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'INDECENT' EXPOSURE Paula Vogel on haunting play. Photo by Todd Rosenbera

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AFTERMATH Peaceful assembly after flag-burning, priest's removal Photo of Resurrection Catholic Church by Carrie 6



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SAY HER NAM

Rally remembers trans victims of violence



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online exclusives at www.WindyCityTimes.com

(left).



WE GOT NECKS

'STREET' LIFE WCT profiles Mott St. general manager Liz Wolferman.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Robyn, Greg Berlanti and the show Veronica Mars.

plus DAILY BREAKING NEWS

ELECTRIC AVENUE

Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

Audi goes fully electric with the e-tron



With a Kiss I Die is an LGBT vampire film with a Shakespearean twist. Film still courtesy of Mona Elyafi

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Anti-gay Daley Plaza rant caught on video

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Windy City Times received a video of a man—holding a clipboard and wearing a T-shirt supporting Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle—using anti-gay language in Daley Plaza.

The person who filmed the video asked that their name not be used.

After an initial verbal altercation, the person began filming the man, at which point he suggested that "straight men" wouldn't follow other men around, and said that the person filming had "sugar in their tank."

While the man's T-shirt was supporting one of Preckwinkle's runs for Cook County board president, the incident took place Sept. 19, just a day before Preckwinkle was scheduled to announce a bid for Chicago mayor; a man wearing a similar shirt is visible in the background, suggesting they were canvassing for Preckwinkle.

Also on Sept. 19, news broke that Preckwinkle had fired her chief of staff for "inappropriate behavior."

"While we are grateful for the countless volunteers who have stepped up to offer their support of Toni's campaign, the actions of this individual are inexcusable. Our campaign has a zero-tolerance policy against anyone engaging in homophobic and transphobic behavior. We are taking immediate action to track the individual and relieve him of his volunteer duties," said Monica Trevino, Toni Preckwinkle's campaign spokesperson. "Toni has a proven track record for championing the rights of the LGBTQ community, and anyone not in line with her values will be immediately removed.

Chicago recognizes 'International Day of Bisexual Visibility'

On Sept. 21, the Office of the Mayor in the City of Chicago issued a proclamation in recognition of the International Day of Bisexual Visibility.

Three bisexual activisits created this community holiday in 1999 to celebrate bisexual people in the face of invisibility and stigma.

The Chicago Bisexual Health Task Force (CBHTF) sponsored the proclamation's development. Among other things, the proclamation highlights the striking health disparities that bisexual people face compared to people of other sexual orientations.

The mission of the CBHTF is to improve the lives of bisexual+ individuals in the Chicagoland area by mobilizing communities, engaging in research, advocacy, and education, and supporting the development and implementation of policies and programs.

More about the CBHTF is on Facebook. The full text of the proclamation is there.

Gursch memorial set for Oct. 20

A memorial gathering for Arthur Fursch, who died June 22, will be held Saturday, Oct. 20, 1-4 p.m., at Grace Place, 637 S. Dearborn St.

Gursch, in recent years, was a member of Gay Liberation Network, formerly Chicago Anti-Bashing Network. Also, he participated in the senior program at the Center on Halsted, which had moved to Addison Avenue. Many groups Gursch was involved with go back all the way to the Stonewall riots, both in Chicago and New York.

More about Gursch is at http://www.windycity-mediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Activist-Arthur-Gursch-dies-at-72/63423.html. For more about the venue, visit http://gracechicago.org/.

Grant celebration of life Oct. 2

A celebration of life for Harry Hodges, aka entertainer Ginger Grant, will take place Tuesday, Oct. 2, at the Baton Show Lounge, 436 N. Clark St., at 8 p.m.

Hodges 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.

No reservations will be accepted. For more information, see The Baton's Facebook page.



Ginger Grant.Photo from Jim Flint book

GUEST COLUMN





Aging gracefully: Don't speak of overcoats or bowels

The old saw says, "You know you are getting old when you begin to talk about the state of your bowels." As a young, newly employed elementary school teacher, my mother often would ask me, "When are you going to be a grown up and buy yourself an overcoat?"

At a garage sale, a much older customer lowered himself into a chair to rest, making loud sighing, groaning, aching sounds. My friend Roger labeled those "Old Man Noises" and warned against making them ourselves.

It is said that "you are only as old as you think you are" and "old age is only a state of mind."

It is said that if you "act old, you are old."

Well here I am, now 73 years old—and I am older, born in 1945, for which you have to scroll down quite a way when filling out your age in an online form—and it amazes me how many years there are in that list between when I was born and today!

Excuse me, but I have to admit that I am more aware of my bowels, now own an over coat, feel the aches and pains while resisting "old man noises" and realize that short of thinking or feeling or acting old, the body has a mind of its own as it slows down, breaks down, lets you down.

My podiatrist told me that my feet needed more attention because "It's like having a car for 73 years and never being able to change the tires."

My skin doctor tells me that dry skin and itching is normal for a person my age. My age? So the lotion bottle has become a permanent fixture on the sink counter.

At my yearly visits to the eye doctor, she talks about farsightedness getting better and nearsightedness getting worse, which is usual as one gets older and one must keep an eye (so to speak) on one's cataracts, which begin to cloud.

While I usually do not talk about growing older, keeping it privately to myself, it is nice now and then to discuss the symptoms with friends of the same or similar age, just to compare notes to know that you are not alone in your years, and it is possible to learn something you did not know about living with ag-

ing. Writing also helps one process the situation.

Another thing that happens as you get older is that you go unnoticed. People are not attracted to you, are not sizing you up as a sex partner, are not necessarily interested in what you have to say. Luckily fantasy still exists. Even though you have given your best to society during your prime years, you are deemed somewhat useless. The young do not understand who you are in today's world and you do not understand who they are.

I find myself saying what my parents used to say with dismay, as well as, at times, with disgust: "This generation ... I just don't understand them!" Ironically, there are so many more things I now understand about my parents and the changes they went through as they aged, but hopefully I am doing it more gracefully, having learned from watching them getting older while not becoming curmudgeons.

You know, these are my hips and they can ache if they want to. These are my rotator cuffs and they can hurt when they want to. This is my lower back and if it needs to go out of alignment, I give it my permission. This is my headache and I am entitled to it, although I might share it with a few aspirin.

My body has served me well for 73 years. Short of major surgery, which luckily exists if necessary, there is no neighborhood service shop that can oil my joints, retread my feet, tune up my muscle composition, rotate my blood vessels, alter my body mass or refill my visual ability.

I am grateful for all the signs of being old which means I am still alive: Enjoying the changes in the seasons, the holidays that come and go, a play or an opera or two, the excellent meals prepared by friends or enjoyed at the newest neighborhood restaurant, a good deep afternoon nap; I love them all!

Does the quote "Keep calm and carry on," which was a motivational poster produced by the British government in 1939 in preparation for World War II, (and never actually used until recently) apply to aging as well? I think it does!

Michael holds his BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana, additional degree work at the Hunter College in New York, his MA as an Education Generalist with a concentration in Gifted Education from the National Lewis University in Evanston, and an Advanced Certificate in Education Administration and Supervision, also from the U of I in Urbana.

Gerber/Hart board president outlines plans at fundraiser

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, 6500 N. Clark St., held its Fall 2018 fundraiser, "Open History, Open Future," at the library on Sept. 22. About 75 supporters attended.

Board President John D'Emilio briefly outlined Gerber/Hart's goals and achievements in brief remarks, noting that the library "is in a really good stage of its history."

He praised Gerber/Hart's "solid core of volunteers" and added that, "The collections are in really good order, better than they've ever been."

Among the goals he outlined is an ambitious project to digitize several runs of LGBT publications from the '70s, '80s and '90s, an effort whose first phase will likely cost about \$7,000. Guests at the Sept. 22 event pledged enough to cover about half that cost.

"The digitization project would not only save

Report: Trans people no risk to restrooms

A new study from the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law revealed that there is no evidence that allowing transgender people use public facilities that align with their gender identity increases safety risks, NBC News reported.

The study presented findings from sites in Massachusetts with and without gender identity inclusive public accommodation nondiscrimination ordinances.

Moreover, the study revealed that reports of privacy and safety violations in public restrooms, locker rooms and changing rooms are extremely rare.

The study is at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13178-018-0335-z. The NBC News article is at https://www.nbcnews.com.

Controversial CPD commander dies

Jon Burge—the former Chicago Police Department (CPD) commander connected to the torture of detained suspects, almost all of them African-American—has died in Florida at age 70.

More than 100 people claimed Burge and his detectives tortured them into false confessions. Burge served more than four years in prison for committing perjury about torture under his watch.

The City of Chicago eventually agreed to pay more than \$5 million to 57 of the individuals.



John D'Emilio at fundraiser. Photo by Matt Simonette

us from the reality of deteriorating paper. ... It allows us to index these publications as well," D'Emilio said.

Other fundraising goals for Gerber/Hart would cover additional high-quality boxes and shelving space; finding aids to help patrons better learn about and access the library's resources; and a comprehensive mapping project highlighting locations that are significant for Chicago LGBT history.

D'Emilio, who only recently began his tenure as board president, also celebrated his 70th birth-day that evening. During his remarks, he noted that it had been about 45 years since he first committed to studying LGBT history.

"Believe me, I had no idea what kind of path it was going to take me on," he said.

After his public remarks, he praised his predecessor as board president, Carrie Barnett, who he said worked diligently alongside the board to shepherd the library through a time of crisis several years ago.

"It was the right time for me to take this on, and the right time for the organization," D'Emilio said. "Carrie created the right foundation."

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



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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



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Peaceful assembly follows rainbow-flag burning at church

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Chicago Ald. Deb Mell (33rd Ward) organized a peaceful assembly Sept. 19 outside Resurrection Catholic Church, 3043 N. Francisco Ave., in response to Pastor Fr. Paul Kalchik and seven parishioners' unauthorized burning of a rainbow flag.

Mell and about 30 community members gathered, with some holding up Hate Has No Home Here banners and others rainbow flags, across the street from the church to send a message to Kalchik that his action was unacceptable.

"Thank you everyone for coming out on this rainy day for this very important display of peace," said Mell. "This morning, I woke up and was going through my Twitter feed and I [saw] 'Priest burns gay flag in exorcism ceremony' and I did not click on it because I did not think it was in my ward, but somewhere else. Then I learned it was Fr. Paul and right away I became very angry because Fr. Paul and I know each other well. We deal with the parking situation around the church, street vendors and other ward issues and I had no idea of the hate in his heart for our community. I have been hearing from a lot of folks throughout this city today and they are also very concerned about the level of incendiary action that Fr. Paul took last Friday.

"We understand that Fr. Paul is also healing from his own wounds from the abuse he suffered as a child, but it is not OK to demonize a whole community and put out hateful rhetoric to make himself feel better. I really wish he would look inside himself. We have come so far in the LGBTQ community and have so many things to celebrate. To think this hatred is being spread in our neighborhood is not acceptable. LGBTQ families are the fabric of our neighborhoods."

Mell praised Cardinal Blase Cupich for telling Kalchik that the church did not give him the authority to burn the rainbow flag. She further spoke about growing up Catholic herself, and added that she was encouraged by gradual progress she sees in the church around LGBTQ people and issues.

Mell also noted that Kalchik quoted scripture that called for the killing of LGBTQ people. That kind of speech, she added, "cannot go unchecked" because LGBTQ people, especially trans people of color, are being killed in Chicago and across the country. She called on Kalchik to come meet with the protestors because she had a rainbow flag for him; he did not emerge from the church, however.

Speaking with reporters, Mell said that she hopes Kalchik is open to change which is why she

wants to have a dialogue with him. Addressing Kalchik's assertion that pedophilia is connected with having gay priests in the church's ranks, Mell said there is no evidence that "gay people are pedophiles more than straight people."

In terms of Kalchik's connection to what DignityUSA calls the extreme, ultraconservative and not officially recognized Church Militant website, where his writings have been published, Mell said the site does not equate with the person she knows who has assisted the homeless, immigrants and refugees. She added that her relationship with Kalchik is strained now and called on him to be removed from the parish so he can go get the help he needs.

One anti-LGBTQ protestor was in the crowd and shouted out, "You're lying" and, "You changed, he didn't," while Mell was answering reporter's questions.

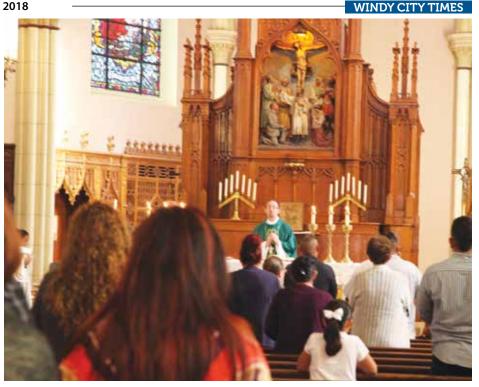
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Rev. Emily Heitzman also spoke. She said what happened was "heartbreaking and shameful, and that it was instigated by someone of the cloth made it even worse.

"What this priest did, and his uninformed and bigoted statements, give scandal to the people of God and promote bigotry, violence and hatred," said longtime LGBTQ civil rights activist and practicing Roman Catholic Rick Garcia, who also attended the protest. "As far back as 1976, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated that gay people are entitled to 'friendship, love and justice.' What Fr. Kalchik did was neither friendly, loving nor just.

"To his great credit, Cardinal Cupich told the priest not to move forward with the flag burning, and [warned that], if he did, there would be 'canonical penalties,' and the cardinal was clear in affirming the dignity of all people, including LGBTQ people."

Activist TJ Williams-Hauger, who was not at the protest, added: "Resurrection Parish Church has been a parish who has historically been supportive of the LGBT community. The rainbow flag was previously on display in the sanctuary of the church as a testament to Jesus' radical message of love and equality. While the voice of protest is important in all cases of speaking against oppression and bigotry, I feel that it is most appropriate to target not the church, but Fr. Paul Kalchik, who committed this act of hatred."

On Sept. 22, the efforts of the protestors and other concerned community members paid off. Cardinal Cupich announced, via a letter, that Pastor Kalchik had been removed from his parish effective immediately.



Service at Resurrection Catholic Church on Sept. 23. Photo by Jane Rickard

Little Village wins top chamber award

The Little Village Chamber of Commerce in Chicago received the United States Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) "Chamber of the Year" Award during the 2018 USHCC National Convention in Philadelphia, a press release from the chamber stated.

The USHCC Chamber of the Year Award honors chambers that have achieved major accomplishments in the areas of business economic development, procurement and access to capital. The award spotlights chambers that epitomize leadership, commitment to the Hispanic business community, and outstanding accomplishments.

Last year, the Little Village Chamber of Commerce received the USHCC Local Chamber Grant Program to fund an entrepreneurship program known as Juntos Emprendemos, which helped 75 small businesses in Chicago.

Court: State Dept. cannot deny passport to non-binary citizen

A U.S. District Court Judge ruled Sept. 19 that the U.S. State Department exceeded its authority under the Passport Act of 1926 when it denied a passport to Lambda Legal client Dana Zzyym, a U.S. Navy veteran who is intersex and non-binary, and does not identify as male or female.

Because Zzyym could not choose a gender on

the passport application, the application was denied.

Lambda Legal argued that the State Department violated the Administrative Procedure Act as well as the due process and equal protection aspects of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"It is well past time for Dana Zzyym and other non-binary citizens of this country to be recognized and respected for who they are, to live openly and authentically, and to be able simply to travel freely about the world," Lambda Legal Senior Attorney Paul D. Castillo said in a statement. "Dana is intersex, and identifies as intersex and non-binary, but the U.S. Passport application did not allow them to identify themselves accurately. In light of this ruling, we call on the State Department to promptly issue Dana this essential document that accurately reflects their gender."

Victory Fund brunch Oct. 14

The LGBTQ Victory Fund—which works to achieve LGBTQ equality by recruiting, training and supporting openly LGBTQ candidates for public office around the nation—will hold a Champagne brunch Sunday, Oct. 14, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., at Chez Event Space, 247 E. Ontario St.

During the reception, Victory Fund CEO Mayor Annise Parker will share her insights on LGBTQ issues and politics of the day, and provide an insider update on LGBTQ candidates running across the country.

See "Victory Fund Chicago Champagne Reception" on Facebook.



artsandtheaterweekly.com

National LGBT veterans' group meets in Chicago

The Chicago chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) hosted the 2018 national convention of the American Veterans for Equal Rights Sept. 20-23 at the Center on Halsted and hosted a semi-formal banquet Sept. 22 at Ann Sather restaurant on Belmont Avenue.

Amanda Simpson—a former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense and the only openly transgender woman U.S. presidential appointee (pictured here with Jim Darby, president emeritus of the Chicago chapter of AVER)—was the keynote speaker. Kristin Beck—a former U.S. Navy seal and Purple Heart recipient who, in 2013, came out nationally as an openly transgender woman—spoke at the banquet and received the Sgt. Leonard Matlovitch Award.

Danny Ingram, a past national president of AVER, also spoke at the banquet; outgoing AVER President Steven Ingram addressed the group at the Center on Halsted.

Report: Only 1 in 4 young gay, bi men uses Truvada

The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law has found that only 4 percent of sexually active gay and bisexual men in the United States use Truvada as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined is a highly effective tool to prevent the transmission of HIV.

This is the first study to report on estimates of HIV testing and use of PrEP among gay and bisexual men using a national probability sample in the United States. In the study, researchers examined gay and bisexual men in three age groups: young (18-25), middle (34-41) and older (52-59).

Other findings include that:

—Bisexual and non-urban men were less familiar with PrEP compared with gay-identified and urban men;

—Slightly more than half (52 percent) of young sexually active gay and bisexual men were familiar with PrEP as HIV prevention, compared with 79 percent of men aged 34-41; and

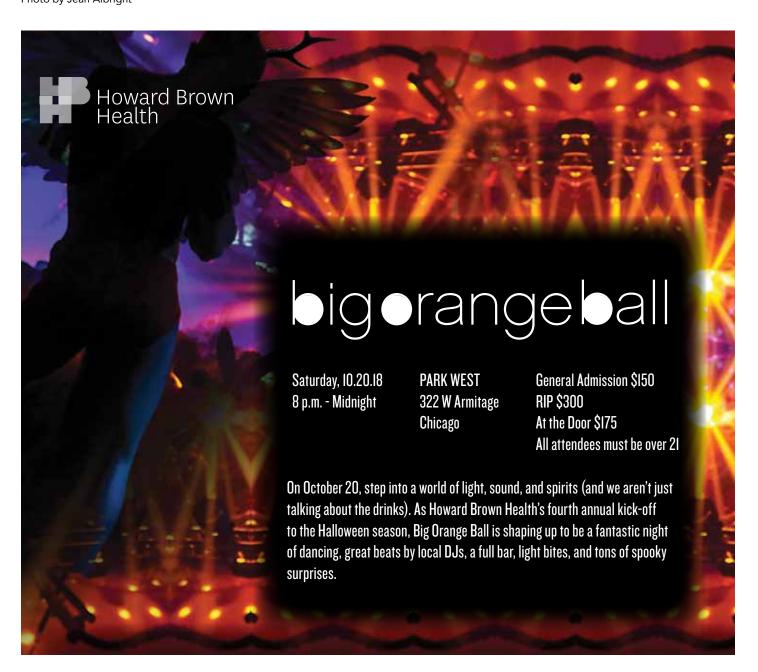
—Black gay/bisexual men were more likely than White men to meet recommendations for HIV testing, which may be due to recent efforts to target Black men for HIV testing.

The full report is at https://journals.plos. org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal. pone.0202806.

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Jim Darby and Amanda Simpson. Photo by Jean Albright



Brave Space Alliance holds transgender anti-violence rally

BY VERNON HESTER

On Sept. 21, Brave Space Alliance held a rally in front of Trump Tower at the intersection of Wabash Avenue and Wacker Drive to address the ongoing epidemic of murder towards transgender women of color.

The event, called "#SayHerName," was meant as a wake-up call following the death of transgender woman Dejanay Stanton, who was found dead with a bullet in the head in an alley in Chicago. Stanton was the 17th trans female resident in the United States to be murdered this year—and the number has increased since then.

Speaking to the crowd that numbered about 100, trans woman and activist Stephanie Skora said, "There have been so many [this year] that I have lost track ... but I can tell you: The trans community—we own our dead." She also said, "When a cis man or cis woman gets murdered, people hit the streets in hours. When a trans individual dies, nobody will claim them. When we want people to say, 'trans lives matter,' we want them to mean it. Our deaths deserve marches, too; we deserve to shut down highways, too [referring to Rev. Michael Pfleger's anti-gun rally that closed sections of the Dan Ryan Expressway and Lake Shore Drive this summer]. I want to make sure that trans women are included in this outrage." Skora concluded, "There would be no gay civil rights without trans women [of color]. Trans women have always been at the forefront."

