday, Oct. 13.

A new exhibit opens at The Poetry Foundation Friday, Sept. 28; visual artist and poet Krista Franklin's "... to take root among the stars" maps Afrofuturist and AfroSurrealist thought on handmade paper. Franklin will perform at the opening along with Aricka Foreman, Kara Jackson and Jamila Woods, with music by DJ Rae Char-donnay. The exhibit will be open through Friday, Dec. 21.



Jose Olivarez.
Photo by Nick Ward



Julian Randall.

Photo by Nicholas Nichols

At the Lit & Luz Festival Oct. 13-20, poets, writers and visual artists from Chicago and Mexico City collaborate in cultural exchange and conversation with readings, discussions, artist talks and performances. The Poetry Foundation will host an event during the festival Wednesday, Oct. 17, and MAKE Literary Productions will host a bilingual conversation between the two featured Mexican authors Fernanda Melchor and Julián Herbert at The Hideout Friday, Oct. 19. Other events will be posted on the Lit & Luz website.

This November, the American Writers Museum will open a temporary exhibit all about a famous singer/songwriter to whom many American poets trace their lyrical sensibilities. The Bob Dylan exhibit will focus on his enduring influence on American culture, music and writing, as well as his selection for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016. A Fender electric guitar that Dylan played at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 will be on display, and a series of intimate events featuring current singer/songwriters in genres from hip-hop to folk begins in September.

Some special readings this fall provide rare chances to see visiting poets. The Poetry Foundation is hosting three exciting Poetry Off the Shelf readings during the Chicago Humanities Festival in November, beginning with Kazim Ali at Gallery Guichard Friday, Nov. 2 and Jos Charles at Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts Saturday, Nov. 3. United States Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey reads the next weekend Saturday, Nov. 10 at First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple. No. 1 New York Times bestselling author and illustrator Rupi Kaur will perform at The Chicago Theater Monday, Oct. 1.

Book festivals give Chicago readers another opportunity to mingle with their favorite poets and presses. Lit Crawl Chicago always features great poetry readings at Andersonville hot spots; this year's crawl takes place Saturday, Sept. 22. Chicago-area small presses congregate at the Chicago Book Expo at Columbia College Monday, Oct. 1.

BOOK REVIEW

Perfectly Clear
Author: Michelle LeClair,
with Robin Gaby Fisher
\$27; Berkley; 289 pages
REVIEW BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Michelle LeClair is an openly queer Scientologist who thought she could have it all.

She was very, very wrong.

Perfectly Clear, LeClair's memoir about an adult life in Scientology followed by a life-changing revelation – that she was in love with another woman – opens with a raid. For years since leaving the church (as she refers to it), LeClair, her four young children and her partner have been stalked in the grocery store, outside of their schools and offices. In the prologue, the Los Angeles Police Department is invading LeClair's home in the middle of the night, bearing a search warrant, terrifying her and her family.

Yes, Scientology's reach extends to law enforcement.

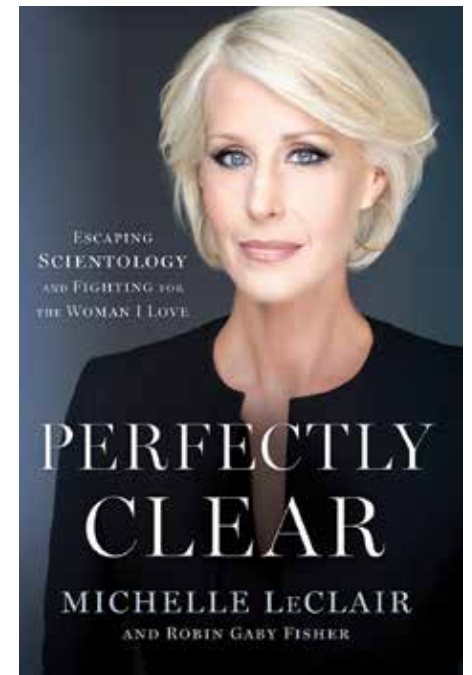
With co-writer and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Robin Gaby Fisher, LeClair chronicles her relationship with perhaps the most confounding "religion" in modern history. As an 18-year-old Los Angeles transplant by way of Oklahoma, she took a summer job as a saleswoman for a training facility that turned out to double as a Scientology recruitment facility. Young Michelle was pretty, intelligent and had a head for business: looking back, she reflects, she was a ripe candidate for Scientology from day one.

The only hiccup? Back in high school, Michelle once fooled around with another girl.

Scientologists are notoriously homophobic. As an "ethics officer" in the church explains to Michelle, "[h]omosexuals get sick easily. They get AIDS. They cannot procreate. Many have committed crimes of sexual deviance. You don't know one because they hide their crimes. Is that the group you want to be a part of?" Of course, a terrified teenage Michelle says no.

This brief and youthful tryst would haunt Michelle for decades during Scientology's notorious "auditing" sessions, during which church members must plunge the depths of their past memories. If this sounds like therapy, it isn't: first, Scientologists are notoriously anti-analysis, and second, these auditing sessions (often conducted by young, inexperienced church members) are meticulously recorded and filed. It's speculated in documentaries like *Going Clear* that famous Scientologists such as John Travolta have ultimately stayed with the church because of the dark secrets they have spilled during auditing sessions.

But Michelle's secrets would only get darker. After attaining the status of Clear (which Scientologists define as free of the "reactive mind", and which comes with a price of thousands of dollars of courses and auditing sessions), Michelle becomes the unofficial "poster girl" of the church. She also endures an abusive marriage to her teenage sweetheart, and grows more terrified as her small family grows. When contemplating divorce, Michelle discovers she's pregnant for the third time. But when she turns to her beloved church for help, Michelle is subject to a litany of



double standards – and there's that dirty little homosexuality secret again. Michelle then meets and connects with a wealthy, intelligent music producer – who happens to be a woman – and her persecution really begins.

LeClair, who raised millions of dollars for Scientology's charity group Youth for Human Rights International, deftly exposes the church's blatant money grab from its members – often encouraging broke parishioners to open new credit cards – as well as its nasty treatment of ex-members, or SPs (Suppressive Persons). She tells of her own mother, who initially joined the church through a corporate recruitment program and ends up in Sea Org, the highly prestigious Scientology organization that forces its members to live in squalor and do menial tasks for a fifty dollar stipend per week. And she tells in vivid detail of the church's far-reaching influence, especially when it comes to intimidating journalists searching for the truth and fellow outspoken ex-members such as film director Paul Haggis (who left the church after his lesbian daughter was repeatedly mistreated).

For those like me, who are endlessly fascinated by this cult of the heart, mind and wallet, some of LeClair's details aren't new. You can't read a Wikipedia article on Scientology without learning about e-meters, silent births and Tom Cruise. What makes *Perfectly Clear* unique is its queer perspective. Even Haggis, one of the first celebrity ex-members to speak out against the church, can't give a personal account of what its like to be in a forbidden relationship as a Scientologist. LeClair can, and LeClair does. Even those who've read and seen *Going Clear*, or are familiar with Leah Remini's various anti-Scientology outlets, will be shocked by LeClair's experiences and Scientology's influence on powerful LA organizations such as the police and the district attorney's office.

Though LeClair's copious exclamation points get a little old, *Perfectly Clear* is a fast, fascinating read from the perspective of a gay Scientologist who survived – but just barely.

Off the beaten path: From steelworks to truckers, Anne Balay writes about LGBTQI lives

BY KELSEY HOFF

Anne Balay was working as an assistant professor in 2014 when her book on queer Indiana steel mill workers *Steel Closets* was published. When she wasn't offered tenure, Balay decided to use the opportunity to do something she had always wanted to do: drive an 18-wheeler. Balay only drove for a brief time before she was offered another professorship, but her foray into trucking coincided with an enormous increase in LGBTQI and Black truck drivers. Her new book *Semi Queer* studies this phenomenon in terms of gender, race, economics and history.

"Any trucker space you go to there's lesbians, there's gay men, there's trans people ... they're everywhere and they're out and they're happy to talk about it. That's one of the reasons I wanted to write about it; it came as such a shock to me after my steel mill experience," said Balay.

The LGBT steel mill workers she sought out for *Steel Closets* kept their identities hidden to avoid violence and harassment at work, but Balay found a very different culture among truck drivers, who were eager to share their experiences in a job that fit their identities. Balay noted that 10 of the drivers she interviewed were intersex, and she did not have to look hard to find them.

"Intersex narrators that I talked to felt always that they were shifting between identities and never wanted to park somewhere. You can hear the language of how they describe their identity is mirrored by the process of what trucking is."

From the beginning, Balay's goal in searching out LGBTQI and African American truckers was to tell real working-class people's stories in great detail, calling attention to the way Americans make policy and activism decisions according to stereotypes about the working class that are known to be false.

"There are two stereotypes that are both completely inaccurate, and my book tries to disprove both of them at the same time in a complicated way. The two stereotypes are that truckers and other working-class people are politically conservative, anti-gay, anti-feminist, just kind of old school in general about social issues, and that they're white The other thing I want to challenge is that queer people are economically prosperous: that assumption that queer people are white male architects living in New York who own Subarus. That's not the majority of the queer population."

A lot of the phenomena Balay found happening in the LGBT trucking world, however, led to more questions than answers. For instance, why did the LGBT truckers she spoke with so frequently support Trump?

"One of the reasons that truckers like Trump [and] hate Democrats is that Democratic con-

gresses and Democratic presidents have done all of this. ... The absolute sellout of the American working class was done by Democratic presidents," Balay claims.

As in many other industries, Balay explains, the Federal Department of Transportation shifted from regulating the industry to regulating people as a result of Democratic policies. During 14-hour days on the job, she quickly discovered worsening working conditions and increasing surveillance, and expanded her study to inquire if this phenomenon is related to the field's sudden explosion in diversity. It proved more difficult to get other drivers to talk about these problems than the rewards.

"They're proud of it. ... They hate to be perceived as whiners, [but] they will call their dispatcher and say 'I am bleeding from an open wound' and the dispatcher will say 'you have to get your freight in on time. You can go to the ER after you deliver your freight.' It's routine. And they have to pay to clean the blood out of the cab."

Semi Queer is broken down into "Rolling" and "Stopping" chapters, both of which describe practical aspects of the job and serve as apt metaphors for the workers' experiences. Truckers are alone, doing the fulfilling part of their job while rolling, but stopping usually means losing money and almost always means interacting with other people.

Truckers spend hours "stopped" waiting for shippers to load their trucks, and they lose time during snow storms and equipment malfunctions. "Detention time" is unpaid in every state except California, and a federal bill called The Denham Amendment is currently being debated, which would make paid detention time illegal. These regulations are handled by the Department of Transportation rather than the Department of Labor, so truckers do not have the same protections as workers in other industries.

"The clincher for me is: the rules of when truckers can drive are suspended whenever it's at the convenience of the customer. It has nothing to do with safety or trucking safety."

Balay gives the example that just before the Fourth of July, truckers are allowed to drive unlimited hours so fireworks will arrive on time. While limits on driving hours are supposedly put in place for the drivers' safety, these regulations are suspended, allowing the same drivers to carry loads of explosives all over the country sleep deprived and hungry, making conditions even more dangerous. Accidents are the most dangerous form of "stopping." Even drivers that are never involved in an accident see a lot of people die, and they are expected to get right back in their trucks and keep driving.

"They are considered disposable machines, and

they don't receive any maintenance or support from anyone," she said.

The "Rolling" chapters in *Semi Queer* capture the exceptional fit queer truckers have found behind the wheel, which they sacrifice their personal safety to enjoy.

"The truckers have these stories of how it feels to be out there, criss-crossing the country, tied to that incredible power source, yet totally invisible. Because even though trucks are everywhere and enormous, we don't see them. There's a way that that fits with queer and trans and immigrant identities in really kind of hard-to-unpack ways, but I spend a lot of time in the book talking about psychic fits between the job and queer-

BOOKS

ness," Balay said.

Oftentimes truckers see the practical need for the items they are hauling when they arrive to load and unload.

"One of my friends just delivered a whole load of food to the firefighters in California and like drove up to them and unloaded it. And there's just this feeling that like the world would not keep turning if you stopped turning your wheels."

In terms of future projects, Balay is thinking about the stories sex workers have to tell.

"I ran into a lot of people who do sex work when I was at truck stops. There's new legislation that makes sex work more dangerous right now, and I want to think about that as another way that the government and queer activism, and in this case feminist activism are making choices that harm poor people and queer people."

Balay's book launch for *Semi Queer* is at Chicago's Women & Children First Books Friday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m. She is also reading in Indiana the same weekend, and then in New York and Philadelphia, where she lives.



Anne Balay.
Photo by Riva Lehrer



Left: The Chicago Model took over 20 years to build and is an updated mini version of the city. Right: Chicago Alderman Brendan Reilly (42nd Ward), Lynn Osmond, Rahm Emanuel, Gordon Gill and John Pintozi cut the ribbon on the new Chicago Architecture Center.

Photos by Ariel Parrella-Aureli

Chicago's leading architecture space re-opens as the Chicago Architecture Center

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Walking into the new architecture center downtown can at first be overwhelming.

A futuristic map of the world with tall buildings and what the future of Chicago might look like grabs one's attention—with a deep blue sea and population numbers for 2050 floating next to building dimensions.

Scale models of famous skyscrapers from Chicago and globally sit on the other side of the wall, showcasing the tallest buildings in the world. It's part of the "Building Tall" inaugural exhibit in the new Drake Family Skyscraper Gallery, which is just one of the new features of The Chicago Architecture Center, 111 E. Wacker Drive. The CAC was formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation. It opened to the public Aug. 31 after a ribbon-cutting ceremony Aug. 29.

The 20,000 square-foot center is two floors of remodeled space, three galleries, a classroom, a lecture hall and a gift shop. The building was designed by the world-famous firm Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture and overlooks a plethora of some of Chicago's iconic buildings—the Wrigley Building, the Tribune Tower and Marina City. Its opening marks a new, advanced beginning for people to learn about Chicago's strong architectural history, present and future.

Lynn Osmond, CAC's CEO and president, wants the new center to represent the future of Chicago and be a place for youth, community and culture to coalesce. She said the new home for Chicago's

architecture scene will enable the CAC to offer valuable experiences to visitors and students and engage them in new ways of learning about the city's architecture and design history.

"When you are talking about a city in a built environment, we certainly embrace Chicago's architectural legacy but also look at the future and how we continue being the city of architecture," Osmond said. "We never want to be antiquated because Chicago's history is one of innovation and we want to encourage our architects but also the children of tomorrow to continue to innovate."

Osmond said the industry does not have many female architects but that CAC's program called Girls Build is trying to change that. It gives young girls the critical skills so they are encouraged to go into the design field. The Skyscraper Gallery also features two leading women architects: Zaha Hadid, whose buildings are in Soho, China and Jeanne Gang, who is from Illinois.

"We wanted to show there is room both for women and people of color in this profession," she said. And that encompasses the LGBTQ community as well.

"What is wonderful about the design community is that the LGBTQ community really [is] central of it—so many of our designers that we work with are part of that community and I encourage that," she said.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel is a big supporter of the CAC and helped cut the ribbon. He shared his appreciation of the space and called architecture

ARCHITECTURE

Chicago's family jewels—jewels that unite the city and the 140 languages spoken in the Chicago Public Schools.

"The world has a lot of forces tearing us apart but design, architecture and conversation can create a common understanding and brings us together," Emanuel said.

He added that architecture can be a humanitarian force and the city's skyline is for everyone—a student in Roseland can call it home just as a student in Ravenswood can.

"Both children can say, that's my home, that's my city," he said.

One of the galleries accommodates perhaps one of the most dramatic, detailed structures in all of the CAC: The Chicago Model, housed in the appropriately-fitting gallery, The Chicago Gallery. The 3D printed model of the city spans more than 800 square feet and took about 20 years to build, said Hugh Welsh, president of Royal DSM North America, the science-based company who built the model.

"You can imagine how much joy it creates to replicate the city you love and bring your children [and] grandchildren here and show them not only what you do but the impact you have on a

place like this," Welsh said.

He said the model originally debuted in 2006 as part of Chicago's Centennial Celebration and since then has been updated yearly to include new buildings. It encompasses 630 city blocks and 4,250 buildings. As new buildings are created or old ones are taken down, the model is updated to reflect that, Welsh said, noting that the project has logged thousands of hours in creating the material—stereolithography resins—and called it a labor of love. Each 3D structure takes about one hour and 23 minutes to print, though it depends on its size. For example, the Railway Exchange Building took 20 hours to print.

"The remarkable engineers that work for our company take great pride and pleasure in being part of this project and as DSM continues to evolve, so does the city of Chicago," he said.

A film and interactive light show illuminate the model to show Chicago's early growth, its rebirth after the Great Chicago Fire, the city's first skyscrapers, which ones were built by which architects and modernist masterpieces. It even shows all the bike lanes in the city by darkening the model and lighting up the paths. These kinds of interactive tools will help students better learn in a fun way about their city and connect to it as their home, Osmond said.

See <http://www.architecture.org/>.



Chicago Architecture Center CEO and President Lynn Osmond opened the ribbon-cutting ceremony Aug. 29 and welcomed the packed gallery to the new center.

Photo by Ariel Parrella-Aureli

Cris Williamson.
Photo by Irene Jones Photography

Cris Williamson: On music, love and the industry

BY JOHN STADELMAN

Cris Williamson—the legendary singer-songwriter, feminist, activist and trailblazer for women in the music industry—received the Jack Emerson Lifetime Achievement Award on Sept. 12 from the Americana Music Association in Nashville, alongside longtime friend and Olivia Records co-founder Judy Dlugacz.