Brave Space Alliance CEO LaSaia Wade said,

"This is for our sisters who are afraid to come out. ... We would have more people here, but people are afraid to come out." Addressing cis allies, Wade said, "You want us to stand by your side but you refuse to respect us and stand by ours? We are not asking for handouts saying 'please, please, pretty please.' I am the CEO of our own organization on the South Side of Chicago and we have the right to say how we want it, if we want it and if we don't want it." She then asked those present, "When you leave this space, what are you going to do? How are you going to support?"

Activist Karari Olvera Orozco said to the crowd, "I'm 34 years old. The life expectancy for trans women of color is 35, and you may be marching for me next year." Orozco pointed out that in this situation, "It does not matter who is in the White House; it matters who is on the streets."

At the close of the rally, those in attendance observed a moment of acknowledgement for victims by reciting their names in unison followed by the phrase, "Say her name." The names of the victims included London Moore, Diamond Stephens, Sasha Garden, Keisha Wells, Catalina Christina James, Antash'a English, Amia Tyrae Berryman, Tonya Harvey, Phylicia Mitchell, Vontashia Bell, Shantee Tucker, Celine Walker, Janelle Ortiz, Roxanna Hernandez, Vicky Gutierrez, Dejanay Stanton and Christa Leigh Steele-Knudslien.

Other speakers at the event included activists Tanya Cordova and Toni Marie Preston.



Karari Olvera Orozco at the rally. Photo by Vern Hester



LaSaia Wade addresses the crowd at the rally. Photo by Vern Hester

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.

Immigrants, officials criticize Rauner vetoes

Immigrant community members, state legislators and leaders with the Campaign for a Welcoming Illinois denounced Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner's vetoes of the VOICES Act (SB 34), the Immigration Safe Zones Act (SB 35), and the Immigrant Tenant Protection Act (SB 3103) recently.

The vetoes come almost exactly a year after Rauner joined community members in Chicago to sign the Illinois TRUST Act—a bill that barred state and local law enforcement from arresting and holding individuals based on im-

migration status or immigration warrants and detainers.

The VOICES Act, SB 34, would protect immigrant survivors of domestic violence by standardizing the process across Illinois for them to get certifications from law-enforcement agencies in order to seek federal protections. The Safe Zones Act, SB 35, would develop model policies to protect immigrants against ICE arrests at courthouses, schools, hospitals and other sensitive locations. The Immigrant Tenant Protection Act, SB 3103, would bar landlords from evicting or threatening tenants based on their actual or suspected immigration status.

Fred Tsao, senior policy counsel at the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, said in a statement, "A year ago, Gov. Rauner signed the TRUST Act, yet today he announces vetoes for three bills that would make our state more welcoming. One moment he is addressing the needs of immigrant communities, and the next, he is using hateful antimmigrant rhetoric to rationalize rejecting bills that are vital to our communities. Can immigrants really trust this governor?"

Dream Town has 'Be You' campaign

Real-estate brokerage firm Dream Town Realty has a brand campaign for 2018, "Be You."

The new campaign is inspired by the Oscar Wilde quote "Be yourself—everyone else is already taken."

The new ad campaign will come to life throughout Chicago in outdoor, digital and social/online applications. .

There will be a \$10,000 grand prize for the top photo. Through Sept. 30, anyone can submit a "BE YOU" moment online. Visit BeYouChicago.com for all the details and to enter the contest.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey attended a small gathering for the national LG-BTQ political action committee LPAC Sept. 12 at an event hosted by attorney Gail Morse at the law offices of Jenner & Block in Chicago.

Healey, who is running for re-election, spoke passionately about her work and the work of her Democratic attorney general counterparts across the United States in fighting back against the Trump-era rollbacks of rights across a broad spec-

trum. She also addressed the fight in her state to keep transgender rights in place, as they face an anti-trans ballot measure this November.

LPAC states it "builds the political power of LG-BTQ women by electing candidates—LGBTQ women in particular—who champion LGBTQ rights, women's equality, and social justice."

See https://teamlpac.com/. Photo by Tracy Baim



Pictured from left: AG Maura Healey, LPAC Executive Director Stephanie Sandberg, LPAC co-founder/Board Chair Laura Ricketts and Gail Morse.

Photo by Tracy Baim

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE HAS MADE ME A MORE CARING INDIVIDUAL. KARISMA S HIRE TRANS transhirechicago.org

Safe Schools Alliance, PHIMC to merge

The board of directors for the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (Alliance) and Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that expresses their intent to merge in December.

Since January, the Alliance has met with local and national organizations to explore a partner-ship that would provide long-term program sustainability and a stronger infrastructure while preserving the essence of the organization's longstanding core work of policy, public education and LGBTQ youth organizing.

PHIMC enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare systems to promote health equity and expand access to services.

Museum exhibit features '68 DNC

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

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

Museum visitors can revisit the 1968 DNC allyear round in the Museum's permanent exhibition "Chicago: Crossroads of America."

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

Lurie study seeks LGBTQ youth

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

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

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

Food and travel reimbursement will be provided for those who meet in-person, and all eligible youth will receive a \$25 for participating. The study conductors will travel throughout the state to meet youth at locations of safety and convenience for them.

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

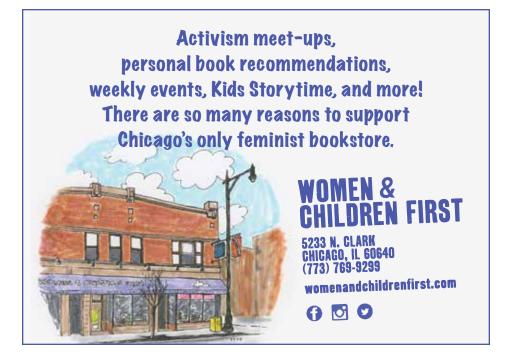
TransTech Summit Oct. 20 in Chicago

The second annual TransTech Summit will take place Saturday, Oct. 20, 8:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m, at Groupon headquarters, 600 W. Chicago Ave.

The summit will include workshops in web/ app technology, media technology, design technology, and business technology. Lunch will be provided.

In addition, the keynote speaker will be Angelica Ross, the founder of TransTech and an actress on the FX hit TV Series Pose.

Early registration is open (\$25-\$50 each); visit https://www.universe.com/events/transtech-summit-2018-chicago-tickets-R7DVPK. For nore information, email info@transtechsocial.org.



Puerto Rican solidarity groups protest Trump administration's neglect

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Calling attention to what they said was the Trump Administration's neglect of Puerto Rico in the year since Hurricane Maria destroyed much of that U.S. territory, Chicago solidarity groups held a protest Sept. 20 at Federal Plaza as a part of a nationwide day of action.

The protest also denounced the Congress-approved Puerto Rico Fiscal Control Board's harsh austerity measures.

Among the speakers were Chicago Boricua Resistance members Veronica Tirado and Emely Medina; Chicago Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines member Michael Boyte; Chicago Teachers Union Latinx Caucus members and union delegates Marlena Ceballos and Victoria Rosario; Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression Co-Chair and Chicago Police Accountability Council member Jazmine Salas; US Palestinian Community Network-Chicago member Nareen Askar; Anakbayan Chicago Chairperson Maya Arcilla; and Mijente member Rebecca Martinez.

Prior to speakers' remarks, emcee Miguel Alvelo read the names of the known dead (out of the almost 3,000 reported deaths) and called on everyone to say "presenté" after each name. Alvelo said most of these people died due to colonialism and racism, not because of the hurricane.

"For more than 500 years, Puerto Rico has been an occupied land and Puerto Ricans have not been considered human," said Alvelo. "We are here to honor the memory of all of the people of the Caribbean who died as a result of these human rights abuses, and to denounce the actions of the U.S. government. We demand justice."

Luis Tubens read a protest poem in both English and Spanish.

Tirado spoke about losing contact with her mother for weeks after the hurricane, adding that due to neglect by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments, there was not enough food, water or medicine.

"Bondholders and the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments are dismantling the island in a criminal way," said Tirado. "They are making profit out of other people's pain."

"Today, we unite our voices with the people around the world in solidarity for the people of Puerto Rico." said Medina.

Medina explained that the Fiscal Control Board and FEMA have made the situation worse by starving the people of resources in the year since Hurricane Maria. She said this includes closing schools and not rebuilding homes, resulting in many people attending schools in Puerto Rican government-funded (millions of dollars) trailers and living in tents. People have not been able to bury their dead with dignity, added Medina.

Both Tirado and Medina demanded that the Puerto Rican debt be erased, schools reopened

and a sustainable plan be implemented for public education and accessible public health systems for everyone on the island.

Boyte drew parallels between what is happening in the Philippines with the U.S.-backed dictator Duterte and how the U.S. government reacted to Puerto Rican's plight post-Hurricane Maria. He called on the audience to chant, "We will bring imperialism down," and said the way forward is resistance to government oppression.

Ceballos said that when the hurricane hit both she and Rosario reached out to each other because they did not know if their families were alive, and could not concentrate on their work. She denounced politicians who did photo-ops while containers of food and water were sitting in warehouses on the island spoiling because they were not distributed to the people due to an archaic law.

"Sometimes the laws are not right, and you have to break the law to save lives," said Ceballos.

Rosario explained that they wanted to do something meaningful and impactful so they took a group of educators to Puerto Rico during Spring Break to help with the recovery efforts. She said neo-liberal policies are destroying communities, including their educational resources, in Puerto Rico and across the rest of the United States.

"This was not a disaster that was natural," said Rosario. "It was an intentional, calculated act and opportunity for those who want to capitalize on other people's pain."

Salas said her mother was born in Puerto Rico and she spent days wondering if her family members were alive.

"It was one of the worst experiences of my life and a reminder of the intergenerational trauma that we have been carrying around," said Salas.

Salas explained the history of the island and how the U.S. government's colonialist policies have stripped the people of their culture and language. She said this practice continues to this day.

"While the doofus in the White House is throwing paper towels and claiming a job well done, the people stepped up to do the job themselves," said Salas.

Askar said her organization stands in solidarity with Puerto Rico. She explained that it would be hypocritical for her to ask people to support the Palestinian cause if they did not do the same for Puerto Ricans, especially since they have both been under colonization for many years.

Arcilla explained that her organization is fighting for democracy in the Philippines.

"Puerto Rican blood is on the hands of the U.S. government," said Arcilla.

Martinez said her organization is "pro-Black, pro-immigrant and pro-queer." She explained that justice transcends borders and that colonialism and white supremacy, as well as neo-liberal-



Miguel Alvelo speaks at the rally. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

ism, work together to oppress and destroy people of color.

Between remarks, Alvelo led chants in English, Spanish and Tagalog.

Lester Rey and Rebel Diaz closed out the protest with resistance songs while the attendees made their way from Federal Plaza to Trump Tower, then to the Que4 community online radio headquarters in the West Loop, to heal. Some attendees also gave spoken word performances during the open mic that was available at Que4.

Twice during the protest a Homeland Security vehicle drove by and stayed parked alongside the curb for more than five minutes.

Arab American Action Network, TAKE ON HATE, La Voz de los de Abajo, Lifted Voices, Teachers for Social Justice and Gay Liberation Network were also on hand to offer support and solidarity during the protest.

NCTE: Gov't changed gender-marker website

Although the current passport gender-marker policy remains unchanged, language about the process for changing those markers on U.S. passports has been altered or removed from the State Department's website, according to a National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) press release.

The longstanding page regarding "Gender Designation" policies—in place since 2010—has been removed, and a new but similar page concerning what they now call "Sex Designation" has been put in its place, with major changes.

Among the changes claimed were the removal of resources from the American Medical Association and the World Professional Association of Transgender Health, and the change of the most mentions of the word "gender" to "sex," among other alterations.

However, a State Department official emailed Windy City Times about the development, saying things have been changed back: "We want to state unequivocally that there has been no change in policy or in the way we adjudicate passports for transgender applicants. The Department of State is committed to treating all passport applicants with dignity and respect.

"With regard to recent changes to our website regarding transgender passport applicants, we added language to make our use of terms consistent and accurate and to eliminate any confusion customers may have related to the passport application process. We apologize for inadvertently including some language which may be considered offensive and are updating the website to remove it.

"Our goal is to make sure our use of these terms is consistent and accurate and to eliminate any confusion customers may have related to passport application process. U.S. passports and passport applications have always used the term 'sex' marker.

"The links to AMA and WPATH were inadvertently removed during the website update process and are being added back: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/applyrenew-passport/change-of-sex-marker.html."

To learn more about the requirements for updating the gender marker on a U.S. passport, visit NCTE's ID Documents Center (https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/passports).

—Andrew Davis



Making contacts at the WERQ! job fair. Photos by Kirk Williamson

Successful WERQ! job fair takes place at Center on Halsted

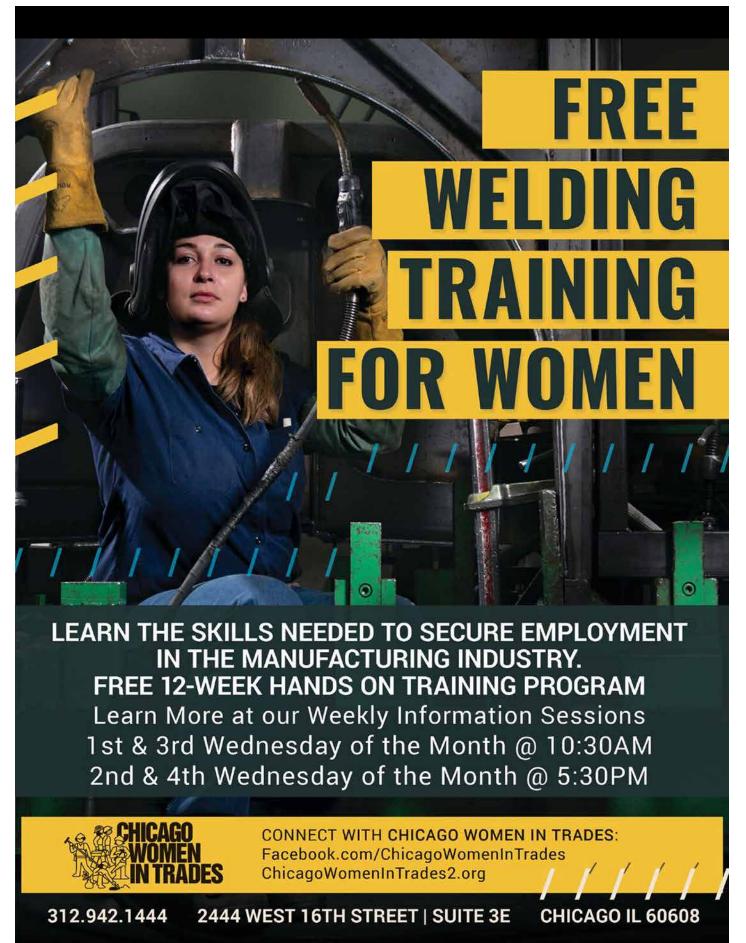
More than 80 major corporations, small businesses, government agencies and nonprofits took part in the 4th annual Windy City Times WERQ! LGBTQ job fair Sept. 21 at Chicago's Center on Halsted

The job fair, which was free and open to the public, featured Windy City Times with Center on Halsted, MB Financial Bank, US Bank, Trunk Club, Howard Brown Health, Pride Action Tank, Chicago House, Association of Latino/as Motivating Action, Affinity Community Services, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Brave Space Alliance, Out & Equal Chicagoland and Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus as hosts.

This was the 4th WERQ! LGBTQ Job Fair. The first focused primarily on youth experiencing homelessness, and in 2016 there was a special emphasis on youth, trans and seniors.



An exhibitor (Betancourt Realty) at the WERQ! job fair.



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viewpoints



THE AMAZON TRAIL

There is no place like home

I was recently contemplating my shoes, which, along with clothes and boxes of books, are the only closeted things in our home.

That morning I'd noticed my sweetheart had attached a magnet depicting Dorothy's ruby shoes to our back door. Now, I'm as big a fan of The Wizard of Oz as the next gay person, but those shoes were never particularly significant to me. Which might be because, as a little kid, I read and reread the 1903 edition of The Wizard of Oz handed down to me from my considerably older brother and, perhaps, from my father before him. The inscription from Grandma and Grandpa Lynch is: "To read on train to North Dakota. March, 1939."

Of course, the shoes were not ruby-colored, as pointed out by the witty and erudite Kajmeister (kajmeister.com), in her blog "The Page Turns," which she posted not long after the magnet went up. Kajmeister wrote: "L. Frank Baum, author of all the Oz books, originally put the witch and Dorothy into silver, not ruby, shoes. The color was changed to ruby so that the new color process used in MGM could show the shoes off better against the yellow brick road."

I checked the book. The color plates are in orange, blue and yellow, no reds. The road, by the way, is definitely yellow and the artist, W.W. Denslow, outlined bricks on one of the color pages. Baum describes the shoes as silver and pointed and "tinkling merrily on the hard, yellow roadbed."

All that ruby slipper focus led to my footwear contemplations. Aside from tap shoes, the first pair I remember caring about were in a Medford, Massachusetts store front and made of faux alligator leather. Why I longed for them I have no idea, and I never got them. They were probably too expensive for my family.

This was back in the unimaginable 1950s. Since then, I have spent my life in footwear more likely to be worn by the scarecrow. I wasn't exactly a demure little girl and went through white sneakers before I could outgrow demure shoes. I used a lot of white liquid polish to cover scuffs and stains on my white sneaks, which were made of cotton. The stain also



The author, in white sneakers. Photo courtesy of Lee Lynch

worked on white leather shoes, but the Mary Jane style didn't suit me at all.

My mother always said loafers were bad for my feet, and they were because I've had plantar fasciitis since the days we shopped at the Buster Brown shoe store on Main Street in Flushing, New York. But I loved my loafers, especially the ones that were dyed to the shade of a vanilla milkshake. These were the shoes of my coming out time. Nothing made me feel spiffier around town with my girlfriend Suzy than my vanilla loafers.

Except white sneakers, blue jeans and a plain white sweatshirt, sleeves pushed up.

Except white bucks with crepe soles, blue jeans, a button-down shirt and a golf jacket, collar up.

Then came the '60s. At college by then, I forswore shoes. Campus lesbian poet, it was practically expected. There's a photo of the barefoot student that was me in that yearbook, striding across campus like Dorothy, very much "a little girl ... who had been suddenly whisked away from her own country and set down in the midst of a strange land."

I found my "hippie sandals" at an upscale sidewalk sale in Boston. It was also the psychedelic era and sandals, among the liberal arts majors, were de rigueur. Thin-soled, leather thongs with straps, they were the next best thing to barefoot when you had to go into a store or pizza parlor.

Were any of these the silver shoes that would take me home? Not yet. Not for a long while.

My generation of women got tired of doing the behind-the-scenes work for the revolution. We paradoxically experienced patriarchal oppression within the counterculture and got mad. No more Ms. Nice Girl, I bought shitkickers. In the 1970s, Army-Navy Surplus stores carried the jump boots of Paratroopers and the Airborne Forces. I felt pretty powerful lacing them up my calf and knowing the rigid toe cap could endanger male chauvinist pigs.

Next came the ankle-high Timberlands which I bought to wear in chilly Connecticut. The tread didn't cut it on the ice and they did me no good whatsoever in deep snow so I made the sixties journey a little late (in the eighties), went to California and bought my first Red Wing boots. Soon those Red Wings carried me west for good to the lesbian mountains, women's land, and tall rubber mud boots.

Not that I left my Birkkies behind. Arizonas, Bostons, I re-soled them until they weren't fit to wear, then replaced them year after year. I guess they were my middle-age shoes, though I still wear the Arizona knock-offs recommended by my podiatrist. By the time one gets to Medicare age, and the plantar fasciitis rages, and everything in Trumplandia costs double what it used to, the real thing isn't as important as it once was.

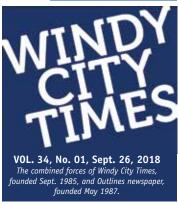
Now that I can no longer run, the doc has put me in running shoes. Most of my waking hours are spent in Asics. Men's for the wide toe box. Neon green to honor the late young writer Sandra Moran, who ran in lively-colored shoes. My sweetheart and I even have waterproof Gore-Tex Asics, for our Northwest rains and for walking our coastal beaches.

It seems like I never needed silver or ruby shoes to get home.