Williamson's career has spanned over thirty albums in fifty years. The success of her 1975 independent release, *The Changer and the Changed*, brought Olivia Records into the limelight. She's just kicked off her Reunion Tour with Olivia Records veterans Barbara Higbie and Teresa Trull.

Windy City Times: So you're starting your reunion tour with Teresa and Barbara. How does that feel?

Cris Williamson: Oh, it's just the best because they're two of my very best friends. They're soloists as well, so when you put three soloists together you got a pretty good orchestra there. It's everything from R&B to jazz to folk to whatever it is that I do, whatever we want to call that!

WCT: You've had a pretty long career spanning over 50 years, and you've released a plethora of albums. I'm curious what your experiences have been in that time.

CW: So glad to be working, period. We had to invent ourselves. First, we had to invent the delivery system because it didn't exist.

There were, of course, and always have been gay men in the arts industry that did not use that as their platform. They were mostly desperate to fit in and not be discovered because it was dangerous. Somebody like Rock Hudson: everybody knew, rumors abounded, but still he kept [secret] until the very end and there was a lot of his life that, like many gay artists, had to be left behind, or had to be cloaked in this kind of quasi-normality that was defined by somebody else.

So we defined our own normal. Just be yourself, love who you want to love. ... The only reason I

MUSIC

think we're here is to love one another.

WCT: Have you seen Olivia Records as a catalyst for giving a platform to gay and lesbian musicians?

CW: Oh, yeah—absolutely. It just wasn't there. We invented it, and there's of course the technology changes to where nobody needs a label now. You can just put everything on a thumb-drive and hand it to your public. None of that existed. Technology-wise, [it's] not so long ago, but how fast things change—changed the delivery system.

So we were that platform for many artists: a place to grow, a place where we had women who would show up if you put a flier on their windshield. At least for me, the music I make is for the human condition. There's not so much gender in there as it is philosophy, as how to exist and live in this world as a good human being. We need to be looked at as part of the human race, and not as these separate people who are ghettoized—although once you're in the ghetto you can make amazing music, we know that, that the obstacles in life can become gateways.

WCT: Could you talk a little more about, looking at when you first started out back in the 1960s and '70s, the differences and similarities that you see today for gay and lesbian artists?

CW: I do see that the past is there now pretty strongly and artists can take it as they wish. They don't have to fear the same things that we did in our time, [although] in some cases I guess you do because violence is violence and hatred is hatred and that increased. Sometimes I think freedom is an illusion and we have to take it every day, to be a free as we are. You can't assume that everything is free, because it still has to be made for everybody. If I want it for myself then I have to say, "I want it for you, too." Because do you have the luxury to only care for a certain

amount of people, or do you work really hard on loving everybody? Having that be a real thing, [to] become the change you wish to see in the world.

And that's my goal. I want this world to get along... I think art is necessary, I think music is necessary in the world and so in that respect I have the greatest job in the world.

WCT: What advice would you give to young LGBT musicians who are just starting out?

CW: Probably first thing is: Don't expect to be on the big stage right away. Play for everything. That's the way I did it. Come up the hard way. It's honest. ... Take the journey and take a long time, sing everywhere, perform everywhere for everyone. It's easy to preach to the converted, it's difficult to play a bar, or an eating establishment where you're just background noise and you don't feel like a star. Well you're not there yet!

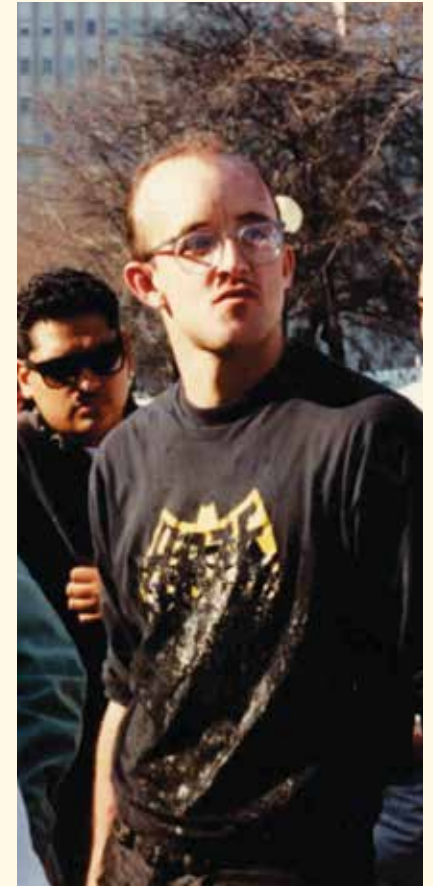
I was born almost solely pledged. I knew how to do it but I chose the hard, honest path and I haven't ever regretted that. Get good at your work, get good at your art, practice, practice, practice.

And practice relating to people when you're up there. There's a lot of smoke and mirrors that goes on where you dress in costume or you appear in ways kind of like drag. They clothe themselves in the form of somebody else, which doesn't interest me as much. What I'm interested in is when people appear as themselves.

WCT: And that goes back to the honesty?

CW: That's right. I'm just not good at it! [Laughs] I have no ability to wear costumes, because I like who I am so much. That's my other piece of advice: You've gotta be well to do this. Because there's great sickness in the world. Music is the best there is—a song can turn a heart.

See Cris Williamson with Barbara Higbie and Teresa Trull at the Unitarian Church of Evanston on Thursday, Sept. 20, at 7 p.m., with tickets at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3612727>.



Keith Haring in 1989 in Chicago.
Photo courtesy of Irving Zucker

Haring mural exhibit in Loop thru Sept. 23

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

The exhibition will be in the Sidney R. Yates Gallery, 4th Floor North, as part of the City of Chicago's Year of Creative Youth.

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

Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs and to expand the audience for Haring's work through exhibitions, publications and the licensing of his images. Nine months after completing the mural in Chicago, Haring died of AIDS-related complications at age 31, on Feb. 16, 1990.

Admission is free; visit ChicagoCulturalCenter.org.

BOOK REVIEW

When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir

by Patrisse Khan-Cullors & asha bandele

\$24.99; St. Martin's Press; 257 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

You can't look any longer.

Whatever it is, it's just too painful, too scary, so you hide your eyes and pretend that nothing's happening. You can't look any longer, so you don't ... but after awhile, you notice it again. That's when you realize that you saw all along. That's when, as in the new book *When They Call You a Terrorist*, by Patrisse Khan-Cullors & asha bandele, you realize that you never really could look away.

Growing up as the third child in a family of four, Khan-Cullors lived with her mother and siblings in a "multiracial" neighborhood near Sherman Oaks, California. The two places were "less than a mile" apart but, due to social, financial, and racial divides, they were separated by oceans, in Khan-Cullors' mind.

Despite that her mother worked all day and into the night, Khan-Cullors was reared in a loving atmosphere. The man who raised her wasn't always around, but she adored him; after she learned, at age 12, that he wasn't her biological father, her birth-father and his family became present on a regular basis. Absent an adult, Khan-Cullors' eldest brother acted as "man" of the house. This all complicated her young life, but she enjoyed this expanded, supportive family.

Khan-Cullors said that she was 12 years old the first time she was arrested. By then, she'd witnessed her brothers being questioned by police for just hanging out with friends. She started truly noticing her surroundings.

Not long afterward, her father was imprisoned on drug charges, and she lost touch with much of his family. Then her older brother was imprisoned for attempted burglary and was diagnosed with a mental health disorder, and Khan-Cullors came to understand that she was Queer. She began to ear-

nestly question things in her life.

At 16, she became an "organizer" and an activist. She doubled down on it after her brother was arrested and called a "terrorist" for yelling at a woman. She was driven to act when, following the death of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of George Zimmerman, she sent out a message to her friends.

#BlackLivesMatter.

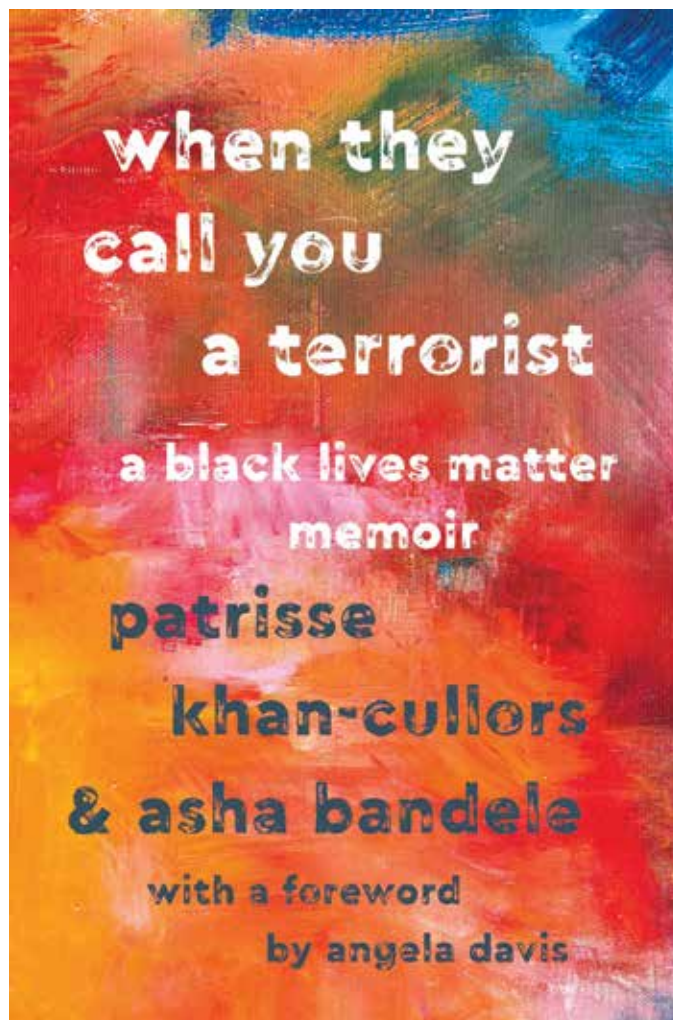
"I write," she said, "I hope it impacts more than we can ever imagine."

And, of course, it did, and it will. Once you're finished with *When They Call You a Terrorist*, you'll want to stand up, too.

You'll want to stand, even though author Khan-Cullors (with bandele) doesn't tell stories here that haven't already been told before. Indeed, many authors have shared similar tales of poverty, affluent white friends, outrage, prison, and sadness. The shelves are full of such books—but this one is different because Khan-Cullors gives her story an urgent hear-me-now outrage. That "done playing" feeling is what readers may come away with—a feeling that underscores Khan-Cullors' activism.

And that's what this book is about: It's a rallying cry wrapped in a memoir tied in a call to legal action of whatever sort. And so, if you're ready, *When They Call You a Terrorist* is worth a longer look.

Want more? Then look for *So You Want to Talk About Race*, by Ijeoma Oluo.



Windy City Times

WERQ!

CHICAGO

LGBTQ JOB FAIR

Friday, Sept. 21, 2018

11 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, Chicago

ALL welcome. Entry-level to advanced positions.

Free workshops with experienced professionals:

9:30-10:30 a.m.: Transgender Issues in the Workplace

Contact: terri@windycitymediagroup.com

Sponsors:



Partners:



DeRay Mckesson: Fighting for Black lives



DeRay
Mckesson.
Photo
by Blair
Caldwell

BY ADA CHENG

By the time this interview was conducted Sept. 7, DeRay Mckesson, one of the most visible Black Lives Movement organizers, was already on his book tour in New York for his memoir *On the Other Side of Freedom: The Case for Hope* (Viking Books).

When asked about the reception for the book so far, he said, “I am very excited. I am excited about the conversation that’s happening. ... One good thing about the written text is that people resonate with different things in the book. ... Some have an ‘aha’ moment about police violence while others resonate with issues like identity and language.”

Mckesson, known for his Patagonia blue vest, details in the book how the decision to drive from Minneapolis to Ferguson in 2014 following Michael Brown’s death changed his life. He would later spend a year in the streets protesting, being teargassed, and walking all night because it was illegal for protestors to stop. He, along with other activists including Johnetta Elzie, Britanny Packnett and Samuel Sinyangwe, launched

Campaign Zero in 2015, a policy platform to end police violence. For his activism, Mckesson has received many awards and honors, including The Root 100, Peter Jennings Award for Civic Leadership, Howard Zinn Freedom to Write Award and Out 100.

The memoir itself is more than a recount of his experiences with police or activism. Intermixed with personal stories about childhood, school, faith and community are his reflections about storytelling itself and the larger questions about narrative and power.

He pointed out why the discussion of language and storytelling loomed large in the memoir. “It is important to think about the way we use language to frame issues. Even though I write about police, it is the storytelling that’s the real power,” he said.

He talked about growing up near Baltimore City, where he learned to see a world structured through whiteness and defined by white people. He described an incident through which he came to understand that white people could be wrong, too.

A pivotal moment for his consciousness,

BOOKS

prompting the first act of resistance: naming the world in his own terms.

And it is not the learning of language but the unlearning of it that leads to that act of resistance. As he writes, “Language is our first act of resistance. It matters how we talk about the work we do; the words we use or the words we create matter to describe the world we live in, the freedom and justice we deserve.”

When discussing police violence, Mckesson is posing fundamental questions about power, narrative and storytelling. That is, who gets to tell stories in our world? Who has the power to shape the narrative that dictates our worldview? Who gets to define truth(s)? And what does it mean when institutions, such as the police, hold lethal power to harm and kill people of color while at the same time wielding the power to define who is the victim in incidents of police brutality?

For example, using particular narratives and images, the police and the media consistently frame and portray Black victims as thugs and criminals. And with their assumed criminality and thus presumed guilt, they are deemed underserving of justice within an earn/deserve paradigm in the United States.

In other words, the violence against the Black body is accompanied by and justified by the violence of the language.

In that sense, changing the material reality of inequity in the larger society necessitates reshaping the inequitable ways certain stories and truths are told and validated.

This applies to how each group history is narrated as well. Mckesson gives examples of a few stories often swept under the rug to demonstrate who is deemed as the legitimate representative of the Black community and who in turn gets silenced in the narration of the Black history.

For example, one was the 15-year-old Claudette Colvin, who also refused to give up her seat on the bus, yet she remained unknown in history compared to Rosa Parks due to respectability politics. Another important figure, Bayard Rustin, played a central role in shaping the nonviolent strategies during the Civil Rights Movement and was an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—yet he was banished to the margins due to his open gayness.

Similarly, using “out of the quiet” as opposed to “out of the closet” to describe his experiences as a gay Black man, Mckesson has struggled to find his place in the movement at times with some people who might not believe that he deserves to be there.

As he poignantly writes, “In activism, I am often asked if I am gay or black first as if I am not black and gay and male at the same time, all day, every day. ... I am asked if the ‘gay agenda’ has superseded the goal of bringing about justice and equity, as if there aren’t gay black people or as if the oppressions are connected, interwoven.”

The question then is: In social justice movements, how does one engage in activism that doesn’t replicate the oppressive act of erasure and instead sustain a practice and a narrative that respects the contribution of all members regardless of their gender, sexuality and class?

In this thoughtful memoir, Mckesson ponders on the need for social movements to go beyond trauma and critiques and to envision a future where concrete visions for a better world can be developed and a just society can be built. When asked about his vision for the future, he said, “It is not just the absence of oppression but is the presence of justice and equity.”

That entails both faith, the belief that something will happen, and hope, the belief that something can happen, as he succinctly puts in his work.

DeRay Mckesson will be in Chicago discussing his book Wed., Sept. 26, 7:30 p.m., University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration (with Seminary Co-Op Bookstores), Gordon Parks Arts Hall, 5815 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago. For tickets: <http://ssa.uchicago.edu/deray-mckesson>

LGBTQ military veterans to hold national conference and Sept. 22 banquet

The Chicago Chapter of AVER (LGBTQ military veterans) will host the National AVER Convention at the Center on Halsted Sept. 19 through 21 and will host an associated banquet on Saturday, Sept. 22 at Ann Sathers, 909 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. There will be an open bar, a silent auction, buffet dinner and a program with speakers and awards.

Keynote speaker will be Lee Reinhart, former Chicago AVER chapter president and the first veteran discharged under Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell to reenlist in Illinois following repeal of the policy. Kristin Beck, a transgender woman and retired Navy SEAL, will be honored.

The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Tickets to the event are \$40 at www.averchicago.org/national-convention/. Questions can be addressed to Jim Darby 773-752-0058.

BREAKING
NEWS
SPECIAL
FEATURES
EXPANDED
COVERAGE
ARCHIVES

WindyCityTimes.com



Tony Breed's strip, *Muddlers Beat*.
Courtesy of Breed



Tony Breed.
PR photo

A new breed: Chicago artist draws his way to LGBT comic success

BY CONNOR LUDOVICE

Tony Breed, a Chicago-based artist and writer who has been making comics which he publishes online since 2006, is also active in making sure the work of LGBT comic artists is amplified across the country.

Breed has been a fan of comics for most of his life. "My earliest memories of reading comics would be from the Disney comics I'd read when I was a little kid," he said. "I used to read a lot of Donald Duck and Scrooge McDuck comics, and then when I was in the 4th grade, I was really into reading Tintin and I tried getting my hands on as many of those comics as I could."

Breed was inspired by some of the comics he read in the funny papers. "I wanted to make comics like Peanuts when I was eight or nine," he said, and started around age 11. But he didn't start to make comics professionally until he was in his 30s.