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ARTSCTHEATER WINDY ARTSCHEIM A

WEEKLY

SAM KIRK'S MURAL **BRINGS A CONVERSATION ABOUT** INTERSECTIONALITY TO BOYSTOWN **PAGE 21** Mural of Kiam Marcelo Junio. Photo by Jake Wittich

THEATER REVIEW

Frankenstein

Playwright: adapted by Robert Kauzlaric, from the novel by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley At: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. Tickets: Lifelinetheatre.com; 773-761-4477; \$40 Runs through: Oct. 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Two hundred years ago, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, struggling with grief over a series of untimely deaths in her immediate family, told the story of a man's audacious attempt to overcome mortality by creating a human being in his own image. His hubristic proposal does not end well.

More than a century and a half later, playwright Robert Kauzlaric, struggling with grief over the death of his own father, found in Shelley's parable a voice for the confusion accompanying upheaval in his immediate universe and the frustration arising from outsiders' inability to recognize the extent of damage engendered thereby. Now, in 2018, he recounts the story of a woman whose grief over the death of her beloved father compels her to create an imperfect replica of her late sire, assembled from her memories and her refusal to "move on" as her friends and family have.

Kauzlaric's entry in the season's unplanned Franken-fest (Lookingglass, Court, and Remy Bumppo also have Frankenstein productions planned) honoring the 200th anniversary of the horror classic's publication is less an adaptation of Shelley's neogothic fable than a wholly reimagined narrative based in an earlier concept. Our heroine is Victoria, a young woman whose emancipated mien and scholarly pursuits were championed by the parent whose loss she feels deeply. The monster conjured by her crippling bereavement is a grotesque mannequin beseeching



Ann Sonneville and Chris Hainsworth in Frankenstein.

Photo by Suzanne Plunkett

his surviving kin to endure the sorrow of separation and to embrace its inevitability.

The abstract construct of a single individual's spiritual journey is not easy to depict visually, but the collective agility exhibited by the ensemble convened for this Lifeline Theatre production weaves its many elements into an unbroken thread leading our heroine (and us) on the turbulent path through depression threatening to engulf both the living and the dead and ultimately, to recovery and acceptance.

Embodying this metaphor is Cynthia Von Orthal's towering rod-puppet Lazarus whose countenance reflects a myriad of expressions and whose multiple-operated limbs facilitate a dexterity allowing him, at one point, to physically overpower his distraught reanimator, portrayed with steely resolve by Ann Sonneville. Oh, and since an uneasy mind often resembles a mad scientist's laboratory, a virtuoso tech team supplies a kaleidoscope of hissing lights, eerie music and evocative shadows.

THEATER REVIEW

Second Skin

Playwright: Kristin Idaszak At: The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tickets: WildclawTheatre.com; \$15-\$30 Runs through: Oct. 13

BY KERRY REID

If you were going to give the elevator pitch version of Kristin Idaszak's Second Skin, now in a world premiere with WildClaw Theatre, you might well go with "It's The Secret of Roan Inish meets

Conor McPherson." This despite the fact that Idaszak's atmospheric tale takes place nowhere near the Irish settings of either John Sayles' 1994 movie or playwright McPherson's dramas.

But in subject matter and structure, the parallels are irresistible. Yet Idaszak's play, by focusing on the parallel yet alienated lives of women who are related to each other—but cannot relate to each other—adds a welcome twist of realism to the mysterious.

Sayles' magic realist film was about a young girl in an Irish fishing village who is convinced her baby brother was stolen away by a mythical half-human, half-seal creature called a "selkie." McPherson has long been lauded for his use of interlocking monologues and use of supernatural

tales as a way of exploring grief and loss. That's the way Idaszak tells her ghostly and poignant story about the fragile but persistent bonds of sisters, mothers and daughters.

Quinn (Stephanie Shum) fled her small seaside home as soon as she was able. She's run away from the mother whose nameless fears kept both of them shut away inside their home. But now her mom, Sigrid (Paula Ramirez)—whose name conveniently rhymes with "secret"—is suffering from ALS and needs her daughter's help. A chance meeting with a woman in a bar sets off a series of revelations about Sigrid's long-lost sister, Aislinn (Hilary Williams).

The stranger reminds Quinn of a chance encounter on a beach when she was quite young—

an encounter that started her mother on the path of overprotectiveness that Quinn resists. In the second monologue, Sigrid fills us in on who that stranger is (spoiler alert: it's Aislinn) and the guilt she still feels for what happened to her. In the third part, Aislinn emerges from behind the large round window at the center of Lizzie Bracken's set (which looks like a ghostly pier) and tells her side of the story. (Sarah D. Espinoza's sound design provides otherworldly mournful notes, while Kaili Story's lights add a sense of being underwater.)

The main details of the intertwined narratives don't really conflict—but the emotions do. Jess Hutchinson's staging gives each actor breathing room to grow their tale, trusting that we'll follow them through the mists of the past and let us empathize with all three women. It's not, perhaps, as dark or gory a tale as some past WildClaw efforts. But it slowly exudes a clammy sense of dread and sorrow as the women confront interior ghosts of guilt, regret and retribution that are harder to shake than any spirits in the night.

THEATER REVIEW

Arms and the Man

Playwright: George Bernard Shaw At: City Lit Theatre, 1055 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. Tickets: City:Lit.org; \$32 Runs through: Oct. 21

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This 1894 comedy is one of George Bernard Shaw's most frequently-produced works, part of a group of early dramas published as "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant." It's one of the pleasant plays owing to its happy ending, fast pace and light tone, none of which means it isn't filled with Shavian satire, sarcasm and ideas.

It's set during a 1880s war between Bulgaria (backed by Russia) and Serbia (backed by Austria). As the play opens, the wealthy Petkoff family is celebrating a final Bulgarian victory, brought about when a suicidal old-fashioned cavalry charge succeeded because the enemy's machine gun jammed. Capt. Bluntschli (Adam Benjamin), a mercenary Swiss soldier for Serbia, escapes slaughter by taking refuge in the bedroom of the Petkoff's daughter, Raina (Scottie Caldwell), the fiancée of dashing Sergius Sa-



Martin
Diaz-Valdes
and Chelsee
Carter in
Arms and the
Man.
Photo by
Steve Graue

ranoff (Martin Dias-Valdes), the Serbian officer who led the cavalry charge. Bluntschli shocks Raina by pointing Sergius's stupidity and the unromantic realities of battle which, he says, military professionals avoid at all costs.

Shaw quickly has introduced his life-long antiwar ideas, and goes on to downsize romantic love, material aspirations, social pretensions and the idea that ability has anything to do with wealth or position. Bluntschli and Raina end up together, once he leaves military service to take command of his family's luxury hotels), while Sergius—in what might have shocked Shaw's 1890s audiences—proposes to the servant girl, Louka (Chelsee Carter).

Bluntschli is the catalyst for change, the

practical Man (or Person) of Action found in all Shaw plays, who challenges others to look beyond artificial barriers of social class, wealth, gender, false romanticism and moral or intellectual cant, if you're to get anything done in the world. Practical individuals also can be self-serving, but Shaw always ignores that!

Arms and the Man is half comedy of ideas and half farce, an unusual blend for Shaw, who spends the play's second half untangling fairly standard late-19th century plot complications. This gives directors two general approaches: emphasize comedy and let ideas fend for themselves (which they can), or just the opposite. For City Lit's first Shaw play, director Brian Pastor has taken the comedy approach, guiding his actors to very broad characterizations with large reactions to things. The style works, but it will be a matter of taste for audience members with fixed notions of Shaw's dry wit and serious discussions. After all, Shaw's characters—mostly talking points-rarely are completely convincing, which led the great Laurence Olivier in the 1940s to revolt when playing Sergius.

Completing the generally competent cast are Eleanor Katz (Mrs. Petkoff), Adam Bitterman (Major Petkoff) and Linsey Falls (Nicola). Ray Toler (set) and Tom Kieffer (costumes) contribute suitable, colorful designs and a good wig for Ms. Caldwell.

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

Late Nite Catechism, The Royal George Theatre, open run. When you can't trust your own parish priest any more, remember that Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan's teaching nun has been ministering to her multicultural flock since her class first convened in 1993. MSB

The Little Foxes, Citadel Theatre, through Oct. 28. Lillian Hellman's exploration of greed and family in post-Civil War Alabama has a plot that hits like (spoiler alert, sort of) a heart attack while flaying bare (yes, I do mean flaying) the racism and misogyny of the Deep South both then and now. CES

—by Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan



Ambrose Cappuccio and Tiffany Bedwell in Naked.

Photo by Chris Popio

THEATER REVIEW

Naked

Playwright: Luigi Pirandello, translated by Nina daVinci Nichols At: Trap Door Theatre, 1655 W. Cortland Ave. Tickets: \$20-25; 773-384-0494 or TrapdoorTheatre.com Runs through: Oct. 27

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

"Tell the truth, but tell it slant," poet Emily Dickinson urged. The saying has become a universal

literary device, and a good starting point for Luigi Pirandello's Naked, a play that explores one woman's various versions of the truth. Like the secretive governess Ersilia Drei, and like Naked itself, Trap Door Theatre's production bears a lot of truth. Unfortunately, the production possesses so much slant that it's extraordinarily uneven.

Pirandello's anti-heroine (played by a luminous Tiffany Bedwell) is a survivor. Forever at the mercy of men, she's committed an act of egregious proportions—or has she, really? A protagonist like Ersilia, young and desperate but certainly not naïve, was certainly unusual for 1922, but both Pirandello and translator Nina daVinci Nichols give her the intelligence and nuance she deserves. A couple of moments are especially relevant in the "me too" era, though playwright and translator don't condone predatory behavior but merely illustrate it as a sad truth of both then and now. In turn, director Kay Martinovich has clearly put in the time with the script and actress Bedwell to ensure no facet of Ersilia goes unseen, whether she's meekly contending with an ambitious older writer (Bob Wilson) or fighting off the advances of her former lover (Ambrose Cappuccio).

The problem is, Ersilia's not the only character in the play. Far from it: She's offstage for long portions, during which the other characters analyze her motives and gossip about her effect on the men around her. Martinovich seems to have conveniently forgotten about the rest of her cast—a shame since, typical of Trap Door Theatre, they're a talented bunch. If Martinovich had spent more time vocal coaching, actors like Cappuccio wouldn't spend the entire 100 minutes

shouting in a very small space and taking the audience completely out of the moment. for example.

Martinovich handles Naked's quiet, dramatic moments much better: Ersilia's final monologue, revealing her true vulnerability in the face of horrible tragedy, is especially haunting. The issue is, Pirandello infuses his drama with a healthy dose of dark, absurdist comedy. Martinovich can't handle these oddly funny moments, choosing to direct them like a 1980s sitcom. At times, I felt like I was watching two different plays, and both the truth—and its many slants—were completely lost

Set designer Nick Schwartz has a better grasp on Pirandello's oddities. The back wall of the boardinghouse room is noticeably crooked, and the bright turquoise windows open, shut and flap according to each character's moods and whims. Combined with David Goodman-Edberg's lighting and Rachel Sypniewski's costumes, Naked has the look of a sepia-toned What's Wrong With this Picture? Everything is pretty but something is always slightly off. With a little bit of imagination, even the floor seems tilted.

Naked's production values and Bedwell's dynamic lead performance reflect what might have been. A more coherent directorial vision would have cast a harsh light on the truth—whether Ersilia's or the other characters'—and the slant.

SPOTLIGHT

Alexis J. Roston channels Billie Holiday in Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill, Lanie Robertson's gorgeous evocation of the late, great, ground-breaking singer's life. Set over the course of Day's final concert at the titular locale, the show is packed with music forever associated with Holiday ("Strange Fruit," "God Bless the Child" and others) as well as insight into her struggles with addiction. Directed by Shanesia Davis, this marks Roston's fourth time bringing Holiday to life on stage. In terms of voice and persona, Roston's delivers a mov-



ing, powerful performance. The Congo Square production runs through Oct. 7 at eta Creative Arts Foundation, 7558 S. South Chicago Ave. \$25-\$35; CongoSquareTheatre.org

Caption: Photo of Alexis J. Roston courtesy of Porchlight Theatre





16 Sept. 26, 2018 WINDY CITY TIMES



BY KAREN TOPHAM

Talking with Paula Vogel is the easiest thing in the world. Her friendly, open demeanor makes it feel like a long, warm conversation with your grandmother—if your grandmother happened to be a prolific Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and a social radical, unabashed feminist, and proud lesbian.

Vogel has written 16 plays in the last 40 years. Her work has been produced in more than 30 countries and received more awards than can be listed here. Following the brilliant Artistic Home production last spring of her Pulitzer-winning How I Learned to Drive, this fall brings two new Vogel plays to Chicago.

The Chicago premiere of Vogel's Indecent is running through Nov. 3 at the Lincoln Park's Victory Gardens Theater. At the same time, the Goodman Theatre is workshopping Vogel's newest creation, Cressida On Top. Despite a packed schedule, Vogel took the time to speak with Windy City Times in a wide-ranging interview.

Beyond The Children's Hour

Indecent is the story of a 1906 play written by a young Polish Jew named Sholem Asch. God of Vengeance proved very successful all over Europe, but when it came to America and was translated into English, authorities didn't take well to its unfettered lesbian content. God of Vengeance was shut down. Its entire cast was found quilty of

THEATER

indecency. Vogel, 66, first became familiar with the play roughly 40 years ago.

"It just floored me that [Asch], a newlywed man, a heterosexual man, could write such a beautiful love scene between two women," she said. "Up to that point, I was a little depressed and concerned that the Lillian Hellman Children's Hour was going to be the model of theatre and film in which a lesbian commits suicide or a lesbian is eternally alone and unhappy and her lover marries a man and lives happily ever after—that was kind of the model of the 1950s.

"There were not a lot of plays about lesbians," Vogel said, and what plays there were tended fo be about lesbians in primarily unhappy relationships. "I wouldn't call God of Vengeance particularly a happy play, but it basically says that the love between two women is a pure, passionate love," Vogel said.

Variations on a theme

God of Vengeance haunted Vogel for decades. In 2009, she received a phone call from director Rebecca Taichman. "She called and said, 'Do you know of this play, God of Vengeance?' and I said, 'Oh my God, do I!' As we talked on the phone it started to take shape."

Like all of Vogel's work, Indecent plays with structure and form. "I think the thing that made me start to want to write plays is that it wasn't just paint by numbers and that every person has a story and that story demands a new structure for it, one original to it," she said.

The unique structure of Indecent involves a play-within-a-play and lots of music.Vogel and Taichman came up with the notion of a dead troupe of actors rising from the dust to tell the story of God of Vengeance. From there, they took off, trying variations over multiple drafts and workshops.

The process was a departure for Vogel: For previous plays, she had written in a fury, often finishing them in as little as two weeks.

"I became adept at writing quickly in intense bouts; that's basically how I've written my plays," she said.

Seven years to premieres

Indecent proved more elusive: "It took me seven years to do the research, and then after every four or five drafts, Rebecca would do a reading or put on a workshop; I worked on it a long time. This is a large-scope piece."

Indecent premiered in 2015 in simultaneous productions at Yale Repertory Theatre and La Jolla Playhouse.It opened on Broadway in 2017 to positive reviews. (The Tribune's Chris Jones called it a "deftly structured.") It won two Tony Awards, and was nominated for three.

"At age 67, this represents the first time that I can actually travel to Chicago and work a little bit with the director and simultaneously work at the Goodman on a new play, so that's pretty exciting for me," Vogel said. "I no longer have an 80-hour-a-week day job that precludes me

from traveling."(In addition to playwriting, Vogel served for years as a department chair at the Yale School of Drama and oversaw the playwriting department at Brown University.)

Letting go, leaning in

Now, Vogel says she's excited to see how director Gary Griffin will interpret Indecent at the Victory Gardens.

"Gary and I had a wonderful 24 hours together on Cape Cod exploring his ideas, talking about the play," Vogel said. "He showed me the costume design, the set design. It's never been done this way before. Every production is radically different; it's really a director's vision. When you're doing a premiere it's a conversation and I'm in the room making adjustments."

Letting go of her creation doesn't bother Vogel.

"It's an honor, it's a thrill to see other people's' visions. If one is a control freak one, writes novels. But if one enjoys the party and the conversation, you basically become a playwright.

"As of opening night, the playwright starts to say goodbye. We're the first ones to leave the party, and there's always a kind of mourning, but it's very rewarding to know that [the play] has future lives," she said.

Many of Vogel's plays have dealt with LGBTQ+ issues. Indecent does as well, but also brings in issues of censorship, immigration, and anti-Semitism.

Human sexuality, human rights

For Vogel, LGBTQ+ issues can't be written about in a vacuum.

"If there is anything I am ardent about concerning my sexuality, it is to not see our issues as separate from issues concerning people of color (or) economic issues, inequality, drinking water in Flint, suppression of the press, separation of families at the border," she said.

"There is a divide-by-fear mentality and we have to be united; we have to embrace a coalition. So the only thing I worry about at times is if younger people say 'I can get married now and okay I'm done.' Like that's the end of the conversation. That's the beginning of the conversation.

"It's not about our rights as gay, lesbian, trans, bi, queers; it's about our rights as Americans; it's about human rights."

At its core, like its author, Indecent is political. "I wrote Indecent aware of the rise in hate speech, aware of the bashing of immigration, deeply deeply concerned, and I thought there is an important reason to write this because this happened in our history. In a moment of fear there is no history; there's just fear about the future and the present moment and history becomes completely erased."

Indecent runs through Nov. 4 at the Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Tickets are \$29—\$74. For more info, go tohttps://victorygardens.org/event/indecent/

Note: This is the first of a two-part look at Paula Vogel and the production Indecent. Next week, Topham and Vogel talk LGBTQ issues, theatrical form and the need for theater in today's political environment.

THEATER REVIEW

Curve of Departure

Playwright: Rachel Bonds At: Northlight Theatre, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie Tickets: 847-673-6300; Northlight.org; \$30-\$88 Runs through: Oct. 21

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This new play, in its regional premiere, puts a lot on the table—probably too much for an 80-minute work—but author Rachel Bonds manipulates it with such warmth, humor and humanity that you don't notice. Perhaps wisely, she doesn't attempt to fully-resolve the issues of family, relationship and choice she raises, but she reveals her four characters to us with skillful directness with which we can empathize.

Rudy, an old man with Alzheimer's, has come from New York to Santa Fe to bury his long-estranged son. He's accompanied by his former daughter-in-law, Linda, now his companion and caregiver. They are joined by grandson/son, Felix, and his affable, tattooed boyfriend, Jackson, who live in Bakersfield, California. The boys are negotiating Jackson's wish to adopt his neglected and abused two-year old niece, and it threatens their relationship. As the child of a broken marriage himself, Felix creates barriers—legal difficulties, cost, gay parenting within the implied conserva-



tism of Bakersfield—to hide his deeper insecurities. Rudy, preparing to end his own life in a few months over Linda's objections, smooths troubled waters with words of wisdom as the sun rises over

the desert on the morning of the funeral.

The roles are evenly distributed among the four characters in this small-scale true ensemble piece, and the Northlight production benefits from four richly heart-felt performances under the astute but relaxed direction of BJ Jones. Playing

Penelope Walker and Mike Nussbaum in Curve of Departure.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

Rudy, master actor Mike Nussbaum is first among equals, as always. Approaching his 95th birthday, Nussbaum is a force-of-nature who retains all his chops, instincts and remarkable physical vitality. The characters he now plays permit Nussbaum to indulge in some audience-delighting old geezer shtick—sometimes puckish, sometimes cranky—but he knows when to pull it back and give focus to others, both hallmarks of a consummate pro.

His younger companions also are impressive. Penelope Walker (Linda), Sean Parris (Felix) and Danny Martinez (Jackson) create truthful, caring but unsure human beings (as we all are or should be). At the end, they cotton to Rudy's almost-elegiac advice to embrace compassion and the future, whatever it may be, even though it requires a leap of faith. We mustn't use the failures of our fathers and grandfathers to create our own limitations, he tells us, and his words resonate with Felix and, particularly, Linda who has the greatest amount to lose in the future.

Walker and Parris are African-American actors, although the script makes no reference to race or biracial relationships. Does the script specify the casting, or is it a choice made for this production? You can't tell, and that's as it should be because it shouldn't matter.

Curve of Departure is played on Lauren Nigri's handsome, roomy hotel room set, redolent of Santa Fe adobe.

THEATER REVIEW

Odessa

Playwright: Michaela Heidemann At: Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark St. Tickets: theRBP.org; \$10-\$20 Runs through: Oct. 6

BY KERRY REID

The Ukrainian city of Odessa may be best known in popular culture for the famous "Odessa Steps" sequence in the film The Battleship Potemkin. But what lies underneath the port city provides the setting for Michaela Heidemann's haunting, funny—and occasionally too impenetrable—chamber piece, now in a production with The Right Brain Project under Colin David's direction.

Fittingly, Right Brain is using the smaller stage at Otherworld Theatre for this dark twisty production. Set in the labyrinthine series of catacombs underneath Odessa—remnants of the city's stone-mining past, and so vast that they've never been fully mapped—the main source of stage lighting comes from two flashlights. One is held by Andrew (Logan Hulick), an American journalist who was lured to the catacombs, beaten and left for dead. The other belongs to Dariya (Hannah Williams), the Ukrainian woman who helped lure him there and feels guilty enough to try and get him back out.

The problem is that they keep getting lost. This enrages Andrew, naturally. While he certainly has reasons to complain, we also get more than a whiff of Entitled American Dudebro from him, which Williams' Dariya delights in pointing

out. She also twits him about being a terrible journalist. Apparently before his current misadventure, his greatest claim to media fame was a piece he wrote about trying to survive on nothing but peanut butter for a week. And as he himself admits, a quick Google search (if not native common sense) might have told him that going into the catacombs with people he barely knows wasn't a great idea.

Are they alone in this underworld? That's a good question. Before we enter the theater, Masha (Alison Schaufler), a bubbly teenager, leads us to our seats and tells us how excited she is about the party about to happen in the catacombs.

Is Masha still wandering the space, too? Is what we're seeing real, or something Andrew is imagining after a head injury? (Schaufler appearing as his mother in an interlude suggests the latter.) At one point, Andrew exclaims "This doesn't end until I do"—as concise an encapsulation of the existential viewpoint as you'll find. But it's unclear what we're supposed to take literally here.

As Dariya and Andrew wander and argue, the story starts to spin its wheels a bit. However, both Williams and Hulick excel at negotiating not only the physical landscape of ramps and platforms in the small dark space, but also the shifts in tone from mundane joking to deeper rage.

Ultimately, the show feels more successful as an exploration of atmosphere and uncertainty than as a fully realized portrait of what an American journeying to the heart of darkness might encounter. But if you enjoy theatrical conundrums that don't offer up easy answers, the intimate clamminess of Odessa may suit you just fine.

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No small 'Change': Firebrand, TimeLine partner for 'Caroline'

BY SARAH BOWDEN

Caroline, or Change is set in 1963 Louisiana, in the midst of the Civil Rights movement, as citizens grapple with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. But don't mistake it for a period piece. This is not musical-as-history, easily folded neatly in the pages of some forgotten book.

"This is one of my favorite musicals of all time because of Caroline," said director Lili-Anne Brown. "To some extent, I am Caroline, and my mother is Caroline, and I know many Carolines."

Brown's staging of Caroline, or Change—penned by Tony Kushner (Angels in America) and composer Jeanine Tesori (Fun Home)—runs through Oct. 28 at the Den Theatre in a co-production with TimeLine and Firebrand theaters.

The 2004 musical follows the title character (Rashada Dawan), an African-American woman who works in the Gellman household, doing laundry and looking after the Jewish family's only child, Noah (Alejandro Medina). Noah is grieving the recent death of his mother. As his stepmother Rose (Blair Robertson) struggles to integrate herself into the household, Caroline struggles with making ends meet in her own household. Caroline is a mother as well, and is often at odds with her

THEATER

daughter Emmie (Bre Jacobs) over how much she should demand from her employers.

When Rose tells Caroline that any change left in Noah's pockets at the end of the day is hers to keep, it sets off a battle of wills that shakes Caroline's sense of self and her relationships with Emmie and Noah. The extra money is helpful in Caroline's home, but it it comes with a price of its own.

Kushner based the script on experiences from his own childhood, but Noah is noticeably not the protagonist of the play. "He chose to center the story on Caroline's internal struggles," Brown said. "She is surrounded by events, but the musical is not about those events. It's about how it feels to grow old, and have an ability or inability to change, and be a mother to girls."

Caroline's fight for survival from paycheck to paycheck allows her little time for politeness, kindness, or optimism. This makes her a "four-dimensional" character, according to Brown "We don't get to see Black women rage out, and deal with the consequences in a spiritual way," she said. Such expression is a gift, the director as-



Lili-Anne Brown. Photo by Michael Brosilow



Caroline, or Change's Bre Jacobs, Rashada Dawan and Blair Robertson. Photo by Rob Riddle/GhostLight

serts.

Dawan agreed. "You don't get to be too authentic onstage as a Black woman. Usually, you play characters full of hope and joy and kindness, and Caroline doesn't choose those things. But none of us live inside of hope every day of our lives.

"My people may not like see all the dirty laundry onstage, but if we don't deal with it, then we can't have a conversation," Dawan said.

Authenticity breeds understanding for the audience, according to the artists working on Caroline. "It's important to consider historical moments that are not mainstream," said dramaturg Fatima Sowe.

"Domestic technicians"—the preferred terminology for women who work in household or hotel service industries—were left out of the U.S. labor movement that started in factories, primarily due to racism.

"But domestic technicians laid the groundwork for people who are freelancers now, as well those who work in the service industry now," Sowe said.

Dawan added that dramaturgy materials helped her understand Caroline's exhaustion and the fact that if "domestic technicians" such as Caroline were less than consistently gracious and giving, their inhumane treatment gave them good reason to be so.

"If people wanted maids back in the time of the play, they would drive to certain corners, and pick women up off the street," she said. "They would pick these women by looking at their knees, looking at how scarred their knees were to prove they spent all their time working on hands and knees," Dawan said.

Sowe said there is a rich context to be shared with the audience surrounding Caroline's narrative. The realities of her life parallel figures in the domestic technician labor movement, whose stories will be featured in the lobby at the Den. "Even when we center on domestic things, they reflect their political time, but change is happening always," she said.

Dawan said she believes now is a perfect time to produce this musical, referencing the ongoing Chicago hotel workers' strike, which she has seen firsthand on her commute. "We're witnessing people in power who have money, and how they act," she said. "The hint of wealth is impactful. To not have it is impactful."

Brown said she hopes to demonstrate the wide gap that exists between Caroline and the other characters visually. The Den space allows for an expansive design, and she "wanted to explore the relationship of Caroline being low." There are multiple references to Caroline living underground, or being underwater. To give the audience a similar impression, Brown has the audience on risers, with everyone in the upstairs part of the house on a higher level, while Caroline stays in the basement, on the deck of the stage floor. The audience is physically anchored to Caroline's place in the world.

Tesori's music adds another layer to the narrative. The score contains klezmer, MoTown, work songs, classical music, and musical theatre ballads. While wide-ranging, the musical themes highlight the relationships examined in the show.

"I like the last 'Underwater' song because it's a soft lullaby," Dawan said. "It's a heart-to-heart because [Caroline is] surrendered. She's telling Noah that he will learn to lose things. You can sense the love felt between her and Noah, despite all her heaviness, and that's amazing to me. The characters are seeing each other in each direction, and paying attention."

Guiding the next generation into a better future allows Caroline hope at key moments with her daughter Emmie, as well. "The more that you are aware you are different, you are then able to see the contrast in society and the potential for change," Sowe pointed out. "The past and what you do with it always determines the present."

Caroline, or Change runs through Oct. 28 at the Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$45; visit Firebrandtheatre.org.

Author Dan Kois talks 'Angels in America' in new book

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

As a college theater student, Dan Kois became obsessed with Tony Kushner's epic drama Angels in America. That obsession continued for years, fueling Kois' just-released book, The World Only Spins Forward, an Oral History of Angels in America (co-authored by Isaac Butler).

"I engaged with those characters and their struggles," Kois said of Kushner's saga of love and survival at the height of the AIDs crisis in the '80s. "After reading the first part of the two-part epic, [I] was waiting to see what would happen in Part Two, which I know now Tony was also trying to figure out," he said.

On Oct. 1, Kois joins with Chicago actors who brought Angels in America to life for a discussion of the book, the play and its impact on the world. The 7 p.m. event takes place at Victor Gardens Theater

Angels in America Part I, Millennium Approaches debuted in San Francisco in 1991. In 1993, both parts of the roughly seven-hour play—Millennium Approaches and Perestroika—debuted on Broadway. In 1994, Chicago opened the first national tour of Angels in America at the Royal George Theatre. Chicago's second production of the piece was David Cromer's 1998 revival for the Journeyman theater. Cromer's reimagining, Kois said, is the only regional production that receives its own chapter in the book.

"Cromer's production made other theater companies feel like it's possible to do this play without breaking your theater company in half," Kois said of the Journeyman's vastly scaled-down black-box rendering.

"It can be a series of chamber pieces where the effects are used sparingly and are even more effective as a result," Kois said. Interviews with artists involved with Cromer's production made an impression on Kois. The Journeyman's intimate staging, he said, resulted in "an amazing community experience in which the entire theater community came together to rehearse, create and grab this play for themselves."

Angels in America has played throughout the world and launched many a career. The original Broadway production won the 1993 and 1994 Tony Awards for Best Play, and Millennium Approaches was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1993. Mike Nichols' 2003 HBO adaptation featured Meryl Streep, Mary-Louise Parker and Emma Thompson. The recent Broadway revival, a transplant from London's National Theatre, boasted Nathan Lane and Andrew Garfield among its star-studded cast. The 250 interviews in The World Only Spins Forward include conversations with Streep, Lane and Parker, among others.

The Oct. 1 event will feature Chicago's early

BOOKS

Angels, including actors Jeff Christian, K. Todd Freeman, Philip E. Johnson, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Natasha Lowe, Ian Owens, Keith Phipps and Barbara Robertson.

The book began as a cover story for Slate, where Kois is an editor. "I pitched it as an oral history," he said. "Not only was the history of the play full of the great talkers of the last 25 years...but also the play itself is a real act of conversation. It's a series of dialectics designed to be oppositional voices put in the same room as each other, arguing about the things that matter most."

When the first draft of the story was 40,000 words (roughly 160 pages) Kois and co-author Butler knew they had a book. "We did a good job telling the story of the play's birth and Broadway, but what we hadn't told was the way the play reached the rest of America."

Was it difficult to get prominent actors, directors and writers, including Kushner himself, to talk? According to Kois, not a bit.

"The stories we got were great and the memories were vivid and the opinions were strongly worded. People wanted to go to the mat for something they did 20, 25 years ago," he said.

How, according to Kois, has Angels endured over two decades?

"We started the interviews in the summer of 2016," Kois said. With the presidential election, "the tenor of all those interviews really changed," he said.

People involved with Angels in America productions that happened at the peak of the AIDS crisis spoke of "creating art at a time of emergency," Kois said. That feeling is prevalent today, he said.

"For many people, it feels like we are once again at a time when activism is desperately necessary, and when our art can address the underlying energies that require us all to fight back against the forces that want to stop the world from turning," Kois said. "The lesson of [Angels in America] is that there's always going to be a crisis and an emergency, and art is the way we can navigate and negotiate."

The reading and discussion of The World Only Spins Forward: The Ascent of Angels in America is at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1, at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, and a book signing will follow. The event is free but reservations are required as space is limited. To reserve tickets, call 773-871-3000 or email tickets@victorygardens.org.



Writer Dan Kois.
Photo by Todd Hale





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'Queer, Brown femme power' radiates at new Boystown mural

RY JAKE WITTICH

A new mural honoring non-binary people located in the heart of Boystown aims to open a dialogue about intersectionality within the LGBTQ community.

The 750-square-foot mural on the side of the Howard Brown Health Center in Boystown, 3245 N. Halsted St., features Kiam Marcelo Junio, a non-binary interdisciplinary artist and holistic healer. The artists—Sam Kirk, Andy Bellomo and Sandra Antongiorgi—hope it's the first in a series of murals celebrating queer people throughout Chicago.

"We wanted to open a dialogue about non-binary and gender nonconforming folks within the [LGBTQ] community," Bellomo said. "We're creating more conversation around and visibility for for non-binary and gender-nonconforming folks through public art."

At the center of the mural is a portrait of Marcelo Junio, painted by Antongiorgi. The background, a collaboration between Kirk and Bellomo, features abstract line work and other designs that aim to capture the essence of Marcelo Junio as a person.

"There's a beauty to how centered [Marcelo Junio] is and their confidence, peacefulness and healing qualities," Antongiorgi said. "They are such a presence and have a power within that you can see in the mural."

The artists applied a 22-carat gold leafing to create Marcelo Junio's lips, eye makeup and some of the line work in the background.

"Kiam is big, majestic, royal and regal, and the gold captures that," Bellomo said. "The gold leafing is innovative and makes the mural more special and celebratory."

Planning for the mural started about two years ago, according to Kirk. After securing funding and finding a location for mural, the artists start-

Danai Gurira play to debut Steppenwolf Theatre Company is present-

Steppenwolf Theatre Company is presenting the Chicago premiere production of Familiar, written by Danai Gurira (actress from TV's The Walking Dead; the films Black Panther and Avengers: Infinity War; and Broadway's Eclipsed) and directed by Danya Taymor.

Familiar begins previews on Nov. 15, with the opening being Nov. 26 at 7 p.m. and the production running through Jan. 13, 2019, in the Downstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St

Single tickets (\$20-\$109) are now on sale through Audience Services at 312-335-1650 or Steppenwolf.org.

ART

ed painting the wall Aug. 13.

Bellomo said painting the mural was heartwarming because they were interrupted almost every few minutes by people commenting on its beauty.

"Lots of people were stopping by and saying, 'I see so much queer, brown, femme power here," Bellomo said. "And that's the idea—from this one person, you see this higher community of people they represent."

Bellomo said it was important to create a mural that creates dialogue about how groups of people can be marginalized within the larger LGBTQ community so people can learn to better support one another.

"It's a necessary conversation at this moment, and you can see this mural from four blocks away, so you can can't ignore it," Bellomo said.

Marcelo Junio said they were honored to be chosen as mural's subject, and that their inclusion represents intersectionality within the LG-BTQ community.

"Being an orphan, a transnational adoptee, Filipino and queer, I know from the outside it can look very conflicting and complicated," Marcelo Junio said. "I'm gay, but I'm different from the gay people I see on magazines and TV. I'm Filipino, but not like all the other Filipino boys I know. So every group I belong to, I've always felt like an outsider at some point. Intersectionality ties all that together, and this mural is a statement that people like me belong here too."

Before starting work on the mural, Antongiorgi met with Marcelo Junio to learn more about their character, practices, politics and beliefs so they could be accurately represented in their portrait.

"We are all mirrors to one another," Marcelo Junio said. "I understand my own complexity, beauty, place in space and time, and that I'm worthy of love. I hope that people can feel that from the mural and see themselves just as big and just as worthy of being celebrated."

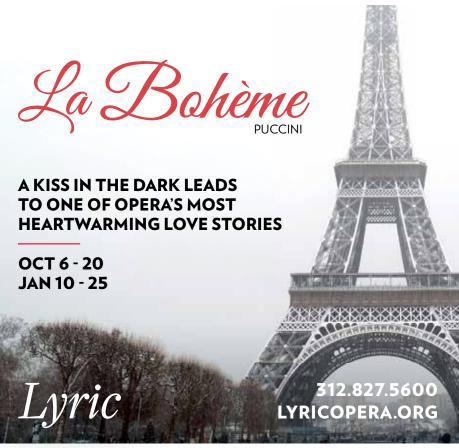
Bellomo said they are working on a proposal to start a series of queer murals throughout Chicago, but they need funders to make future projects possible. The first mural was funded by Howard Brown Health, Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward) and the Northalsted Business Alliance.

"We hope future murals would be not just in Boystown and spread throughout Chicago, especially its South and West sides, where there's a need for more LGBTQ visibility," Kirk said. "I hope to get the city out of its segregated mindset."

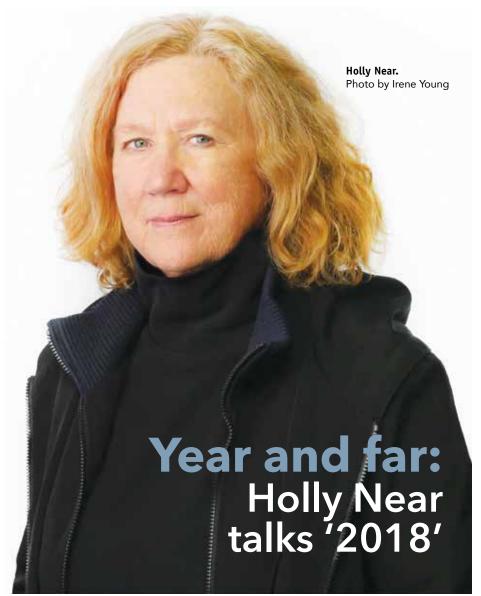
Antongiorgi, Bellomo, Kirk and Marcelo Junio will officially unveil the mural at a celebration starting 2:30 p.m. Sept. 29 outside Howard Brown Health Halsted, 3245 N. Halsted St., in Lake View.



Mural of Kiam Marcelo Junio. Photo by Jake Wittich



New Lyric coproduction of Puccini's *La bohème* generously made possible by the Julius Frankel Foundation, Abbott Fund, Liz Stiffel, The Michael and Susan Avramovich Charitable Trust. Howard L. Gottlieb and Barbara G. Greis. and Roberta L. and Robert J. Washlow.



BY JOHN STADELMAN

Singer-songwriter/longtime feminist/anti-war activist Holly Near's new album, 2018, is a thoughtful mirror on the craziness, worry and fear that defines the year of its namesake.

Windy City Times: The album is titled 2018, which is an interesting choice. What was the driving force behind this?

Holly Near: We went through the lyrics and song titles and everything felt a little shallow. I was sitting with my co-producer of the record ... and I said, "What about 2018?" And she said, "That's it." It was as if with 2018 everybody knows what's going on this year and what kind of catastrophes we're living with. It just felt like it landed the CD in time, and hopefully the music will live on beyond 2018.

WCT: You have a background in acting and I'm curious how that affected your songwriting, especially lyrically.

HN: From early on, my songwriting has been defined by my ability to tell a story in about three minutes. ... That was strong in my early development as a songwriter, and with the whole idea of a camera lens, where you can start way back and see the big picture and focus in on the

MUSIC

detail, or you can start with the detail and pull back to see the big picture.

In my songs, I try to have that motion of lens and in doing so what I have discovered is that the listener can find themselves somewhere in that moving ... of the lens, even if it's a subject they're not familiar with.

WCT: We see that in [the song] "Casualty in My Own House," starting from talking about violence in a relationship, to a child, then broadening that out to America's violence—that lens movement.

HN: I think that's a good example, and in some songs it's not like that. "Coup d'état" doesn't have a going in and out as much, but it has little surprises in order to keep it lighthearted, and at the same time it's actually extraordinarily serious. I have written some songs that were hammers over the head [laughs], but I didn't really like them that much.

My interest in the song came when I figured out how to go in through the back door: Stay away from rhetoric ... and get down to talking with people about what we want. ... It's an in-

teresting thing as a songwriter to keep thinking about because on the other hand I don't want to abandon truth-telling or radicalism.

WCT: "Coup d'état" has a coy sound, but then when you listen to the lyrics it's the opposite. Something that's recurrent throughout the song is that a coup d'état is described by what it's not, as in, "It's not a dance, a Mardi Gras." What, in the terms of the song, would you say is a coup d'état?

HN: By definition, a *coup d'état* is an overthrow of government. For example, after Trump was elected I was in Chile and they had a military coup there for many years, and artists who I met in Europe and the United States had not been able to go back to their countries for 11 or 12 years for fear of being murdered. I met them when they were in Europe or the United States and did some collaboration work with [them].

So I was familiar with coup d'état from the coup in the early '70s. I started watching what was going on in this country. I was in Chile when it happened and people were coming up to me saying, "What just happened in your country [was] a coup." There was messing with the elections, there's underbelly reports of who was going to get in, there was a lack of truth-telling. So it was observing that through the eyes of the Chileans.

WCT: In the liner notes of "Someone Was Brave Before Me," you mention a "brave exercise" that led to the creation of the song. Could you talk a little bit about what that exercise entails?

HN: It started with an acoustic show that I did in New York and I asked some of the performers, if I sang this kind of riff would they be willing to step forward and tell a story of someone who had influenced their life. ... That was the beginning of it, and when I would do songwriting workshops or I would give talks

I would use it as a way to get people to participate and remember that they were part of a long history of people who had stepped forward, not because they were trained organizers or because they knew what they were doing, [just that] the moment happened and they stepped forward—and so it's worked. It's been a structure to get people to come forward and tell stories.

I decided that I could put [the song] on the recording. At the end it's a little tag that says after all these songs and these ideas we didn't start here. And it didn't end here. And there's that last rhyme that talks about the rising of the new movement, so it tries to say in that short period of time: "That which came before us and that which is now and that which is carrying on."

WCT: Part of a legacy.