In 2006, Breed launched his web comic, *Finn and Charlie Are Hitched*, which told the stories of married couple Finn and Charlie, their friends and their day-to-day life adventures.

Finn and Charlie initially "were both essentially stand-ins for me and my husband," he said, "but later they took on lives of their own."

In the early parts of the series, Finn and Charlie's stories were very much like his own real-life stories, but fictionalized. "There's one story where Charlie sits next to a complete stranger on a plane who ends up randomly telling Charlie about his sex life, and this was something that had actually happened to me in real life," Breed said.

The comic ran as a web comic from April 2006 until December 2013, and the series has been collected into four volumes that have been physically published in collected editions. In 2011, the series was nominated for an Ignatz Award for Outstanding Online Comic, and Breed received a nomination for Promising New Talent.

When *Finn and Charlie Are Hitched* ended in December 2013, Breed began his next comic, *Muddlers Beat*, which is still ongoing. It contains Finn and Charlie, but now focuses on them as part of a group of friends. "I felt like I ran out

COMICS/ART

of ideas with just Finn and Charlie, and I wanted to do a series that didn't just mainly focus on them," Breed said.

With *Muddlers Beat* and his first ever long-form minicomic called *That Night*, Breed said making comics has become a way for him to process life, including processing tragic events, including the passing of his husband in December 2015 and the death of his cat.

On writing as a way to process the passing of his husband, Breed said, "I just wanted to write what was on my mind. I wrote it for myself, but also for others who've had a similar experience to my own, and to those who've never experienced a situation like that."

Breed has been running his own tables at comic conventions since 2009, and has attended numerous conventions over the years, including Flame Con, which is billed as the largest LGBT comic convention in the world. Breed has been a part of a number of panels for the non-profit organization, *Geeks Out*, which seeks to rally, promote and empower the queer geek community.

Breed spoke very highly of his convention experiences and of getting to meet fellow LGBT comic creators. "It's great to learn about people's stories and for creators to connect and do panels together," he said. "It's just a great way to bring people together, and for creators to network." Breed added that many LGBT comic creators want to tell more stories that are positive, stating that for many years, there were too many LGBT stories—especially in movies—that were very dark.

"In the '70s, '80s and '90s, LGBT movies were too dark, and focused too much on individuals who are LGBT committing suicide, and while it is true that the suicide rate for people who are LGBT is higher than the rate for people who aren't LGBT, a lot of creators now want to go against that and tell more positive stories about our lives."

See <http://www.tonybreed.com/tony/comics.html>.

DRAG IT UP!

Our list of all the regular drag shows in and around Chicago. To include your show in our listings, please submit info to kirk@windycitymediagroup.com.

MONDAYS

Chicago's Best Worst Drag Show, hosted by Arby Barbie, weekly, 2 a.m., no cover. The Jackhammer Complex, 6406 N. Clark St.

Vamp, featuring Mimi Marks, hosted by Mercedes Tyler, weekly, 11 p.m., no cover. Progress Bar, 3359 N. Halsted St.

Lipstick & Mascara, hosted by Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 11:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Plot Twist, hosted by T-Rex, every 3rd Monday, 10:30 p.m., Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.

TUESDAYS

Killer Babes, hosted by Lady Ivory, every 3rd Tues., 10 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Roscoe's Drag Race, Chicago's longest-running amateur weekly drag competition hosted by Frida Lay, Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted St.

Dixie Wins a Talent Show (while Alexis Bevels stage-manages), featuring Dixie Lynn Cartwright and Alexis Bevels, a showcase for local drag queens, performance artists and comedians, last Tues. of the month, 9:30 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

WEDNESDAYS

Honeys on Halsted, hosted by Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 11:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

All Things Beyonce, hosted by Dixie Lynn Cartwright, featuring Dida Ritz, Saya Naomi and guest queens, 2nd or 3rd Wed. of the month, 9 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

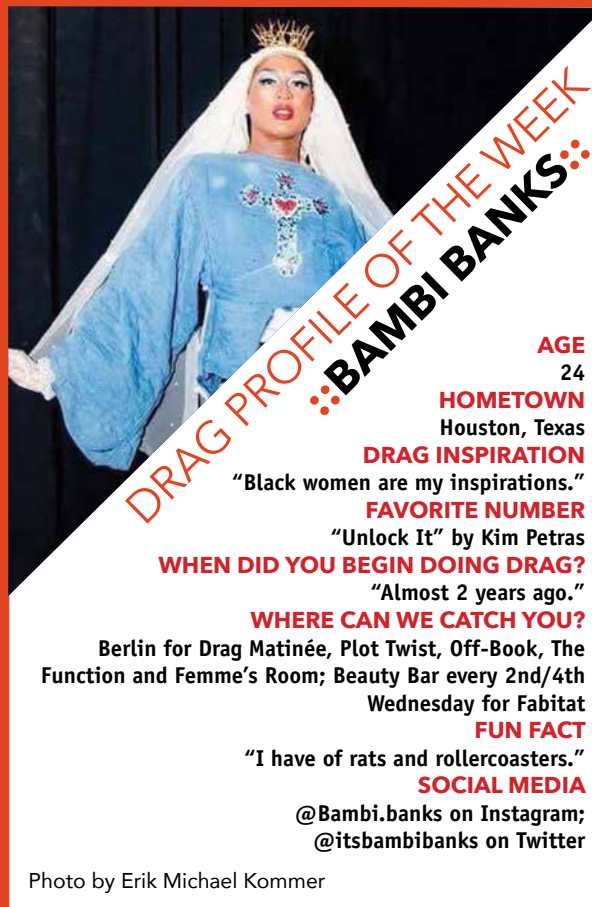
THURSDAYS

Babes In Boyland, featuring Monica Beverly Hillz, Lila Star, Teri Yaki and Otter Chaõs, weekly, 1 a.m., no cover. The Jackhammer Complex, 6406 N. Clark St.

Sirens of Splash, featuring Lila Star, Mimi Marks, Aura Mayari and Silky, weekly, 9 p.m., no cover. Splash Chicago, 3339 N. Halsted St.

POP ROCKS, dance party with drag from Alexis Bevels and Saya Naomi, get on stage to Win with Dixie Lynn Cartwright, weekly, 9 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Body Beautiful, hosted by Danika Bone't and Alexandra



DRAG PROFILE OF THE WEEK
BAMBI BANKS

AGE
24

HOMETOWN
Houston, Texas

DRAG INSPIRATION

"Black women are my inspirations."

FAVORITE NUMBER

"Unlock It" by Kim Petras

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN DOING DRAG?

"Almost 2 years ago."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU?

Berlin for Drag Matinée, Plot Twist, Off-Book, The Function and Femme's Room; Beauty Bar every 2nd/4th Wednesday for Fabiat

FUN FACT

"I have of rats and rollercoasters."

SOCIAL MEDIA

@Bambi.banks on Instagram;

@itsbambibanks on Twitter

Photo by Erik Michael Kommer

Diamond, 4th Thu. of each month, shows at 11:30 p.m., 12:30 a.m. and 1:30 a.m., no cover. Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

FRIDAYS

Beauties and Beaus, hosted by Naysha Lopez, Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 9:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Dining With the Divas, featuring Angel LeBare and CeeCee LaRouge, shows weekly at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Hamburger Mary's Oak Park, 155 S. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

SATURDAYS

Drag Matinee, hosted by T-Rex, weekly, 10:30 p.m., Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.

#POPular, featuring 2018 Fan Favorite Tiffany Diamond, hosted by Veronica Pop, weekly, shows at 10:30 p.m., Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

Beauties and Beaus, hosted by Naysha Lopez, Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 9:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Drag shows at Manuevers: 1st Sat.: Raven's Ravishing Revue, hosted by Raven Samore; **2nd Sat.: The Dymond Standard**, hosted by Diamond Calloway; **3rd Sat.: Diva's Den**, hosted by Sasha Love; **4th Sat.: Noche Latina**, hosted by Aleya Couture. All shows at 11:30 p.m., no cover. Maneuvers, 118 E. Jefferson St., Joliet

Stardust, hosted by Natasha Douglas, 1st Sat. (starting Nov. 2018), 8:30-10:30 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Sofia's Dragtacular Review, hosted by Sofia Saffire, every 2nd Sat., 10:30 p.m., Shakers on Clark, 3160 N. Clark St.

Ashley Morgan Presents A Drag Revue, featuring Coco Shonnell, Dominique Diamond, Vivian Dejour and Juan M. Wette, hosted by Ashley Morgan, every 3rd Sat., 9:30 p.m. seating, \$5 suggested donation, The Call Bar, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

6 Queens 1 Diva, hosted by Muffy Fishbasket, every 4rd Sat., 10 p.m., \$5 cover, The Call Bar, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Dining With the Divas, featuring Angel LeBare and CeeCee LaRouge, shows weekly at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Hamburger Mary's Oak Park, 155 S. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

SUNDAYS

Reinas de la Casa, featuring Windy Breeze, Veronica Pop, Zafina Hasheesh and Danika Bone't, hosted by Alexandra Diamond, 2nd Sun. of each month, shows at 11:30 p.m., 12:30 and 1:30 a.m. Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

Angel LeBare's Fish Hatchery, contest for aspiring drag queens, every 4th Sun., 8 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 7, 9 and 11 p.m. 436 N. Clark St.