HN: It's that lens again. If you're put close, you're looking at Black Lives Matter. And if you pull back you see the whole Civil Rights Movement. Or if you're back even farther you look at the whole movement in this country toward humanitarianism ... and then come in close to whatever's going on in your personal life at the moment, then I hope it can be used and it will be sung at rallies and marches.

See Holly Near in Chicago at the Old Town School of Folk Music on Friday, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m.; visit https://www.oldtownschool.org/concerts/2018/09-28-2018-holly-near/.

Black Ensemble to add 'Women of Soul'

Black Ensemble Theater continues its 2018 season ("Movers and Shakers") with Women of Soul (With a Tribute to the Queen), written and directed by Black Ensemble Theater Associate Director Daryl D. Brooks, whose hits with the company include Men of Soul.

Women of Soul will be performed at the Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center, 4450 N. Clark St., beginning Oct 20, with an unlimited run.

The previously announced production of A Revolution in Rhyme has been postponed and will be produced at a later date this season.

Women of Soul guides us through the life of some of the most powerful women in soul music, including Chaka Khan, Diana Ross and Teena Marie—with a special tribute to Aretha Franklin.

Tickets are \$45 each for previews (Oct. 20-21, 26-27), \$55 (Saturday matinees) and \$65 (Fridays, Saturday evenings and Sunday matinees); visit BlackEnsemble.org.

Christina Aguilera in Chicago Oct. 16-17

As part of her first tour in more than a decade (The Liberation Tour), Grammy winner Christina Aguilera will stop at The Chicago Theater, 175 N. State St., on Oct. 16-17.

Christina released new song "Accelerate," featuring Ty Dolla \$ign and 2 Chainz, earlier in May; it is the first song from her forthcoming album, Liberation (which will be out June 15).

Live Nation is producing the tour, which started Sept. 24 in Hollywood, Florida, and will take place in 22 cities, ending Nov. 13 in St. Petersburg, Florida.

See LiveNationEntertainment.com and https://www.christinaaguilera.com/.

'Homos' ends Sept. 30 at Pride Arts

Homos, or Everyone in America will run through Sunday, Sept. 30, at Pride Arts Center-The Broadway, 4139 N. Broadway.

Jordan Seavey's play follows the relationship of two thirtysomething gay male residents in Brooklyn over five years. Pride Films and Play Associate Artistic Director Derek Van Barham is helming the production.

Seats are \$20-\$30 each; tickets are available by phone at 866-811-4111 or 773-857-0222, or online at PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

BENT NIGHTS

Riot Fest

BY HESTER

The number 13 turned out to be lucky for the 2018 edition of Riot Fest.

The future for this festival started looking dim after the death of founder Sean McKeough in 2016—just before the glut of Chicago-area summer festivals started choking itself. (The Open Air Festival, Common's AAHH! Fest, and The Warped Tour have since ended in that time.) The 2018 Riot Fest got hit with a wave of expected (Fest headliner Elvis Costello's cancer treatments and surgeries) and unexpected hurdles and misfortunes (Headliner Blink 182's abrupt cancelation, a snafu in ticket availability and the alleged poisoning of festival signee Pussy Riot's drummer Peter Verzilov) and rumors swirled that the show would not go on at all.

The show did certainly go on, and this 13th version of the punk-rock/metal/hard-rock festival and traditional close of summer went on without a hitch. For three days, under a forgiving sun and not one drop of rain (or the ocean of mud and swarms of bees that have followed in their wake), an eclectic mix of 88 bands and performers entertained a generally happy and joyful overflow audience on five stages, with nary an incident or arrest.

On the musical front there was plenty of hard rock (Weezer, Taking Back Sunday, Alkaline Trio, Killing Joke, GWAR, The Jesus Lizard, Bad Religion and Dropkick Murphys), rap/hip-hop (Cypress Hill, Digable Planets, Run the Jewels), straight up pop (Matt and Kim, Incubus, Speedy Ortiz),

MUSIC

alternative rock (Costello, Beck, Young the Giant, Health) and straight-up punk/metal (Sum 41, Suicidal Tendencies, Dillinger Four, Clutch, Direct Hit, The Wonder Years and Interpol) to satisfy the most finicky of tastes.

Although there were no out performers on the bill, there were plenty of queer favorites (Blondie, Johnny Marr, Gary Numan, Cat Power) and friends of the community (Andrew W.K., Jack Antonoff of the band fun. fronting his side band Bleachers) to make things frolicsome. The Chicago scene was represented by Liz Phair, DIY upstarts Twin Peaks and good-natured goofball Archie Powell who snagged honors from the Chicago Tribune as one of the 'best dressed' at the festival (for his fetching pink jacket and shorts ensemble with floral embroidery).

And then there were the must-see sets, which included Pussy Riot (who mixed activism with funk in a dance-performance piece in front of a banner swearing vengeance for that poisoning), Father John Misty (whose subversive funk was enlivened by his vaudevillian dance moves) and '50s legend and sole survivor of the Million Dollar Quartet Jerry Lee Lewis (who, along with Little Richard, started the outrage and scandal which became punk rock).

With overall attendance estimated to hit the festival average of 40,000 a day despite no big-name reunions (The Misfits in 2016 and Jawbreaker in 2017) and an absence of zombies and circus performers (the later were contained in a circus tent and performed every three hours), the 2018 Riot Fest looks like one for the books and a fitting close to one of the most memorable musical summers in Chicago.

See more photos from Riot Fest at WindyCityMediaGroup. com.



CSO performing with 'Bride of Frankenstein' screening Oct. 26 Chicago Symphony Orchestra will perform Academy Award-winning composer

Chicago Symphony Orchestra will perform Academy Award-winning composer Franz Waxman's score to Bride of Frankenstein at an Oct. 26 screening of the film at 7:30 p.m. at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

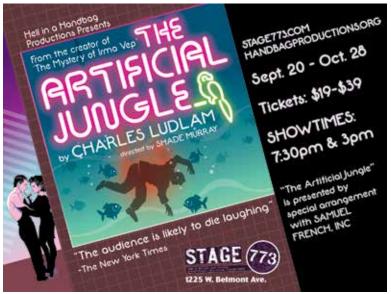
The 1935 film, directed by gay filmmaker James Whale, follows Dr. Frankenstein (Colin Chive) as he is goaded by the wicked scientist Dr. Pretorious (Ernest Thesiger) into creating a mate (Elsa Lanchester) for the monster (Boris Karloff) that he created in the original film.

Conductor Emil de Cou, music director of the Pacific Northwest Ballet, will lead CSO in the performance. The audience is invited to dress in Halloween attire.

Bride of Frankenstein runs 75 minutes, and will be followed by a screening of Mel Brooks' 1974 parody Young Frankenstein, starring Gene Wilder, Madeline Kahn, Peter Boyle and Cloris Leachman.

Tickets are available at Symphony Center, by phone at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000, or online at CSO.org.

CULTURE CLUB





Open House Chicago:

Exploring historical sites—for free

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Ever wondered what it looks like inside the Ukrainian National Museum or downtown architecture gems like the Railway Exchange Building or the Civic Opera Building?

On Oct. 13-14, people can take a peek inside these historical buildings for free and stop the wondering. The eighth annual Open House Chicago, sponsored by the Chicago Architecture Center, will provide access to more than 250 sites in 30 neighborhoods and suburbs. Beverly, Morgan Park and Austin join the 2018 neighborhoods of architectural gems, as well as a few new sites in other neighborhoods.

The event offers views of buildings rarely open to the public and will show behind-the-scenes access to repurposed mansions, stunning skyscrapers, lavish theaters, industrial facilities, new apartments and breathtaking sacred spaces—many that have contributed to Chicago's rich architectural history and stature.

"[Open House Chicago] gives Chicagoans the rare opportunity to discover hidden gems in architecturally significant buildings all across the city," said Lynn Osmond, President and CEO of the CAC. "But OHC attendees are discovering not only what is near their homes, they are exploring new neighborhoods across town and in the process changing preconceived notions about their neighbors.'

She said that, last year, 60 percent of attendees ventured out to see new neighborhoods and hopes this year will be an even larger turnout and that people will discover new city establishments and learn architectural history.

New sites to see

Beverly is known for its residential, tiny-town feel and relies on 95th Street as its commercial and residential backbone.

There are five sites to see there, such as Chicago's most famous castle, The Givens Castle; the Ridge Historical Society; and the Wild Blossom Meadery and Winery. An eye-catching visit will surely be at Optimo, the city's only custom men's hatmaker business, known for its classic fedoras,

Rockefeller Chapel. Photo by Eric Allix Roger

p.m.

straw Panama hats and even a limited-edition

Cook County, according to the house's site. It is now an entertainment venue and a museum on the second floor that houses antiques collected by recently deceased owner Jack Simmerling. The house's open house hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

ARCHITECTURE

that brings back hates from earlier decades of

style. This site is only open Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5

The Ingersoll-Blackwelder House at 10910 S.

Prospect Ave. is one of three neighborhood sites

in Morgan Park. The Victorian mansion was built

in 1874 for real estate magnate John Ingersoll by

Morgan Park's developer, the Blue Island Land and

Building Company. A Queen Anne style expansion

was added the next decade for new owner Isaac

Blackwelder, president of the then-independent

Village of Morgan Park. His wife, Gertrude Black-

welder, was a founder of the Morgan Park Wom-

en's Club and the first woman to cast a vote in

Austin has 13 sites to visit, such as the Aus-

Rock restored auditorium and school and four historical churches. One that stands rich with history is the Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central Ave., which was once home to Chicago's largest Methodist congregation. Designed by Sidney R. Badgley in 1909, the church is an ode to Our Lady of Fréchou. The Fraternité Notre Dame—a religious order that started in France in 1977 hosts daily mass, a soup kitchen and a food pantry in the space, which it acquired in 2001 after the church was empty for almost 30 years. It also is home to after-school programs for children to keep them off the street and offer them nutri-

tin Community Family Center, the Catalyst Circle

WINDY CITY TIMES

It's close to impossible to say which sites are the best worth your time, but some more that caught our eye are the Logan Square Auditorium, the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel in Hyde Park and the Colvin House in Edgewater.

tious meals they don't often get at home, accord-

ing to the church's website. Its open house hours

are Oct. 13 at 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 10

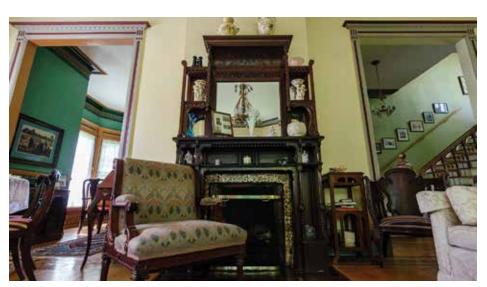
The Logan Square Auditorium was built in 1915 and has a terra cotta eagle on its front facing the signature area monument. The space hosts all kinds of events, from weddings, concerts, benefits and movie screenings. The inside is virtually unchanged albeit the enhanced sound system, bookings and professional light shows that can be seen from the square or boulevard. This site is only open Oct. 13 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Rockefeller Chapel on the University of Chicago's campus was designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in 1928 and is all about the details in Gothic style. It has one of the world's largest carillons (an instrument of musical bells) and a sizable Skinner organ. Its open house hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct 14 from 9 a.m.-

Designed by architect George Maher in 1909, the Colvin House Prairie-Style mansion at 5940 N. Sheridan Road has gothic ceilings, carved pillars and excessive plaster ornamentation. It's now home to Creative Coworking, which has modernized some of the house for offices and events. Its open hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

See the full list of the 2018 Open House Chicago sites at https://openhousechicago.org/sites.

hat modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright's signature headwear. The building, at 1700 W. 95th St., is a century-old firehouse and was repurposed this year by architect firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The design used blackened steel, walnut and cork to show the unique craftsmanship of the business



Left: Interior of the Ingersoll Mansion. Photo by Eric **Allix Rogers**

Right: Ukranian National Museum. Photo by Maksym Prokopiv



THE SPORTING LIFE: Linda Bache

BY ROSS FORMAN

The one-year anniversary of the last game in Chicago Force history on July 8 brought mixed emotions—and certainly a tear or two.

After 15 seasons, the highly successful women's football team ended its run with a playoff loss. Tears of sadness from 2017 have grown into tears of pride for what the Force accomplished, highlighted by its 2013 national championship.

"I really miss it; I miss spending time with my Force family," said Linda Bache, the team owner who also was a standout defensive player for six seasons. "I've been acutely aware of how different things are in my life since football ended. This has been a weird spring and summer. Normally I'd be working on Force stuff daily and attending three or four practices a week. I'm not accustomed to having flexibility of schedule or time on my hands, so it's been a little strange. My wife Yvette and I have been traveling quite a bit, which we love and will continue to do."

Bache, who lives in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, is a senior account manager for Ferrellgas. She is originally from Farmington Hill, Michigan, and has called Chicago home for 24 years.

"My Force memories are divided into two parts: my six years on the field as a player, and the nine years on the sidelines [after] I stopped playing," Bache said. "My last three years as a player, I also was an owner and general manager, so that was incredibly difficult and all-consuming. [Since] I was so busy, it kind of flew by, [and] we had so much fun. There were so many wonderful people [who] were a part of the team over those 15 years. I'm sure I could have done a lot of different things with my life during that time, but I doubt anything would have been as enjoyable or would have fed my soul as much as the time I spent with the Force."

Nothing was more memorable than the summer of 2013, when the Force dominated opponents and ultimately captured the team's lone national championship. That season was, without question, "the pinnacle of our success," Bache said.

"We were head and shoulders better than every other team during the time when the women's game was at its most competitive. Everyone was completely committed and totally dialed in, and we were unstoppable. I think our 2013 squad was the best women's football team ever. When you look at our roster that year, the stats, the point differential, the complete domination. ... I think it's indisputable that we were the best women's team ever assembled."

The Force was dominant in 2013—and many other seasons. It was never uncommon for the Force to win games by 40, 50, 60 or even 70 points.

SPORTS

"We were a dominant team throughout our 15-year existence and that was accomplished through a complete commitment and sheer force of will from the top of the organization on down," Bache said. "It's tough to do because you essentially go through some kind of roster rebuild every three to five years, [but], we kept reinventing ourselves based on each season's roster and our [longtime] head coach John Konecki was always looking for another way to elevate the program, stay a step ahead of the competition, and push the sport forward."

The final Force event was last September—the final team banquet, which Bache tagged as both memorable and emotional, and definitely filled with laughter.

The 2017 banquet also featured the induction of quarterback Sami Grisafe and coach John Konecki into the Chicago Force Hall of Fame, which naturally was met with thunderous applause. After the banquet, they took a group photo, and Becky Thuestad then announced she was pregnant. "It felt like a wonderful way for us all to bid farewell to the past and embrace the future," Bache said.

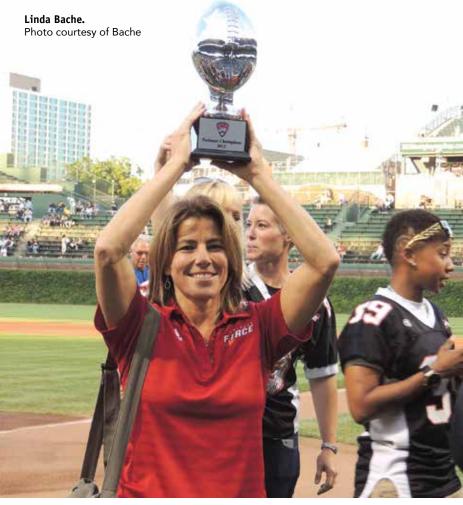
After the banquet, Bache and Holt went on a two-week vacation and met up with former Force players and owners Amanda Malsch and Tricia Charbonneau. "The four of us have talked many times about what a life-changing experience it was to be a part of the Force," Bache said. "I hear that sentiment expressed repeatedly by former players, coaches and staff. When a team becomes a family, it creates lasting bonds, and the memories and relationships live on. I'm really proud to share in that."

Bache said she still sees many of the former Force players. For instance, Bache and Holt visited Grisafe in California as she worked on a new album and a documentary film. They also attended Cassey Brick's graduation from the Chicago Police Academy this past spring, and Bache recently had dinner with Darcy Leslie who has a summer internship with the New York Jets.

"I still get lots of calls from coaches, players, sponsors and fans," Bache said. "I was especially happy to receive an invite recently to the wedding of a favorite former player (Emilie Belanger) that will be held in Canada this October. She was one of our first international players and I'm thrilled for her and honored to attend her wedding."

Many former Force players have had babies and several more are pregnant, so there's another generation of potential female football players in the pipeline, Bache said.

"I'm extremely proud of the legacy we created



Extra Point with ... Linda Bache

Favorite pro sport:

Football

Favorite pro team:

Chicago Cubs

Favorite pro athlete:

Serena Williams

One pro athlete you'd like to meet: Billie Jean King

One pro sports event/game you'd like to Attend:

"A Cubs' World Series [championship]."
Still in sports:

Bache is a member of the Women's Football Alliance (WFA) Advisory Council, along with former Force player Liz Okey.

as a powerhouse team and an organization that was always evolving," Bache said. "We became a hub for international players as our reputation for excellence spread throughout the women's worldwide football community. We had players travel here from Finland, Canada, Norway, the Czech Republic, Poland, France, Germany, New Zealand and

Australia to play for the Force."

So, will we see another women's football team in Chicago?

"I have not heard of a new women's tackle football team starting here, but I hope one does. I'd like the women of Chicago to have the opportunity to play tackle football," Bache said.

And, yes, the Force will be back, eventually—with a reunion of some sorts.

"I could see myself putting something together in the next year or so," Bache said.

"Our 2017 season ended one game too soon when we lost in the conference championship, but it's not a huge regret for me. We were worthy of being a championship team, but we didn't play well enough for four quarters to win the qualifying game. I've been able to appreciate that last season fully and the Force in its entirety. Having that final season was a gift, really—I appreciated each moment and was very cognizant that the clock was ticking. By stating from the outset [of the 2017 season] that it was the team's final year, it allowed all of us to approach the season with an understanding of its finite commitment. It gave everyone a chance to author their own final chapter of Force football, so I'm glad we did it that way."







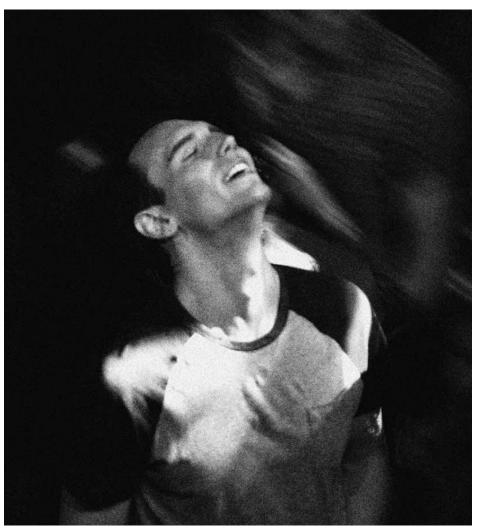
Reviewing the movies of Reeling

BY STEVE WARREN

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

It's Christmastime 1985, and Adrian (Cory Michael Smith) has flown from New York to pay his first visit in three years to his conservative Texas family. Though he can't find a way to tell them, it's probably also his last visit.

Learning that his acne-aged brother Andrew (Aidan Langford) has switched his after-school



1985. Photo courtesy of Reeling

The following are reviews of a couple of the movies that will run at this conclusion of this year's festival:

—1985 (***) (Sept. 26, 7:15 p.m.): What a difference 33 years makes!

This movie is shot in black-and-white to emphasize the time-machine quality (even though B/W movies had already been virtually obsolete for a couple of decades), and it will be seen differently by viewers of different ages. For those who were there, it will be wistful, bitter nostalgia; for the younger set, a synopsis should probably come with spoiler alerts, though hopefully not for readers of this paper.

activities from sports to theater, and is also a Madonna fan, tells Adrian his difficult footsteps are being followed in.

His parents haven't changed. Dad (Michael Chiklis) wants his sons doing manly, godly things and Mom (Chicago native Virginia Madsen) wants Adrian to hook up with his old girlfriend Carly (Jamie Chung). He does see her, but not for the reason his mother intended.

Adrian's farewell tour may keep you on the verge of tears throughout, or leave oblivious viewers (though why would they be seeing this?) wondering what those Kaposi's Sarcoma lesions are on Adrian's chest.

FILM

Everything unfolds slowly and subtly in Yen Tan's expansion of his 2016 short. The Malaysiaborn, Texas-based gay filmmaker has been turning out excellent product for nearly two decades, and it's time the industry at large took notice.

One minor quibble: Except for the reformed high school bully who appears in one scene, no one sounds like they've lived their lives 45 minutes from Dallas. Perhaps this was to avoid overstereotyping or to make the story more universal. It lessens the regional authenticity but nothing can take away from the film's emotional authenticity, which packs a real wallop..

—Studio 54 (***) (Sept. 27, 5 p.m.): When a time machine is invented, this documentary will make Studio 54 (1977-80) a top destination. The creators of the Manhattan disco tell the tale. Steve Rubell, who died of AIDS in 1989 and is seen in old interviews, was the face of the club—a gay man who loved the celebrities and the celebrity. Ian Schrager, with whom Rubell became friends in college, was the brains, the man behind the curtain; in recent interviews he says he's discussing those days for the first time. Be warned: this is largely a sad story of those happy times and their aftermath.

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



Cast of Freelancers Anonymous. Photo by Jerry Nunn

'Freelancers' screens at Reeling's opening

Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival kicked off its 36th year at The Davis Theater on Sept. 20. The movie Freelancers Anonymous screened after a red carpet with several members of the cast and crew.

The 2018 comedy combines an office worker, a wedding and a start up app with a strong female perspective.

Freelancers Anonymous star Natasha Negovanlis mentioned she was sent the script after being seen in her web series Carmilla. She said, "What impressed me about it was it's a very broad American style comedy, but instead of a straight white male lead, it's a queer woman. It is completely normalized. I think it has broad appeal outside of the LGBT community. We have to show the straight world that we are just people."

Lisa Cordileone who stars and also co-wrote the film, explained that they made Freelancers Anonymous a year ago in Chicago, adding, "We shot in Bethany Church for two weeks, Angelina's and the West Loop."

She also said "This is about a group of women that help each other and make something

better."

Cordileone said that Alexandra Billings, who plays her boss in the film, "is the real deal. I was intimidated by her at first, then I relaxed and we went to work."

After the screening, a question and answer portion was moderated by Chicago Reader's Amy Matheny and Windy City Times' Scott Duff.

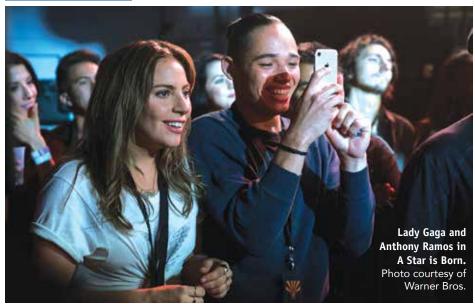
Director Sonia Sebastian recalled that movie was made in 19 days. When an audience member asked for advice on how to be a filmmaker, she replied, "Go out and shoot with a phone or camera. Work with actors that will tell your story. Practice and just do it."

A reception followed at Carbon Arc Bar & Board attached to the theater, complete with food and drinks to celebrate the debut of Freelancers Anonymous.

Other significant screenings throughout the festival are planned with cast and crew in attendance, such as Rupert Everett on Sept. 27 at Landmark Century Centre Cinema at 7 p.m. for his film The Happy Prince, and Jason T. Gaffney with Kevin Held for Analysis Paralysis, also at Landmark on Sept. 27 but at 9:30 p.m.

Closing night on Sept. 30 features the documentary Studio 54 at 5 p.m., screened at Chicago Filmmakers, 5720 N. Ridge Ave. A wrap party in the new space will follow the movie, with this year's award winners announced.

Visit ReelingFilmFestival.org for tickets and information.



Fall movie preview

BY JERRY NUNN

Movies fall into award season with Oscar-pleasing true stories from around the world and a lineup that will captivate many cinephiles in the upcoming months.

Among them are Ryan Gosling walking the moon in First Man and Robin Hood taking another shot at the bullseye with Taron Egerton. More comic-book movies are on the way before the end of 2018, with Venom, Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse and Aquaman. The popular Autobot Bumblebee spins off from the Transformers' world and Mary Poppins Returns with Emily Blunt in the starring role. Who is ready for a car chase or a singalong?

There are holiday happenings with Pharrell Williams narrating Dr. Seuss' The Grinch and the star-studded The Nutcracker and the Four Realms. Kiera Knightley and Richard E. Grant are both in The Nutcracker and portray LGBT characters in films based on true-life people from our history books

There are several fall opportunities to see movies early in film festivals around Chicago with Reeling: The Chicago LGBT International Film Festival Sept. 20-30 and the 52nd Chicago International Film Festival Oct. 10-21.

Here are a few films with upcoming release dates that have special interest for our rainbow community:

September

—A Simple Favor: (Sept. 14) This is a murder mystery thriller starring Anna Kendrick and Blake Lively in some of the best fashion seen on the screen recently. Girl-on-girl kisses and past lesbian relationships are all part of the fun in a movie that will keep you guessing until the very end. No spoilers, please!

—Colette: (Sept. 28) This is a biographical drama about the life of French novelist Gabrielle Sidonie Colette who had lesbian affairs during her marriage. Keira Knightley stars in the movie along with several trans actors spotlighting gender-de-

fying costumes and casting.

October

—A Star Is Born: (Oct. 5) Watch Lady Gaga become a movie star in her first cinematic leading role as a waitress named Ally. She meets established musician Jackson Maine, played by Bradley Cooper, at where else? A gay bar!

—Halloween: (Oct. 19) Who else besides Cher doesn't know how to say farewell? Michael Myers returns 40 years later to battle it out once again with Jamie Lee Curtis as Laurie Strode for the last time. This is a direct sequel to the 1978 film which murders the previous continuity.

—Can you Ever Forgive Me?: (Oct. 19) Melissa McCarthy stars as Lee Israel, a best-selling celebrity biographer and actor Richard E. Grant plays her gay best friend. Many of the scenes were shot at the gay bar Julius in the West Village that still exists today.

—The Happy Prince: (Oct. 19) Out actor Rupert Everett multitasks as a writer, director and star of this biopic about Irish poet Oscar Wilde. A couple of Colins are along for the ride with Firth and Morgan as standout stars. The title refers to a children's story that Wilde wrote.

—Suspiria: (Oct. 26) Call Me By Your Name director Luca Guadagnino shifts genre gears by remaking horror maestro Dario Argento's 1977 classic, bringing Dakota Johnson, Chloe Grace Moretz, Tilda Swinton and original star Jessica Harper along for the ride.

Novembe

—Bohemian Rhapsody: (Nov. 2) British band Queen will rock you with the story of singer Freddie Mercury, leading into the group's performing at Live Aid in 1985. Some in the LGBT community were concerned Mercury's gay backstory might not be in the forefront, so stay tuned.

—The Girl in the Spider's Web: (Nov. 9) Claire Foy stars as bisexual hacker Lisbeth Salander in the film version of the popular novel.

-Boy Erased: (Nov. 9) Based on Garrad Con-

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ley's memoir, Boy Erased has the not straight in real life Lucas Hedges playing the son of two religious parents who put him in conversion therapy. Gay singer Troye Sivan and lesbian actor Cherry Jones are among the cast.

—Instant Family: (Nov. 16) Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne adopt foster children and out comic Tig Notaro plays a social worker involved in the process.

—Widows: (Nov. 16) Strong female cast including Viola Davis and bisexual actor Michelle Rodriguez in an intriguing caper movie brought to us by Gone Girl writer Gillian Flynn.

—Second Act: (Nov. 21) Jennifer Lopez portrays a big box store worker who has big dreams. Real life bestie Leah Remini and Milo Ventimiglia

join her onscreen for this romantic comedy.

—The Favourite: (Nov. 23) Director Yorgos Lanthimos reunites with Olivia Colman and Rachel Weisz (after working together on The Lobster) for this lesbian love triangle period piece.

December

—Anna and the Apocalypse: (Dec. 7) A zombie Christmas musical has a lesbian character in the main cast. Can Ella Hunt and the gang sing their way out of the situation or is this dead in the water?

—Aquaman: (Dec. 14) Game of Thrones hunk Jason Momoa returns as the Superfriend perhaps least likely to have their own dedicated motion picture. Amber Heard also reprises her Justice League role as Mera; Patrick Wilson (Angels in America), Willem Dafoe and Nicole Kidman costar as well.



Jason Momoa from Aquaman.Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

'La Boheme' at Lyric Oct., Jan.

Giacomo Puccini's romantic opera La Boheme (which, among other things, inspired Rent) will run at Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Dr., on Oct. 6-20 and Jan. 10-25.

The two-hour, 15-minute co-production (between Lyric Opera of Chicago, London's Royal Opera House-Covent Garden and Teatro Real Madrid) will mark Lyric's 64th season. Note that the new curtain time for performances Monday through Friday will be 7 p.m.

La Boheme centers on a group of young, spirited Bohemians living in the Latin Quarter of 19th-century Paris.

It will be sung in Italian, with projected English translations above the stage.

Visit LyricOpera.org/Boheme or call 312-827-5600.

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.

See https://www.expochicago.com/.

NUNN ON ONE

Wash Westmoreland creatively connects to 'Colette'

BY JERRY NUNN

Independent film director Wash Westmoreland continues to take on new endeavors that push the mainstream idea of cinema, such as The Fluffer and the doc Gay Republicans.

He paid his dues as a camera assistant on the movie Hustler White, then worked his way up to co-writing and co-directing Quinceanera with his husband Richard Glatzer, making it a hit at Sundance in 2006.

With Still Alice he broke into mainstream thanks to Julianne Moore winning an Oscar for Best Actress. Glatzer was fighting amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in the hospital at the time of the win, then later died in 2015.

Westmoreland's latest project, Colette, is based on the life of Gabrielle Sidonie Colette, and stars Keira Knightley. The film tells the story of a husband-and-wife writing team, wherein the wife, Colette, is determined to break free of her husband Willy's hold, at any cost.

Windy City Times: How was working with Keira Knightley for Colette?

Wash Westmoreland: I really enjoyed working with her, and she's an incredible actress. She's also a lovely person. We got along very well straight away.

I heard she was interested in the film. I was at the Shanghai International Film Festival. We were Facetiming and I only had two percent left on my battery. I told her, "No one else can do this role but you." She said, "Let's do it then," and my phone died! I was just left looking at my phone.

Keira has a lot of things in common with Colette. She has a spark, intelligence, sensuality and a wry sense of humor. She has it all. She really invested in researching the character, reading a lot of books and immersing herself in the world of Colette.

WCT: I had heard she was a diva. Were there moments like this?

WW: No. She was completely down to earth and really nice. She has an assistant who was lovely. She had a child with her and is a working mom. She balances being an actress during the day and taking care of her daughter very well. She's very

committed to both.

WCT: What attracted you to Colette in the first place?

WW: The initial attraction was the character of Colette herself. She has a very dynamic personality and a brilliant writer.

My co-writer, co-director and late husband Richard Glatzer was an avid reader and started reading a lot about Colette. He felt there was a movie there and that being the ideal marriage to show in a feature film. It's the story of a heterosexual marriage with an unexpected queer explosion in it.

WCT: That reminded me of another movie

FILM

sure everyone had the right chemistry with Keira?

WW: The most crucial role, of course, was the role of Willy. I thought Dominic West had the right approach to it, because he takes characters that behave badly and uses charm to get away with it. He and Keira knew of each other's work, but had never met. The first time they read together, it was like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing together. It was magical!

They had a rapport and it was a filmmaker's dream come true. We had a long shot where they were just talking to each other and it was fascinating because it was like playing tennis with their minds.

The other people were either incredible actors or discoveries that we auditioned for the roles. We put together a very inclusive and diverse cast, including trans actors that were playing cisgender roles, lesbians that were playing straight roles and straight people that were playing lesbian roles. Actors of color who were playing char-

tuming.

WW: When you see old sepia tone photos, people are buttoned down. Colette is the opposite. You can't believe how far she goes by using clothes to express herself. Rather than going frilly and over adorned, she goes for simple lines. It is very striking and [utilizes] looks that would work now. When Keira wears them they look really astroniching.

Our costume designer, Andrea Flesch, had a theory that everyone in the background should have multicolors, feathers and beads. Colette should have a simplicity and be the modern one. As Colette progresses, she should move away from feminine clothes to more masculine signaling.

WCT: I almost didn't recognize Keira at the beginning of Colette.

WW: She is amazingly convincing as a teenager at the beginning of the film. She goes from 19 to 34. We worked on her body language being freer as a young person. Her voice was higher and less confident. You see as she progresses, all of these things change.

WCT: What does Colette say to women in current times?



called Professor Marston and the Wonder Women about a polyamorous relationship also.

WW: Colette and Willy had an open relationship too, so it is interesting to see from that perspective. He laid down the rules of it. He felt Colette could have affairs as long as they were women, feeling that was not threatening.

This was a time when the feminist underground was rising with some radical thinking lesbians that altered her world view. They were very instrumental to the path for her liberation.

WCT: How was casting the movie to make

acters in history who were white. It was about letting actors explore different lives, but including everybody within the casting process.

WCT: Isn't that something you have done throughout your career, by showing things not usually depicted on screen?

WW: Yes. Richard and I always approached films by seeing the genre rules and breaking them. We want to see something new so in all of our films we have tried to do that.

With Colette, we tried to do something that wasn't a typical period piece. In many period pieces you wait two hours for a couple to be engaged. In Colette, she's in the barn with Willy within the first five minutes having sex. There's no consequence for a woman being sexual, which is something else revolutionary in this genre.

WCT: I noticed you dedicated Colette to Richard at the end.

WW: It was really his baby and his idea. He wrote the first draft in 2001. He passed away about three and a half years ago, but before that, he said he wanted Colette to be our next film. It was part of the grieving process to make this creatively connected to him.

WCT: Talk about the androgyny of the cos-

WW: One thing that caught me by surprise was the extraordinary relevance to this film to the discussions that are happening around the #MeToo movement, Time's Up and LGBT issues.

The story is essentially about a man who takes credit for a woman's work. That is happening a thousand times a day all over the world. I think the Colette story finds resonance with a lot of women who are kept down by male power structures in the workplace.

As far as LGBT issues [go], it shows that queer characters are part of history. There were a lot of secret histories of queer people in the past, but Colette was actually public about it. I think it is astonishing that she kissed her girlfriend at the Moulin Rouge, causing a riot. She went with what felt natural above and beyond what society allowed. I feel she is inspiring for anyone facing barriers in their lives. They should just charge through them like Colette did!

Colette challenges the norm at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St. on Friday, Sept. 28, with showtimes at Landmark-Theatres.com/Chicago.

See the film review of Colette on page 29.

Beverly Art Walk Sept. 29

On Saturday, Sept. 29, The Alliance (Beverly Area Arts Alliance) will host the fifth annual Beverly Art Walk, a free event to highlight the arts uprising in the Beverly and Morgan Park neighborhoods.

The Beverly Art Walk will feature works by nearly 200 area artists and artisans displayed

in 60 businesses, vacant storefronts and public art locations across the neighborhood. The self-guided walking event will take place from noon to 7 p.m. from West 95th Street to 111th St., and from South Western Avenue to the Metra line on South Wood Street.

Free trolleys will be available to guide visitors on the route.

Visit BeverlyArts.org/events/5th-annual-beverly-art-walk/.

FILM REVIEW

New movie reclaims voice of 'Colette'

BY DANIELLE SOLZMAN

Telling the story of French literary icon Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, Colette is a film that is appropriate for this new era following the start of the Times Up movement.

The film starts as Henri Gauthier-Villars, best known as Willy (Dominic West), gets engaged to Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (Keira Knightley).

FILM

Their marriage is a real depiction of the sexism, much less the feminism, of their time. Willy is an author, but when money troubles become too real, he revisits an old manuscript written by Colette. The resulting Claudine à l'école becomes a huge hit. Three sequels would follow over the next three years. Claudine becomes popular and there's discussion of stage plays and film rights.

Feeling trapped in a marriage and without a voice, Colette starts to explore herself sexually. There's a fling with Southern belle Georgie Raoul-Duval (Eleanor Tomlinson), followed by a long-term relationship with Marquise de Belbeuf or "Missy" (Denise Gough). Missy dresses in a masculine manner. History describes Missy as a lesbian but Colette refers to Missy using the masculine pronouns, which may suggest that Missy should be viewed as a transgender man.

Right off the bat, the film drives into some critical commentary that could seemingly be

discussed around the table today. As Willy offers opinions of theater, art, books, etc., he gets into a disagreement with his mother-in-law-to-be, Sido (Fiona Shaw). She suggests that she'll see it and make up her own mind, reminiscent of present-day situations wherein large numbers of white men offer their critical thoughts as women and other minorities struggle to break through.

Knightley handles the role brilliantly, taking on the character from ages 19-34. Colette was a woman who had no fear. For the era in which she lived, some of the things Colette did were uncommon for women, especially in public.

I do have to applaud director Wash Westmoreland for some of his casting decisions. While transgender talent are starting to become more common on screen, casting trans actors in cisgender roles is still rare. But Westmoreland did so anyway in Colette, by casting Jake Graf and Rebecca Root as Gaston De Caillavet and novelist Rachilde, respectively. Never mind the fact that this film is a period piece, but it's still a rare feat in films taking place in present day. This trans-

gender film critic heartily approves!

The casting goes beyond this. Westmoreland seems to draw from the Hamilton playbook in other roles. The film has an Asian-British actor and a person of color cast as people who were white in real life. The casting in general seems to go with the vibe of who Colette was as a person.

The film ignores some of the typical tropes that audiences associate with period films. Cinematographer Giles Nuttgens tends to keep us focused in on Colette's every move as the camera follows her. First-time film composer Thomas Adès pays tribute to the innovative music of the era with his score.

A film such as Colette speaks to the current times, especially with its commentary on sexism. It speaks to the women working hard at lifting up their voice. After all, Colette wasn't allowed to have her voice. While her husband was getting all of the success, she was the one doing all the ghostwriting. It wasn't until after their failed marriage in which she starts getting the credit she rightfully deserved.

NUNN ON ONE

Aptly named Lila Star takes Chicago scene by storm

BY JERRY NUNN

The multitalented Lila Star is the mother to the House of Escada and currently lives in Chicago where she performs regularly. Star is known as the first, Latina trans rapper and nothing can take away that crown. In 2011, she released a hip-hop single, "I'm a Killa," and has released several songs since.

For many years she has continued to perform in drag at The Baton Show Long as well as the Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club. Star competed in the ballroom scene more than 10 years ago and won Miss Latina Continental 2015.

Her film debut came with the short movie Lakeshore Drive, leading her to the new project TranHeist.

Chicago filmmaker Maureen Maundu is a student at Tribeca Flashpoint College and is the director and producer on the film. It's the story of a trans strip club manager named Morgan, played by Star, who is anxious to have her gender-reassignment surgery. Her friend Iffy asks her to help steal money from her drug-dealing boyfriend and they come up with a plan to do so.

Maundu took a break from filming to talk about creating TranHeist, saying even though she is straight she wanted to learn more about the LGBT community: "When I saw the tape of Lila auditioning I knew I had found her! When I met her she was so relaxed and I asked deep questions. I didn't want my script to offend people. Morgan is a character from the culture and not anyone I knew, so Lila made me feel great about the project."

Star also spent some time talking about her life during the making of TranHeist.

Windy City Times: Is your last name an homage to Brenda K. Starr?

Lila Star: No. As a child I always fascinated by stars so I took that on. I was born on the North Side of Chicago. I grew up singing in church and mariachi with my grandfather, but English is my first language. I am Puerto Rican and Black.

WCT: How is your family?

LS: Super-supportive. My dad passed in 2007, but he was my biggest fan. I am one of the lucky ones, because not everyone has that support system

I was put in a bubble until I was 19, because my parents were very strict with me. I finally went to my first drag show at a gay club. I didn't know a transgender person. After that, it sparked a light bulb and I could relate.

You know Monica Beverly Hillz from RuPaul's Drag Race? She was the first one to take me to a gay club.

WCT: She used to work at the teen clubs.

LS: She did. She wasn't doing drag then, she was living in Indiana. I reached out and got her booked for her first job by pretending to be her manager. Then we started to perform.

That is when I learned about the transgender community and reached out to Howard Brown. I started to transition and my parents realized it was not a phase. I learned that I could still perform as a transgender person. I didn't want to just do shows even though I do it to this day. I wanted to act and make music. I love drag so I always go back to it.

WCT: What do you think about the RuPaul controversy with trans performers on his show?

LS: It upsets me. I had auditioned for the show and couldn't make it because of the boob thing. If you go on YouTube you can find my audition tape. I was told to talk deeper and act differently.

When I went to DragCon someone told me to not waste my time by auditioning again since I have boobs. I was so sad because I love drag and I think if I was on the show I could keep up!

WCT: You also do make-up?

LS: Yes. I was self taught, then I majored in cosmetology. My dad passed away when I was in college so I left that to perform full time. I got my bartending license and a few years ago started studying at Second City.

WCT: You rap also?