OUR NEW NIGHTLIFE COLUMN DEBUTS NEXT WEEK!

WINDY
CITY
TIMES

ARTS + THEATER

artsandtheaterweekly.com

WEEKLY



BILLY Masters

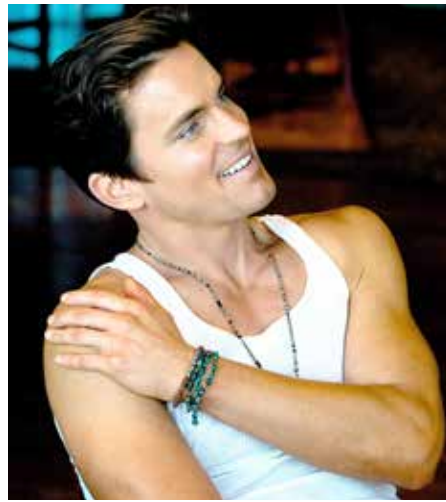
"*Makeup. Five pounds of makeup.*"—Cher explained why she looks so good in *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again*. She added, "*Also the director really liked me. I think he took extra special care to light me.*" As it should be.

There is a routine to Sunday nights. After toiling away on the column for days, I send it off to the various gay and alternative publications around the world with the good sense to carry my scribbles, post it online to BillyMasters.com and doze off close to dawn. When I awoke from my slumber this past week, I found two incredibly different emails. First was an email with the subject "Great Column"—which always warms the cockles of, well, my cockles. The second email had the subject "Your sad comments about Neil Patrick Harris." The writer was upset that I dared to question the masculinity of NPH, but apparently had no problem with NPH disparaging drag and trans people everywhere. It should be stated that both of these emails were well-written, thoughtful and articulate. And they both got an immediate response from moi. At least they're reading.

We're hearing about more guest stars for the upcoming season of *Will & Grace*. **David Schwimmer** is in about five episodes as Grace's boyfriend. **Chelsea Handler** turns up as a power lesbian (so much for the "only-gay-people-can-play-gay-roles" argument). **Jon Cryer** is in a Jack/Karen storyline. Thank God **Minnie Driver** returns as Karen's nemesis Lorraine Finster. In the same episode, we're told **Adam Rippon** makes a cameo as himself. (I'm thinking he could be a potential date for Jack; after all, he already slept with **Rudy Galindo**.) And in the biggest news, Will gets a boyfriend—**Matt Bomer**. Sigh, the hot gays always hook up with straight guys.

When last we left **Colton Haynes** and Jeff Leatham, the actor filed for divorce from the florist after six months of marital bliss. That was back in May. So where are we now? Still in limbo. Leatham was seen visiting Haynes in Vancouver on the set of *Arrow* in July to celebrate Colton's 30th birthday. The two flew back to LA together, still wearing their wedding bands.

According to one of those "unnamed sources," "they aren't officially back together but they are trying to figure things out and headed in that direction. They are spending time together and really want it to work out. They love and care about each other immensely and would love to find a way to make it work. They aren't rushing to make it official and are just taking their time working on their relationship. Things are a lot better and it's going well for them." Am I the only one who thinks this anonymous source is Leatham? And why is it every time I type his name, I type "Leatherman?" Freudian slip, no doubt. Gus Kenworthy confirmed the couple's relationship status: "I mean, I don't know if it's really my place to speculate. I believe he told me that they're working on things. I think that they're in a good place. I don't know if they're back together or



Matt Bomer will be among the slew of guest stars of *Will & Grace*.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

if they're not going to be together, but I think that they're in a good place." That cleared up ... absolutely nothing!

Someone who I suspect doesn't mind getting a dick or two in his inbox is **Andy Cohen**. It was an interesting week for Mr. Cohen. First, he had a story in the *United Kingdom's Attitude* magazine, in which he spoke openly about his sex life, including the use of poppers and bottoms. (They kinda go hand in hand.) After saying he's been out since 1988, he added, "I was always out in my career so there was a freedom to that, and I've always been outspoken, and gay people say they connect with that and it makes me happy, too."

At the same time, the *National Enquirer* had a story allegedly exposing "Andy Cohen's Internet X-Plaits." I'll save you the four-plus dollars and tell you what it said. The *Enquirer* claims to have found Cohen's Grindr profile, which is plausible. Andy admits to being on Tinder and also "a gay dating app." But apparently each time he sets up an account, he's kicked off because the powers think he's impersonating Andy Cohen—as if!

Anonymous sources who claim to have hooked up with him on Grindr claim that he's interested in younger men. SHOCKING! One man said, "Andy once used his celebrity to woo a young man, then discarded him like trash once he was finished. He's very selfish and has a voracious sexual appetite." Um, that describes virtually everyone I know! The insider added, "Andy made it clear he wanted no part of kissing or affectionate touching—only no-strings-attached sex." I believe you have to agree to that just to sign onto Grindr! Andy allegedly has a thing for "redheads, young ginger boys. He lusts over Prince Harry and once admitted to wanting Justin Bieber." Again, virtually everyone I know. In fact, I think he's admitted all of this on his show. YAWN!

In a few weeks, tens of thousands of gays will descend on Anaheim. It's once again time for Gay Days Anaheim. The annual event (which I helped found) takes place Oct. 5-7, Columbus Day weekend. There are oodles of special performers sprinkled throughout the weekend, including **Garrett Clayton** headlining the Saturday night Kingdom dance party! Check out the full schedule at Gay-

SUNDAY. SEPTEMBER 23
IT'S ALWAYS SUMMER IN BOYSTOWN

SUNDAY FUN DAY
SIDE TRACK
T-SHIRT DAY!

GET YOUR OWN SUNDAY FUN DAY TSHIRT FOR ONLY \$10 AT OUR MEN'S ROOM POP UP SHOP 3-9PM

DOORS OPEN 1PM | NO COVER
FUN GIVEAWAYS WITH DIXIE & THE BOYS
PARTY MUSIC AT DECK BAR ALL DAY
SHOWTUNES 4-9PM
SIDE TRACK POP FAVORITES 9PM-2AM

3349 N HALSTED SIDETRACKCHICAGO.COM | F @SIDETRACKBAR 21+ W/D

Maker's Mark

DaysAnaheim.com.

Our brief "*Ask Billy*" question is more of a statement from one of our esteemed proofers. Nate in Key West says, "*Did you see Steve Howey on the season premiere of *Shameless*? WOW—he should always be naked.*"

Howey does enjoy his nudity—and, thankfully, *Shameless* does, too! Seems to me that during his hiatus, Steve did nothing but work out—he clearly isn't eating! During the scene in question, he says he's so hard, he can hold up a bath towel without his hands. You can see how he does it on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm on the lookout for my own *Shameless* towel rack, it's time to end another column. Because the Emmys are on a Monday this year, you'll know who won by the time you read this column. But if there's any inside dish, you'll read about it on BillyMasters.com—the site that's known for poking around. Whatever your point of view, feel free to send your comments to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Howey pokes someone's eye out! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

FREE
NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD.

BUY 10 PAIRS OF UNDERWEAR AND GET ONE FREE WITH OUR NEW PUNCH CARD!

STOP BY OUR STORE & ENTER TO WIN A FREE BREEDWELL HARNESS!

*STOP BY OUR STORE FOR MORE DETAILS

LEATHER64TEN CHICAGO

6410 N. CLARK ST. CHICAGO, IL
773.508.0900 | @LEATHER64TEN
WWW.LEATHER64TEN.COM

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Juniper Spirits & Oysters; U.S. Pizza Museum

BY ANDREW DAVIS

With the thousands of restaurants in Chicago, it's natural that some are overlooked. The Gold Coast spot **Juniper Spirits & Oysters** (in the Claridge House hotel at 1244 N. Dearborn St.; <http://juniperspiritsandoysters.com/>) should not be.

One of the things people might assume, from the name, is that the spot specializes in, well, spirits and oysters. However, Juniper has much more to offer (including music that were altered versions of popular songs—which turned into a guessing game between my dining companion



Juniper Spirits & Oysters.
Photo by Kailley Lindman

and myself).

Now, the restaurant definitely has its share of spirits, with cocktails and mocktails that are mostly named after celebrities with Chicago connections. Examples include the Harold Ramis (with botran reserva rum, demerara sugar, Warre's ruby port and lemon); the Don Cornelius (named

after the Soul Train host, and containing a heady mix of coffee-infused courvoisier cognac, maple simple syrup, orange and housemade coffee, with pecan bitters); and the fantastic Orpah Winfrey (NOT "Oprah," but her actual birth name, and containing pear juice, ginger shrub, rosemary, nutmeg and honey).