LS: I rap! I am the first Latina trans rapper. I just wrapped up my first music video with a reggaeton song with Lester Rey called "Ni Santa." He is so soulful. When you hear the song it has an acoustic, reggae-type feel to it. It is beautiful.

WCT: Talk about your film Lakeshore Drive.

LS: That was my first film—right out of school, which I was lucky enough to land. When I first got the audition for the part, that project was shelved by the director because they hadn't

found a Latin trans actress for two years to play that role. It was a beautiful thing with timing for everybody.

Two months after getting that part I landed my second role in a film. It hasn't been released yet. I have to film the last scene of it because it is being shot in 35mm and is more expensive. I play leader of a group of activists and it is never even discussed in the film that I am trans, which I love.

WCT: Isn't that more validating that you can play any role?

LS: I think so. I don't want to be defined playing the escort or the prostitute. That is the problem with a lot of trans roles.

I think things are getting better. Laverne Cox has opened a lot of doors for trans actresses. She has shown they can be more than escort. She even started that way. I saw in her bio she played an escort early on.

I am not oblivious to it all. I know there will be bumps in the road. I know I have to prove myself and don't mind doing that, whether as a person, a businesswoman or a trans actress. I am down for it. I'm a gangster. I can do it!

Read the full interview with Lila online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Hello, Columbus: Much more than

Much more than a college town

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I've had the good fortune to travel to Columbus, Ohio, a few times—and I've convinced more and more people that it's a great place to visit.

Why is that? Because, despite some individuals' perceptions that The Ohio State University (and don't forget to put "the" in front of the school's name) dominates the city, there really IS a lot to see and do. After all, it is the state capital.

My most recent trip to Columbus involved doing some of the same things I'd previously done—but also involved some exploration, revealing new aspects of this charming city.

DIY and diversity

After checking in at Hotel LeVeque (50 W. Broad St.; http://www.hotellevequecolumbus.com/)—which still looks and feels as fabulous as ever—I was in an LGBT media group that checked out the scene at **The Kitchen** (231 E. Livingston Ave.; http://thekitchencolumbus.com/), which employs a concept called "participatory dining." I honestly didn't see the point of preparing dishes myself (that's why I pay THEM), but the point of doing this became clear (even if it was clear that I'm not the next Rachael Ray): bonding. As we made such dishes as olive bread swirls, it was nice to have conversations with other people, even comparing cooking skills—and the items turned out quite well, if I do say/write so my-



A lamp at Karavan. Photo by Andrew Davis

TRAVEL

self. (By the way, the five-year-old Kitchen has a newer event space, The Studio at The Kitchen, conveniently located next door.)

Then, it was the fabulous and friendly drag queen **Plenty O'Smiles** (aka Plenty O'Cookies; http://www.plentyocookies.com/) who took the reins and instructed us in the art of decorating cookies. She was incredibly patient, even with some of us stragglers (ahem). Be sure to book her; she really is adorable.

And from there we went to **Club Diversity** (863 S. High St.; http://clubdiversity.com/), a very laid-back space with friendly staff and stiff drinks—the kind of place where one could easily become a regular. (For a list of Columbus' LGBT clubs, see ColumbusGayBars.com.)

Clintonville, COSI and vets

The next day, I decided to hit a part of Columbus I'd never experience: Clintonville. What resulted were some nice surprises.

Clintonville is a large neighborhood, and it reminded me of Chicago's Andersonville—and I later understood why. I discovered after I arrived in the area that it's extremely LGBT-friendly, and many lesbians call the district home. (In fact, my Uber driver from Clintonville to my next destination happened to be a lesbian who said she and her wife hoped to move there.) By the way, those in the area must check out the wonderfully named **Dough Mama** (3335 N. High St.; https://www.dough-mama.com/), which not only has a nice selection of bakery items but an all-day menu that includes biscuits smothered in delicious sausage gravy.

And in a shift, this writer (who was a biology major in college) decided to check out the science museum **COSI** (333 W. Broad St.; https://cosi.org/). Yes, there were approximately 5,000 kids when I went (and I might be lowballing that number), but hurdling the little ones was worth it, as this place has some incredible exhibitions, including the Dinosaur Gallery. (For the kids and kids at heart, there's now a "Hot Wheels: Race to Win" exhibit through Jan. 6.

Speaking of museums, our group was allowed to take an early look at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (300 W. Broad St.; https://www.nationalvmm.org/), which officially opens Oct. 27, complete with a keynote speech from Gen. Colin Powell. We were informed that the facility will include timelines, interactive kiosks and 25 stories from veterans, among other things. (When asked if any LGBT veterans will be profiled, Windy City Times was told that the memorial/museum "scoured the country." I'm really hoping this results in at least one LGBT vet being profiled, after so many devoted time—and their



The National Veterans Memorial and Museum. Photo by Andrew Davis

lives—to defending this country.)

After that serious visit, things turned a bit lighter upon visiting **Basi Italia** restaurant (811 Highland St.; http://www.basi-italia.com/), with charismatic chef/co-owner Johnny Dornback. The menu is as audacious Dornback, with tantalizing items such as arancine fumo (with saffron, smoked mozzarella and crushed tomato marinara), braised beef shortribs and cannoli awaiting customers.

Short North sojourn

The area of Columbus known as the Short North is, simply, a treasure.

It may hold a special place in my heart because my initial stay in the city was a Hampton Inn in this neighborhood. However, to me, the Short North has practically something for everyone.

Now, the Hotel LeVeque doesn't have a spa (yet)—but **Le Meridien Columbus**, **The Joseph** (620 N. High St.; https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cmhdm-le-meridien-columbus-the-joseph/) has pretty cool spa suites, and includes a warmed marble seat that feels like heaven. And this hotel is pretty unique, as it has everything from innovative artwork to athletic gear that it loans its guests.

And no visit to the Short North is complete without stopping by **North Market** (59 Spruce St.; https://www.northmarket.com/), with dozens of merchants offering everything from chocolate-bacon donuts to Indian dishes to stonecrab claws—and there's a large dining area on the second floor.

Walking along the main strip of the Short North—High Street—reveals a cornucopia of stores and inviting opportunities. **Big Fun** (672 N. High St.; https://bigfuncolumbus.com/) has vintage toys (Albert Einstein bobblehead, anyone?), while **Karavan** (771 N. High St.; https://

www.karavancolumbus.com/) had Turkish treasures I couldn't resist. Make your own customized candles at **The Candle Lab** (751 N. High St.; https://www.thecandlelab.com/); marvel at the leather goods at **Fount** (668 N. High St.; http://fountleather.com/); and pore through the vintage CDs at **Magnolia Thunderpussy** (1155 N. High St.; https://www.thunderpussy.com/), a 47-year-old store named after a San Francisco burlesque performer.

For a fantastic meal, **Service Bar** (1230 Courtland Ave.; https://servicebarcolumbus.com/)) is definitely a place to hit. Among the cool dishes from Executive Chef Avishar Barua are Cheese & Poof (with fire-roasted pimento spread, pork rinds and barrel-aged hot sauce), lamb wontons, sticky pork shank (with papaya salad, sticky rice and Thai basil) and cinco leches cake.

Then, there is the **Gallery Hop** (http://short-north.org/arts-galleries/gallery-hop/), during which people visit galleries and witness the talents of street performers the first Saturday of each month. It's a can't-miss experience that's been going on for more than three decades (and, by the way, be sure to check out the many murals along the street, including a recent one of late comedian Richard Pryor).

However, there is still so much more to do in Columbus, including visiting nationally known attractions such as the Columbus Zoo and Franklin Park Conservatory, along with the renowned art museum Pizzuti Collection; and quaint neighborhoods like German Village. Columbus—take it all in!

Many thanks go to Experience Columbus and Weirick Communications for arranging this visit. Also, I'm grateful to Short North Trolley (https://www.shortnorthtrolley.com/), and very interesting co-founder Jeff Shugarts, for the transport.

NUNN ON ONE

Adam Rippon skates into success

BY JERRY NUNN

Figure skater Adam Rippon won a bronze medal at the 2018 Winter Olympics, making history by becoming the first openly gay U.S. athlete to do so. He followed that by being the first openly gay celebrity to win Dancing with the Stars. Rippon came out publicly in 2015.

The road to success was full of ups and downs for Rippon, who started skating at 10. The hard work has paid off with many medals and accolades over the years.

He also joined other celebrities on Sept. 24 for a benefit reading of The Laramie Project for a video leading up to Laramie: A Legacy in New York City.

Before his recent Chicago House Speaker Series appearance with Wanda Sykes, Rippon spoke about his current life and upcoming projects.

Windy City Times: How did you wind up working with Chicago House?

Adam Rippon: I just had a great meeting with the team, and they went over everything that they do. It is such an incredible organization. I am super grateful to be working with them.

WCT: Do you work with charities often?

AR: I try to. I get so much joy out of helping other people. I try to be involved with as many different communities as possible.

WCT: What is your day-to-day schedule like?

AR: Each day, I open up my Google Calendar and see what is on it, because I usually don't know. I have a great group of people around me who keep me organized. It has been a lot of travel with a few things sprinkled in.

WCT: Why did you decide to come out publicly in the first place?

AR: For a really long time, I thought it would be something that I wouldn't share with anybody. Life kind of takes over. I felt it was really important.

I am from a really small town. Two weeks ago, a religious university outside of my hometown just expelled someone for being gay. That is the area I come from and why it is important to talk about who I am and where I come from, to normalize it.

I have been really lucky to do things where someone who is out can get in the home of someone who wouldn't necessarily be accepting of someone who is gay.

WCT: Do people reach out to you through social media about this?

AR: Yes. I have heard from tons of people. The stories are really amazing.

It is crazy because I still feel like me. I haven't changed and things aren't really that different. That I was able to reach so many people and share who I was, then to have them reach out and say I have been helpful to them, has been amazing.

WCT: Is there the other side to it where people ask why are you involved in politics?

AR: Of course, but I am 28 years old. I am

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confident in who I am. Everybody will have an opinion. I think it is better to be vocal than to be silent. To be silent means you don't stand for anything.

WCT: Is that why you started talking about politics?

AR: I started talking about politics because I was asked about it. I didn't go to the Olympics to talk about politics; someone asked me a question. If I get a question about it, then I will answer it. I thought it was important and wanted to be honest about what I was asked.

If I was asked about the competition, I would say I was nervous or just doing well. I answered honestly. When I was asked a question about the current administration I answered it honestly.

WCT: Has that spiraled into more questions asking about politics in interviews?

AR: I have been more politically involved now. I think some people wonder why, because it can be such a taboo subject matter and really polarizing to talk about, but I think it's important. If we don't talk about it, then we are never going to be on the same page.

WCT: Why do you think more sports figures are not out of the closet?

AR: There is an underlying notion that if you are gay then you are more effeminate, or not strong. There is a mentality that women can't be as strong as men, and if you are feminine like a woman, you are not a fierce competitor. It is obviously bullshit.

I think you never want to be perceived as weak. I know in my experiences as a competitive athlete, I never wanted anyone to think I was weak.

When I finally came out publicly, I felt so much stronger and was no longer hiding a part of who I am, especially in my sport where you are out there by yourself. You have a few minutes to show who you are and what you are made of. The best way to show all of me was to be honest with everybody about who I was.

WCT: What are your thoughts on Johnny Weir?

AR: I think someone like Johnny Weir helped make the road for me a lot easier. Are we the same person? No. He's way more flamboyant than I am. I appreciate someone like Johnny Weir so much, though—especially within my own sport.

WCT: Do you pick the music you skate to?

AR: I do. When I was younger I had some input from choreographers and coaches, but when I got older, it was really a collaboration between me and my choreographer.

You can have a great idea, but when you talk to somebody they may think it's awful. You want to talk to someone you really trust, because you can't see yourself skate.

I had a great team around me getting ready for the games. They helped me pick my music, but



Adam Rippon. Photo by Jerry Nunn

ultimately it was my choice.

WCT: What do people misunderstand about ice skaters?

AR: They think it is a lot easier than it really is. Being an athlete of any kind is a full-time job. When I was training for the Olympics, I would skate for about four hours, then there was another four hours of work off of the ice. It was eight hours of working out. I think every sport takes about that much time.

WCT: Wearing the harness at the Oscars made a splash. What were the best and worst moments of wearing it?

AR: In men's fashion, there is a limited amount of choices. With a woman's gown it can be so many shapes and cuts, but a tuxedo is pretty straightforward.

Getting to work with Jeremy Scott—who loves cutouts, straps and harnesses—was such a blessing. I did it because I thought it was interesting and fun. Some people felt like it wasn't appropri-

ate, but I wasn't one of those people so...

WCT: What are you working on next?

AR: I filmed an episode of Will & Grace; that was great. I just filmed an episode of Dancing with the Stars: Juniors that premieres Oct. 7 and we run through December.

I started working with the When We All Vote campaign for the midterm elections.

WCT: One special thought from the Dancing with the Stars experience?

AR: It was on of the busiest times of my life. It was fantastic.

I have been able to work with that Dancing with the Stars family more with Juniors, so I felt right at home. It was great to be with everybody.

WCT: If they made a movie about your life—like I, Tonya—who would you want to play you?

AR: I thought Allison Janney was so good. I would want her to play me! [Laughs]

Sept. 26, 2018 WINDY CITY TIMES



AIDS Run & Walk unveils 'Live True. Be You' at annual event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Amidst perfect weather conditions, approximately 2,500 participants gathered for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's (AFC) 17th annual AIDS Run & Walk Sept. 23 at Soldier Field. This year's theme was "Live True. Be You."

Since the event began 16 years ago, over \$5 million has been raised to help many organizations do their work.

AFC and 34 CommunityDirect partners from across Chicago and the surrounding suburbs are the fundraising beneficiaries this year, with 90 percent of the money raised going directly to these organizations. Over \$360,000 has been raised so far and fundraising will be ongoing through Nov. 15.

These partners are Agape Missions, Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Chicago Center for HIV Elimination, Dance for Life, Chicago House & Social Service Agency, Chicago Recovery Alliance, Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Children's Home & AID, CORE Foundation, Erie Family Health, Heartland Alliance, Howard Brown Health, Legal Council for Health Justice, Loyola University Medical Center, Lurie Children's SID, Men & Women in Prison Ministries, Michael Reese Research & Education Foundation, Midwest AIDS Training + Education Center, New Age Services, Night Ministry, Open Door Clinic, Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative, Pride Action Tank, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago, Puerto Rican Cultural Center-Vida/SIDA, Specialized Assistance Services Inc., Season of Concern, Sinai Health Systems, UI Health Community Clinic Network and Youth Outlook.

Jeff Award-winning director Christopher Paz-

dernik kicked off the event with his special brand of humor. He also spoke about being diagnosed with HIV in 2009, adding that, about five years ago, he decided to get involved with this event after he saw an ad for it on the CTA.

WGN entertainment reporter Dean Richards emceed the opening ceremonies. He emphasized that the event's significance to the community is one reason why WGN has hosted it since its inception. He also called on everyone to vote on Nov. 6.

"We remember and honor those who we have lost in this crisis through the years, and salute those who are living healthy with HIV," said Richards. "There is still so much more work to be done."

"The AIDS epidemic has taken the lives of so many of our friends and loved ones," said AFC President and CEO John Peller. "What would the world look like if we were able to learn from and be inspired by the people we have lost? Their voices and vision have been taken from us by the most stigmatized disease on the planet. Today we are here to carry on their legacy."

Peller called on everyone to observe a moment of silence for two leaders in the community who have passed away in the past few months—Marcia Lipetz, AFC's first full-time executive director; and Dan Bigg, Chicago Recovery Alliance's founder and executive director.

"We are almost done building a roadmap toward the day in Illinois without a single new HIV transmission," said Peller. "The campaign is called Getting to Zero Illinois and the goal is to end the HIV epidemic in the state by 2030."

Peller also told this publication that "we are elated by the weather and that fundraising is looking really strong. The support from the community is incredible. We are thrilled to have so many corporate and community teams participating. This is the largest HIV event in Chicago where the whole community is uniting in the fight against HIV."

AFC Board Member Craig Johnson led The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt presentation. Volunteers carried one of the two panels featuring Chicago-area people who have died of the disease throughout the crowd while Johnson read their names.

"Coming back from D.C. where things are tough, and being a part of this extraordinary event, gives me hope," said U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-5). "The common question I get in the time of Trump is, What can I do?' ... [T]he answer is love each other through word and deed, and there is no better deed than what people are doing here today. After we flip the House, this should be a lot more fun run, because we are going to have the money to provide the healthcare and do the critical research to make this an AIDS-free world."

State Rep. Thaddeus Jones (29th District) spoke about his two nephews who died of AIDS being the driving force behind his HIV/AIDS advocacy. Jones also called on everyone to sign the petition to have the state legislature override Gov. Rauner's veto of HB 4096. That bill would establish a Medicaid single drug formulary and provide access for HIV/AIDS drugs sooner.

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus performed "Seasons of Love" and "True Colors" while Jeff Award nominee Donica Lynn sang "You'll Never Walk Alone."

Austin Head from Fitness Formula Club led warm-up stretches for participants ahead of the run/walk while DJ Harry Tyner spun tunes during the race.

First-place winners in the 10K race include Beth Mask in the female category and Ryan Mork in the male category. There were no participants in the gender-neutral category. The 5K race first-place winners were Vanessa Righeimer in the female category, Mark Begovich in the male category and Irvin Almonte in the gender-neutral category.

The event also featured free flu shots courtesy of Walgreens, a MillerCoors Beer Garden, free hot dogs from the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile and many sponsor booths.

See http://events.aidschicago.org/site/TR?fr_id=1480&pg=entry to make a donation and https://gtzillinois.hiv/ for more information.













BY ROSS FORMAN

John Schneider lives on the North Side, yet has been working on the South Side of Chicago around HIV prevention since 2001. He is a fierce advocate for ensuring resources are available in neighborhoods most impacted by HIV and that clinical settings are affirming, responsive to client needs and a fun place to work.

"I specialize in providing high quality primary care, sexual health, hormone therapy and HIV care to young Black gay, bisexual and other MSM as well as Black transgender persons," he said. "My clinic is at Howard Brown 55th Street, where I am medical director. My five hours of clinic each week is busy and the highlight of the week. I have learned so much about what it takes to live intersectional (SGM and Black) and how that impacts health outcomes.

"I work in HIV and know firsthand what people living with HIV go through as well as those who are vulnerable to HIV."

Schneider also is a biker, so participating this September in the 15th annual Ride For AIDS Chicago seemed logical.

The catch was, he did the two-day Ride along with his 12-year-old son, Mahin, who is believed to be the youngest Ride participant ever.

"I take him to many HIV prevention or other health fair events that our Center runs on the South Side, so this was just another one," Schneider said. "He is a young athlete and I have seen him accomplish some other long endurance activities, like hiking. I thought he could do it. He tends to be shy and I thought it would help him to interact with many people."

And it didn't take much convincing for Mahin to agree to ride, his dad said.

After the Ride, Dad was brimming with pride, particularly for his son.

"I did a long walk at his age, but that was it. He has a special capacity for these sorts of things," John said. "We were both very tired," after the two-day, almost-200 mile ride.

When asked if they'd do it again, John said they absolutely would

"In the final mile of the Ride, we made a pact to do it again in the next five years, maybe for the 20th anniversary," of the Ride, Schneider said. Mahin is in the seventh-grade at Lab School in Chicago. He plays competitive soccer and admitted that he had "some trepidation" before the Ride.

Afterward, Mahin said the Ride was "just as hard as climbing Mt. Olympus."

But the youngster also was filled with pride.

"I was happy [to finish] and excited to get [to eat] Cheetos," which he normally doesn't get to enjoy, he said.

Mahin said his Ride highlight was cycling along the beach and crossing the finish line at the end

SPORTS

of day one, when he rode 103 miles.

When asked about being the youngest Ride participant ever, Mahin simply shrugged his shoulders.

John Schneider, 44, who is married to Nammi, said the Ride was a "privilege" to cycle alongside "so many fighters and people passionate about what they do."

The Ride exceeded his pre-event expectations, he said.

"The outpouring of support for Mahin was incredible and not what I had expected," he said. "He was like a mascot. Mahin was very nervous because I always bring him to events where he is the only kid. He kept asking, will there be other kids. I kept saying, probably not. I think including him in these sorts of activities are so important to his development."

John acknowledged the challenge that is the annual Ride, but added, "I am part of something special."

"The final 10 miles of the first day were the hardest, particularly for Mahin," John said. "His hardest point was a fall he had and then the final 10 miles. Particularly when his odometer said 100 miles, but then we had another 5 [miles or so] to go. The first day was 103 miles and [the] odometer was off by 2. I bought him the odometer so I didn't have to hear 'are we there yet?' the entire Ride."