And Juniper certainly has oysters, with variations including sauced, fried and Rockefeller. However, the place also has several salads (like beet and heirloom-tomato concoctions) and sandwiches (with the filet sliders with quail egg being standouts). The next time I'm there, I'll have to try the lobster roll and/or the Claridge cheeseburger (with a sinful topping mix of arugula, burnt onion jam, garlic aioli, and white cheddar).

In addition, there are tantalizing large plates, including 14-ounce New York strip, honey-glazed salmon and duck breast (expertly prepared).

One other note: Juniper is very pet-friendly, even hosting events where people can take photos with their dog or cat (or rabbit or ball python or whatever).

Pizza, pizza, pizza

Given how Chicago feels about pizza, it's

natural that the city has the **U.S. Pizza Museum** (1146 S. Delano Ct.; <https://uspizzamuseum.com/>).

Housed in the Roosevelt Collection, the South Loop shopping center, the museum is open on Fridays at 5-8 p.m. as well as Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m.-6 p.m. through the end of October (although it may extend beyond then), and the pop-up is the brainchild of Kendall Bruns.

The 3,000-square-foot space has plenty of pizza-related items to gawk and ponder about, including pizza-related records, boxes and gadgets. People can even see a (very long) pizza scarf and a pie-festooned version of Chicago's Divvy bike. Also, patrons can purchase items such as a notepads, buttons and even pepperoni jerky. And there are special upcoming events, including a Sept. 29 demo courtesy of master instructor Leo Spizzirri.

However, don't expect to see the museum handing out actual pizza. As my companion said, "They don't give out art at an art museum, do they?"

Admission is free.

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



SPLASH CHICAGO

Quelle horreur! It's the season premiere party for
American Horror Story: Apocalypse, Wed., Sept. 12.
Joseph Stevens Photography



CLASSIFIEDS

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE: Want to advertise your product, service, etc. to thousands of readers? Place an ad in the Windy City Times! We offer affordable rates, convenient service, and as a bonus, your ad runs in our online section for free. **To place an ad, contact Terri at 773-871-7610 ex 101, terri@windycitymediagroup.com, or go to our website <http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/placeclassified.php>.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HUGE COMMUNITY YARD SALE Sunday September 30th, 2018 9am-3pm 4250 N. Marine Dr. South Tower Driveway 20 + Vendors with a Huge Assortment of Items (9/26/18-2)

CLEANING SERVICES

CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We're a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn't been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Depressed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. **Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575. www.ChestnutCleaning.com** (11/28/18-52)

COUNSELING & PSYCHOTHERAPY

ARE YOU GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME? Feeling overwhelmed, anxious or depressed? Is your relationship struggling? I can help you better understand these situations and create solutions for them. My practical approach entails a therapeutic alliance that is affirming, empathic, and interactive. **Michael J. Bland, Psy.D., LCPC. Northside Location. 773-404-8161. Michael@BlandTherapy.com, www.BlandTherapy.com** (9/26/18-52)

HELP WANTED

CONN'S CATERING Seeking Captains, Chefs, Bartenders and Waitstaff for busy Holiday Season Weddings. Please forward us your resume and indicate your availability for interview. Illinois DL required **info@connscatering.com** (10/10/18-4)

HOME IMPROVEMENT & PAINTING

WE MAKE HOLES IN DRYWALL GO AWAY. We also do Remodeling, Bathrooms, Carpentry, Tile Backsplashes, Painting. "A+" with BBB. Licensed-Bonded-Insured, One year Warranty. **Free Estimates! Andy OnCall 847-328-3100 www.andyoncallchicago.com** (4/17/19-60)

'Maisel,' 'Thrones,' RuPaul rule Emmys

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Game of Thrones and RuPaul's Drag Race were the big winners in the areas of comedy, drama and reality competition, respectively, at the 70th annual Primetime Emmy Awards, which took place Sept. 17.

Among the awards that Amazon's "Maisel" snagged were best comedy series, best lead actress in a comedy (Rachel Brosnahan) and best supporting actress in a comedy (Alex Borstein). "Thrones" won for best drama and best supporting actor in a drama (Peter Dinklage), a week after taking seven Creative Arts Emmys the previous weekend.

"Drag Race" won the award for best reality-competition show—making history because it was the first show to win for best series and host (RuPaul Charles) in that genre in the same year. (The show also won four Creative Arts Emmys.)

In other LGBTQ-related news, American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace scored three Emmy wins—for best directing for a limited series (Ryan Murphy), best actor in a limited series (Darren Criss) and outstanding limited series.

Among those snubbed this year were the shows Atlanta (shut out of top categories, despite 16 nominations) and The Handmaid's Tale.

Saturday Night Live's Michael Che and Colin Hanks hosted the event.



RuPaul.
Photo by Kevin Lynch

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST
by Greg Fox

DO YOU THINK I'M CRAZY?

WHY? BECAUSE YOU'RE CONSIDERING COMING OUT TO YOUR BASEBALL TEAM?

YEAH.

NO...I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME, JAIME'S RIGHT. ALL THAT STRESS OF KEEPING YOUR SECRET...

...IT'S PROBABLY AFFECTING YOUR PLAYING.

AND ANYWAY...THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SEVERAL OUT GAY PLAYERS IN THE MINOR LEAGUES...LIKE SEAN CONROY AND DAVID DENSON, SO...

IT'S STILL SCARY. JUST THINKIN' ABOUT GETTIN' UP IN FRONT OF MY TEAM N' TELLIN' 'EM THAT I'M...YOU KNOW...

GAY?

YEAH.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO WORK ON YOUR PRESENTATION.

PROBABLY. BUT MY PARENTS ARE DOWN IN FLORIDA RIGHT NOW.

IF I WAIT 'TIL THEY GET BACK...

...BASEBALL SEASON WILL BE OVER. THEN I'LL HAVE TO WAIT A WHOLE SIX MONTHS TO COME OUT TO THE TEAM.

I DON'T WANT THAT HANGIN' OVER MY HEAD ALL WINTER.

NO...IF I'M GONNA DO THIS... I GOTTA DO IT NOW.

I'LL HAVE THE WHOLE OFF SEASON TO DEAL WITH TELLIN' MY FAMILY.

OKAY.

DID YOU EVER HAVE TO COME OUT TO A WHOLE GROUP OF PEOPLE, KYLE?

YEAH. MY FIGURE SKATING CLUB. AND IT WAS PRETTY SCARY.

YOUR FIGURE SKATING CLUB? WOW. THEY MUST'VE BEEN, LIKE... REAL SHOCKED.

OH, STOP IT...

Website - www.kylecomics.com

Facebook - www.facebook.com/kylecomics

E-Mail - gregfox727@gmail.com

Twitter - @KyleComics

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Sept. 19

Garbage High Homecoming Dance
A Tribe Called Mess, disco all night by Redux with Ginger Forest, Stormy De Janero, Shalita Cake, Fox Tyler, and Vega 10:00pm - 4:00am Berlin Nightclub 954 W Belmont Ave Chicago

Meet Pride Action Tank Celebrate and support Pride Action Tank's participation in the upcoming (Sept. 23) AIDS Run & Walk Chicago. \$20 donation gets a drink ticket and special performances by Thair, lead singer of Chicago alternative band Astro Samurai. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago Tickets: <http://events.aidschicago.org/site/Calendar?id=103101&view=Detail>

Thursday, Sept. 20

New Zealand virtual travel Air New Zealand virtual reality experience of New Zealand & Australia with sight, sound, touch, smell and New Zealand inspired cuisine. Free. Enter to win roundtrip tickets. Through Sept. 22 10:00am - 6:00pm Pioneer Court, the plaza at Tribune Tower, 401 N Michigan Ave

Reeling, The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival Thirty feature films, nineteen shorts programs. Features include Mapplethorpe. Rupert Everett and Scud are scheduled to attend. Through Sept. 27. Various locations; <http://reelingfilmfestival.org>

Day trip to Frank Lloyd Wright's Laurent House and Pettit Chapel Enjoy a late summer evening at Wright's Oak Park Home and Studio. Relax with mu-



DEAR JOHN
Saturday, Sept. 22

New Gerber/Hart Board President John D'Emilio will be in the spotlight at the group's gala.
Photo by Hal Baim

sic, wine, beer and light refreshments. 40 Trust members, \$50 non-members 6:00pm - 8:00pm 951 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park <http://flwright.org/programs/afterhoursatthehomeandstudio>

LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois Young Professional Mixer 6:00p.m.-6:30p.m. Registration and Networking. 6:30p.m.-7:00p.m. Programming with Randy Ford of First Story. Strategies. 7:00p.m.-8:00p.m. Networking. \$10 members \$15 non-members includes drink ticket light appetizers! 6:00pm - 8:00pm My Buddie's Bar & Grill 4416 N Clark St <http://http://business.lgbtcc.com>

The WOMB Open Mic Nite Open mic poetry event. Affinity Community Services is

a social-justice organization serving the needs of the Black LGBTQ community of Chicago with a particular focus on Black women. 7:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago <http://affinity95.org>

Leadership+visibility+rap music= CREATION Live casual conversations with women from our LGBTQ community from different industries, a live performance by latina rapper, Pinqu Ring, also sharing her personal experience. By Women2Women. Tickets required. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Two Hearted Queen, 1201 W Roscoe St Chicago Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/Leadershipvisibilityrap-music-creation-tickets-49613192394#tickets>

Cris Williamson, Barbara Higbie and Teresa Trull reunion tour Gutsy blues/rock vocal dynamo and songwriter Teresa Trull, Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist and singer Barbara Higbie, iconic singer/songwriter Cris Williamson 7:00pm Unitarian Church of Evanston Evanston Tickets: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/nomob?event=3612727>

Friday, Sept. 21

WERQ! Chicago Job Fair Sponsored by Windy City Times. From entry level to higher level experience in a range of fields. terri@windycitymediagroup.com 11:00am - 3:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Chicago CityKey ID and Voter Registration During the WERQ! LGBTQ Job Fair Chicago CityKey ID kiosks run by City Clerk of Chicago offer an optional, valid, government-issued ID which unlocks many things in the city and League of Women Voters and Maggie O'Keefe assist with voter registration. 11:00am - 4:00am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details>

cfm?ID=15480

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/pL7WVA>

Saturday, Sept. 22

Leather Archives & Museum joins Smithsonian Magazine Museum Day Online museum pass allows 1 adult and 1 guest free one-day admission to the LA&M. 18+ only 11:00am - 5:00pm Leather Archives & Museum 6418 N Greenview Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/museumday-2018/>

American Veterans for Equal Rights Banquet Chicago Chapter of AVER (LGBTQ military veterans) is hosting the Annual National Convention of AVER at the Center on Halsted the banquet at Ann Sathers includes open bar, silent auction, and buffet dinner with program to follow. \$40 6:30pm Ann Sather - Belmont 909 W Belmont Ave Chicago 773-752-0058 Tickets: <http://www.averchicago.org>

Gerber/Hart Library Fundraising Benefit Open History, Open Future, on-site at the Gerber/Hart, will feature a look at upcoming possible future projects and welcome noted LGBT history scholar John Demilio, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois-Chicago, as its next Board President. 7:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago Tickets: <http://gerberhart.org>

Pay It No Mind Ball Mothers LaSaia Lauren and Jahari Mizrahi will present a free event will celebrate the life and contributions of Marsha P. Johnson, a drag queen/activist who was one of the prominent figures in the Stonewall upris-

ing of 1969. See "Pay it No Mind Ball" on Facebook. 10:00pm - 3:00am 5110 S. Prairie Ave.

Sunday, Sept. 23

AIDS Walk Chicago Theme: Live True, Be You. The Midwest's largest gathering of HIV advocates gather to fight HIV and AIDS in Illinois. \$30 walkers, \$40 runners before Sept. 16 Time: TBA Soldier Field 1410 Museum Campus Dr Chicago <http://www.aidschicago.org>

Monday, Sept. 24

The Women of Shaw The Women of Shaw: Smart, Strong, Rebellious, and Heroic!. \$50 7:00pm Ruth Page Center for the Arts 1016 N. Dearborn Chicago 312-587-7390 <http://ShawChicago.org>

All-new feminist plays Artemisia in Fall Festival Artemisia launches its 2018-19 theater season with six all-new feminist plays featured in Fall Festival 2018, which will take place Sept. 24-26 and Oct. 1-3. 7:30pm The Edge Theater, 5451 N. Broadway 312-725-3780 <http://Artemisiaattheatre.org>

It's Been a F*cking Year Join Jeff-award nominee Matthew Huston as he explores coming out as a queer man, first love, and learning how to love and accept himself. \$10 8:00pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway 866-811-4111 <http://www.pridefilm-sandplays.com>

Thursday, Sept. 27

LatinX's en Accion Activism Panel More information and ticket link to come 6:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.; <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/latinx>

CONNEXIONS

Mulryan
& York

Attorneys At Law

4001 N. Wolcott
Chicago, IL 60613
(773) 248-8887



ACHILLE BENKO & DUVAL
BUSINESS SERVICES and CPAs

SERVING: ARTISTS
PROFESSIONALS
BUSINESS OWNERS

www.abd-cpas.com • (847) 257-7330

THE LYSTER FIRM
ATTORNEYS
CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEYS
Serving the LGBTQ Community for Over 30 Years

TOUGH, EXPERIENCED AND DEDICATED
312-855-0875 | 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL
LysterFirm@aol.com
24/7 Emergency Phone : 847-309-7777

- State & Federal Courts
- Felonies & Misdemeanors
- Internet & White-Collar Crime
- All Drug Charges
- Sex Offenses
- Weapon & Gun Charges
- All Serious Traffic Offenses
- Drunk Driving
- Orders of Protection
- Expungements

Speak to an experienced attorney within minutes who will fight for you



Driven to serve Chicago's LGBTQ community.

Channing Greene
Audi Brand Specialist

Fletcher Jones Audi
312-628-4327
1523 W. North Ave., Chicago
cgreene@fjaudi.com



The Juniper CENTER

Counseling and Therapy
thejunipercenter.com
847.759.9110
info@thejunipercenter.com

Becoming whole.

Park Ridge · Oak Park · Chicago · Northfield · Barrington

iloilo CUSTOM FRAMING

1478 W. Berwyn, Andersonville

The Law Offices of Richard L. Gerber, LLC



**Advocate for
your rights,
for human rights**

- Medical Malpractice
- Personal Injury
- Wrongful Death
- Nursing Home Negligence

Free consultation

847-748-8224

www.ChicagoInjuryAdvocate.com

Ehrlich Dental

General & Cosmetic Dentistry

- Licensed Sedation Dentistry
- Check Out Our Reviews Online



Joshua H. Ehrlich, DMD

3118 N. Sheffield Ave.
Chicago, IL
(773) 935-0300

www.EhrlichDental.com



Serving Lakeview & Beyond!

The Law Office of Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, P.C.



*When experience counts...
In service to the community
for over 35 years.*

- Business Organization
- Wills, Trusts & Probate
- Real Estate Closings
- Premarital Agreements

33 N. Dearborn St., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60602
312-263-8800 RVMLAWYER@AOL.COM

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

CAR ACCIDENT, WORK INJURY OR ORTHOPAEDIC INJURY

- BACK
- SHOULDER
- ELBOW
- WRIST
- HAND
- HIP
- KNEE
- ANKLE
- FOOT



GOLD COAST ORTHOPAEDIC SPINE AND HAND SURGERY
ROBERT JAMES FINK, M.D.

Conveniently located at 7200 N. Western Ave., 2nd Floor

312-654-8800

www.goldcoastorthopaedic.com

¡Se habla Español!

Family Law

Donald B. Boyd, Jr.

- Pre-Marital Agreements •

LGBT Issues • Divorce/Wills/Trusts • Real Estate Closings
Custody Violation • Child Support

Free Initial Consultation

708-848-1005

402 Lake St., Ste. 200, Oak Park, IL, 60302

Evening & Weekend
Appointments Available
Major Credit Cards Accepted



www.BoydDivorce.com



Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC



PROBATE
TRUSTS
GUARDIANSHIP
ESTATE PLANNING
ELDER LAW

312.985.5938 | rkoenig@clarkhill.com

Clark Hill is a multidisciplinary, national law firm that draws on our attorneys' industry and policy knowledge, our deeply held shared values, and a global network of premier firms and advisors to provide innovative legal solutions and client-service excellence worldwide.

CLARK HILL

clarkhill.com



JOIN THE GREAT CONVERSATION WITH A COMMUNITY OF LIFELONG LEARNERS

The University of Chicago Graham School offers a variety of classes in the liberal arts that provide a comprehensive, interdisciplinary education for adults. Offered in downtown Chicago and online, no application is required at any time to register for our non-credit courses.

Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults

This rigorous program draws on the strong Socratic tradition at the University of Chicago. You will engage with the Great Books through close reading and discussion led by experienced UChicago-educated instructors.

Open-to-All Courses

Led by experts in their fields, these stand-alone courses are on interesting topics including arts, Chicago, China studies, classical Greek studies, Egyptian studies, history, literature, Middle Eastern studies, music, philosophy, and more.

Writer's Studio

Home to writers of all genres and ambitions, the Writer's Studio offers creative and business writing classes. Whether you are dabbling in creative or professional writing, we strive to provide engaging classes and community that serve your needs.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

**LEARN MORE AT
GRAHAM.UCHICAGO.EDU/LIBERALARTS**