John said his personal highlights of the Ride were the long beach and coastal riding [areas and] seeing people who had not previously ridden using their mental power to get through."

When asked about participating in the Ride to support those impacted by HIV/AIDS, Schneider said he is "hopeful that we will reach no new cases by 2041, which is our Center's projection. The official Illinois projections are for 2030, so I am optimistic and driven to do all I can to contribute to this effort."

Architect to discuss local projects
Oct. 2 in Loop

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 Chicagobased 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/thinkinginto-thefuture.

E. Faye Butler in 'Gypsy' Oct. 12-Nov. 25

Porchlight Music Theatre's Mainstage 2018-19 season launches with Gypsy, A Musical Fable, Oct, 12-Nov. 25, at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.

E. Faye Butler will star in the production, which features a book by Arthur Laurents, music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

Single tickets are \$20-\$66 and are on sale now, as are subscriptions to the entire Mainstage season that includes Gypsy, A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder and A Chorus Line; visit PorchlightMusicTheatre.org or call 773-777-9884.

Pro-LGBTQ group HomeField forms

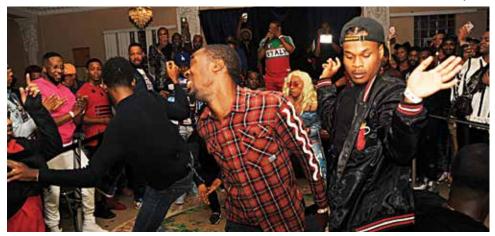
Looking to fill a gap in networking, knowledge and training for LGBTQ employees and their allies in the sports and entertainment field, a group of industry professionals has launched a new nonprofit organization called HomeField Alliance.

The organization seeks to create relationships and professional development opportunities across teams, leagues, organizations and other stakeholders through member networking events and public programs.

A registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, Home-Field Alliance, Inc. NFP is headquartered in Chicago, with a focus on membership from across the United States and Canada.

Those interested in membership can apply through HomefieldAlliance.org.

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Ball celebrates contributions of trans pioneer

BY VERNON HESTER

On the evening of Sept. 22, Mothers LaSaia, Lauren and Jahari Mizrahi presented The Pay It No Mind Ball in celebration of the contributions of LGBTQ activist Marsha P. Johnson.

The free event (which Brave Space Alliance presented) featured a number of ball competitions, a buffet dinner and cash prizes with several icons of the ball scene in attendance. Emcees for the evening included the Legendary Father Kentrele, Sha Sha Lauren and Denim Mizrahi, and judges for the competitions included, among others, La-Saia Wade and Solomon Arnold.

Johnson was a prominent figure at the Stonewall Uprising in 1969 and is often cited as throwing the first brick that ignited the riot. Apart from being named by a number of Stonewall veterans interviewed in David Carter's book Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution (Macmillun Publishing, 2004) for her actions, she was also

DRAG/NIGHTLIFE

known as "the mayor of Christopher Street," a founding member of The Gay Liberation Front, cofounder of a trans-advocacy organization (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries or S.T.A.R.) with close friend Sylvia Rivera, a model for Andy Warhol, and an activist with ACT UP for the last years of her life. She and Rivera also started Star House—a living space for young drag queens, trans women, gender non-conforming individuals and other LGBTQ+ street kids. Johnson died July 6, 1992.

For The Pay It No Mind Ball, the overflow crowd was treated to several performance categories and a seemingly endless night of entertainment as contestants competed in areas like New Vogue, New Realness, Pretty Girl Realness, Executive Realness, Revolutionaries vs. Hippies, Hand Performance (in white gloves), Sex Siren and Glitz and Glam.

























"America's Got Talent got a bigger audience than the Emmys. Write your own punch line. It's a Jewish holiday."—Perennial awards show scribe **Bruce Vilanch**'s quip on the ratings for the Emmy Awards.

If you missed the Emmy Awards, you weren't alone. Not only were the ratings down 11 percent from last year; the show hit an all-time low. But don't take these numbers as a waning interest solely in television—ratings for this year's Oscars telecast were down 19 percent, while the Grammys tanked more than 23 percent. The decline for a televised awards show about television is also deceptive—the vast majority of nominees were for cable and streaming services, while the show was hosted by Saturday Night Live cast members on NBC. Relevance is as hot a topic as diversity, which was the theme of the Emmy's opening musical number.

Since most of you missed the show, here are some of my highlights. **Jenifer Lewis** showed her support for **Colin Kaepernick** by arriving clad head to toe in Nike (and she threw in a high kick on the red carpet just to show those bastards she still could). After his first nomination 42 years ago, **Henry Winkler** finally won an Emmy! I'm not entirely sure **Betty White** knew where she was, but she managed to pull it off ... even though she was dangerously close to exclaiming, "Gladiator!"

RuPaul presented an award with Leslie Jones. Girl, would it kill you to wear a gown? Yes, I'm talking to you, Leslie! As to Ru, congrats on making history by winning Best Host of a Reality Competition Series and snagging Best Reality Competition Series with RuPaul's Drag Race. Darren Criss never misses an opportunity to remind us he's straight. I LOVED the "Reparation Emmys" sketch. Why is it that Tina Fey always looks as comfortable walking in a dress as Jodie Foster or Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg? Taraji, you work that train! Sandra Oh is still trying to explain to her mother that she didn't win (but as she said, "It's an honor just to be Asian"). I'm still not convinced Tim Gunn isn't being held hostage by Heidi Klum and possibly the Symbionese Liberation Army. Lastly, that was an awfully chaste kiss between Ricky Martin and his hubby.

I am proud to announce what is likely destined to be one of this year's Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions—the Stormy Daniels comic book. Political Power: Stormy Daniels is available digitally and in two collective and one hardcover edition on Amazon. It's not what one would call heavy reading—the 24-page comic will likely hold the attention of an 8-year-old boy or a 72-year-old commander-in-chief. Written and drawn by Joe Paradise, it chronicles Stormy's "journey from scrappy opportunist to unlikely feminist icon." The artist kinda made Stormy look like Pamela Anderson as Stripperella or Barb Wire, and shows her in such situations as spanking a sitting president. We'll show some of the more choice illustrations on BillyMasters.com.



Bruce Vilanch pointed his usual acerbic lens on the Emmys.

WCT archival photo

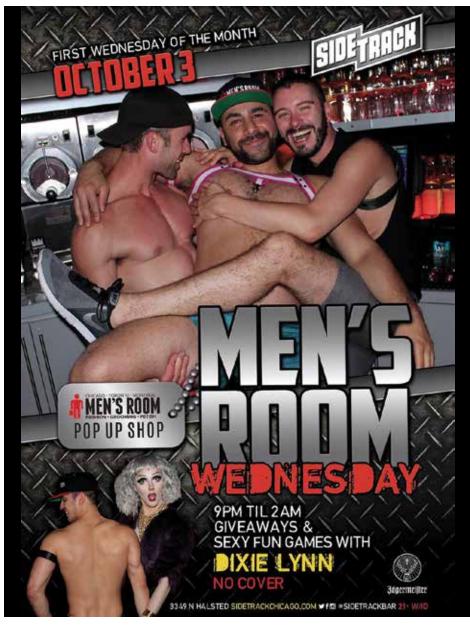
Adam Rippon is officially an American treasure. Last week, he announced (on Twitter, of course): "Pretty cool to soon have something on display in the American History Museum. Now, I just need to convince someone that they need to be next to the ruby slippers." Rippon donated his Olympic costume and skates to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

I'd say Sesame Street qualifies as an American treasure. And I'd place **Ernie and Bert** near the top of the list of indelible inhabitants. Every once in a while, people wonder whether the "roommates" are gay or straight. Former "Sesame" writer Mark Saltzman added fuel to the fire, saying, "I always felt that without a huge agenda, when I was writing Bert and Ernie, they were gay. I didn't have any other way to contextualize them."

It should be noted that the characters were actually created in the original Sesame Street pilot in 1969; Saltzman didn't start writing for the show until 1984. The Sesame Workshop issued a statement of their own: "Sesame Street has always stood for inclusion and acceptance. It's a place where people of all cultures and backgrounds are welcome. Bert and Ernie were created to be best friends, and to teach young children that people can get along with those who are very different from themselves. They also added "they remain puppets, and do not have a sexual orientation." Tell that to Miss Piggy, who constantly lusts after an ambivalent amphibian: Kermit.

With all the buzz about **Bradley Cooper**'s remake of A Star Is Born, many media outlets say that the one film you have to see FIRST is **Barbra Streisand**'s remake of A Star Is Born. The 1976 version has been available in the home video market for years. However, Streisand recently remastered it, added in some deleted scenes and spruced it up for Netflix. Well, you didn't expect her to sit back and let **Lady Gaga** have a moment, did you?

When I heard that **Cicely Tyson** was receiving an honorary Oscar, I was sure it was for her stirring performance at Aretha's funeral—except, of course, that wasn't a film (but it might as well



have been). This particular honor is for her body of work on the silver screen. The presentation will take place at the 10th Annual Governors Award on Nov. 18—because, of course, they don't have time to give it out during the Oscars telecast.

Those of you in Southern California will want to save the date of Oct. 6. That's when the AC Gallery in Hollywood will host a "red-carpet" life celebration of Tab Hunter, which will coincide with a series of life-size paintings of the actor by video director Vance Lorenzini. Hunter's partner, Allan Glaser, came up with the idea of remembering Hunter with this event, which will start at 6 p.m. The exhibition runs through Nov. 28.

When we're saying goodbye to Tab (the actor, not the drink), it's time to end yet another column. And what a long column it was. I barely have time to remind you to check outBillyMasters.com—the site that doesn't need remastering. As always, send your questions to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Ernie and Bert get married in a very special episode of Sesame Street! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible



the DISH Weekly Dining Guide in WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Merchant; breakfast at The Palm

BY ANDREW DAVIS

One of the most challenging things for a restaurant is to retain the patrons from a similar business that occupied the same spot.

This was the daunting task facing the coowners of **Merchant** (3137 W. Logan Blvd.; https://www.merchantchicago.com), a Logan Square restaurant that replaced longtime favorite Dunlay's on the Square. And, so far, Merchant has met the challenge, according to co-owner Christopher Huizar, attracting everyone from families to couples to late-night guests. (Nick Barone and and Chef Matt Skolarus—of Girl & The Goat and Japonais, among other places—are the other owners). By the way, there's even a DJ to entertain patrons on the weekends.

Overall, Merchant is a pretty attractive spot, with a cool decor and welcoming staff (and my dining companion apparently loved the music, as she sang along to the diverse mix of tunes).



Smashburger at Merchant.Photo courtesy of C. Louise PR

The restaurant also features a nice selection of drinks as well as cuisine that could be classified as "globally influenced American fare"—items that ranged from solid to excellent.

Regarding small plates, we tried items that managed to hit the highs and lows in one fell swoop. The elote fritters should be eaten with the accompanying garlic aioli and cotija to get the full effect—but the standout was certainly the addictive broccoli gratin with mornay and charred toast. (Think of your creamiest macaroni 'n cheese, but with the cruciferous vegetable In place of the pasta.) That second dish is definitely worthy of a return all by itself. Other small plates include the fried-rice arancini (same caveat as with the fritters) and wings.

There are many other intriguing-sounding items on the menu. A watermelon salad comes with feta, basil oil and shaved jalapeño; pastor

tacos come with chipotle-marinated pineapple, bacon wrap and tomatillo; and the Mama Gallucci salad features charred romaine, mandarin orange, avocado, blue cheese and a red-wine vinaigrette. One can't-miss item is the smashburger, which has a cheese skirt cooked into it—and is even better with egg and/or bacon.

For your pleasure, Merchant also has all-day breakfast items. They only number two (the braves burrito and parfait bowl) but, hopefully, that will expand. And there's only one dessert: a budino that, unfortunately, wasn't ready for patrons dining mid-afternoon. I have high hopes for it, though—just like I do for Merchant.

Breakfast at The Palm

Not so long ago, I profiled **The Palm Restaurant** (in the Swissotel at 323 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; www.thepalm.com/restaurants/chicago/), and lauded the quality of the food. (There's also some cool people-watching and you can even marvel at the caricatures on the walls of members of the spot's 837 Club, which offers exclusive benefits to Palm regulars.)

Well, add breakfast to the reasons to swing by The Palm. Sure, there are plenty of the usual suspects, but there are also some unique items that are practically sinful.

Start with the cinnamon-streusel Pullman French toast. I don't know exactly what's in this seemingly normal concoction, but these were the best slices of French toast I've had in ages. And if you're feeling truly indulgent, the lobster omelette is a phenomenal treat; perfectly



French toast at The Palm. Photo by Andrew Davis

poached lobster is cooked with egg and tomatoes, chives and cheddar cheese—making for a can't-miss option. Even my dining partner raved about the breakfast sandwich.

The Palm's breakfast menu isn't the most expansive—but the few items on there are bound to make your day. Give this place a try.

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











CHARLIE'S
Happy 25th anniversary!
Joseph Stevens Photography











Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series:

October's featured storytellers



—Anna DeShawn is a Chicago-born media professional and social entrepreneur. She is determined to ride media into its next era by utilizing online radio streams to tell the stories that need to be heard.

—**Gearah Goldstein** is a nationally recognized diversity and inclusion consultant. Gearah has been the lead trainer at the Center on Halsted, training over 2,000 new volunteers over the past two years.

—**James Jones** grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and is one of 12 kids. He majored in computer science and theatre and works for the Children's Hospital as a Senior IT Engineer and started his own production company for film and music two years ago.

—Victor Salvo is the founder of Chicago's The Legacy Project. He brings 30 years' experience as both an LGBT activist and a business owner to his work.

—**Rick Schlattman** is currently a student in Rush University's College of Nursing MSN program and will be starting what someone called his "encore career" as a nurse when he graduates in August 2019, a week after turning 59.

—**Brandon Strawn** describes himself as an educator, a musician and a delight. He has lived and worked in the Chicago region for 10 years, leaving a trail of math, music and mirth behind him.

The September edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, October 2, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

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BOOK REVIEW

Straight Expectations: The Story of a Family in Transition by Peggy Cryden (with Janet E. Goldstein-Ball) \$17.95; Jessica Kingsley Publishers; 183 pages REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Always be prepared.

That's not just a motto to wear on a badge; it could save you money, time, or health. It might get you where you're going, faster or easier. Being ready for anything can you feel secure and safe, it can help you bounce back against any adversity and, as in the new book Straight Expectations, by Peggy Cryden (with Janet E. Goldstein-Ball), it can make you a better parent.

Everything in her life, it seemed, had readied her for what was to come.

Adopted as a small infant, Cryden grew up with a father who was a genius, but was distant; and a mother with emotional issues and what Cryden indicates was probably mental illness. Cryden didn't completely understand the latter until she was an adult and a working therapist, and it took many decades for her to make peace with her mother's legacy.

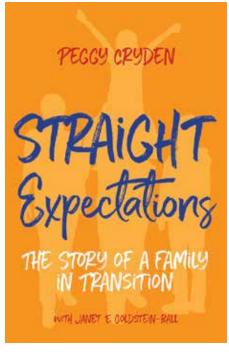
Before that, however, as children, Cryden and her brother were often left to their own devices. They woke themselves, prepared themselves for school, learned to swipe lunch money from their father's pocket change, and they tried not to be embarrassed by their mom's antics, eccentricities, or melt-downs. Untaught by her mother, Cryden learned resilience and basic skills from her grandmother, her grandmother's Black housekeeper, and from a neighbor woman who obviously noted a child in need.

Though she was generally independent much earlier, Cryden moved out of her parents' house when she was still in high school. Later, while attending community college, she met the man she would marry, although Cryden indicates that she sometimes felt she couldn't "bond."

That feeling extended to her firstborn child, a girl she named Julia.

She was a little better centered when her second child, a boy, Jay, was born.

Finally, Cryden had stability and the family



she always dreamed of having: two children, a girl and a boy, and a supportive husband. Theirs seemed to be the perfect, TV-ready, typical family down the block until Julia, who was just a teen, confessed to her mother that he'd come to the understanding that he was really a boy. Shortly after this, fragile Jay, who'd always felt left out, came out to his family...

Although it has steel-strong messages of affirmation, unconditional love, acceptance, and healing, Straight Expectations is a rough read.

Cryden (with Goldstein-Ball, who offers pertinent information in her introduction) tells an absorbing story of childhood neglect and how she turned her own experiences into self-lessons on raising her two sons confidently. Readers will clearly see that there's power in those words but there's also repetition, often within the same half-page, causing the sentiment to wither like a pinpricked balloon. Add in an overabundance of choppy sentences and you've got frustration in the form of a book you very much want to read ... but will you?

Yes, it's worth a try. Straight Expectations contains is a basically good story plus resources, but it needed love with an editing pen. Yes, you may like it enormously—just be prepared.

Want more? Then look for Raising the Transgender Child: A Complete Guide for Parents, Families, and Caregivers, by Michele Angello and Ali Bowman; or The Transgender Teen, by Stephanie A. Brill and Lisa Kenney.

WINDY COMMUNITY CINES CALENDAR

Wed., Sept. 26

Book Launch Party: The Eggshell Skull Rule Amy Strauss Friedman also author of the chapbook Gathered Bones are Known to Wander, nominated for the Pushcart Prize 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event

Genderqueer Chicago Discussion based group for genderqueer and nonbinary transgender related topics. It is open to all (with the exception of reporters and researchers), but has an emphasis on being an intersectional safer space for nonbinary trans people. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://centeronhalsted.org

L Lounge The L Lounge is an informal, social space for lesbians to come together for friendship and support. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.centeronhalsted.org

Thursday, Sept. 27

Peer-led grief support group Coping with loss is an ongoing process. This peer lead support group is an informal way to connect with others who have experienced loss and gain support for your journey. 12:00pm - 2:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http:// www.centeronhalsted.org/neweventsdetails.cfm?ID=15342

Successful Aging: A Self-Management Program Four-session weekly educational session to learn how to manage your health including physical activity/ exercise, fatigue, mood, and nutrition. 1:00pm - 2:30pm Center on Addison, Conference Room http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details. cfm?TD=15491

LatinXs en Accion Activism Panel More information and ticket link 6:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago https://community. centeronhalsted.org/pages/latinx

The Caregiver After author Samuel Park died after a long batter with stomach cancer, his literary friends meet to celebrate the publication of his new and final book 7:00pm - 8:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/presenting-caregiver-samuel%E2%80%99s-friends-curtissittenfeld-rebecca-makkai-nami-munand-shauna

Friday, Sept. 28

Trans/Gender Affirming Name Change Mobilization Hosted by Transformative Justice Law Project. Volunteers will assist Cook County residents with filling



ANNE DO

Friday, Sept. 28

Author Anne Balay will be at Women & Children First. Photo by Riva Lehrer

out the documents required for a name change. Last Friday of every month in room 1202. 9:00am - 3:00am Daley Center Plaza 50 W Washington St Chicago http://www.facebook.com/transformativejusticelawproject/

SexuWellness For women and TGNC individuals, a wide variety of sexual and reproductive health-related services like chest/breast exams, mammogram referrals, pap tests including HPV screening and pelvic exams, STI testing, birth control prescription, IUD placements. Fourth Friday of every month. whs@ howardbrown.org 5:00pm - 8:00pm Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark, Chicago 773-572-8359 http://howardbrownorg/ womens-health/

Official Chicago release party for Cher's Dancing Queen Get on stage with your host Debbie Fox and win in the Cher SyncIt! contest and SLAY to drag from Chamilla Foxx & Jasmine Phoenix. Sing along and dance to your favorite Cher hits all night long mixed in with our Friday Night Dance Party. Giving away Cher concert tickets 9 pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago

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:// qoo.ql/pL7wWA

Anne Balay, author Semi Queer Queers, truck stops and 18-wheelers. Also reading in Indiana the same weekend, and then in New York and Philadelphia. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Holly Near Celebrates her first album in three years, Peace Becomes You 8:00pm Old Town School of Folk Music 4544 N Lincoln Ave Chicago Tickhttp://www.oldtownschool.org/ concerts/2018/09-28-2018-holly-near/

Saturday, Sept. 29

Queer mural unveiling Artists Sandra Antongiori, Andy Bellomo, and Sam Kirk have completed the first of what they hope to be a series of LGBTQ tribute murals. Honoring Chicago artists, hard-working activists, healers, teachers, leaders, queers working to bring our community together. 2:30pm -Outside at Melrose/Halsted at Howard Brown Clinic, 3245 N. Halsted St. http://www.facebook.com/ events/1914075525561034/?active tab=about

In Search of Pure Lust: A Memoir by Lise Weil Reading and Discussion A Quest for Love During the Heady Lesbian Feminist Movement of the 70s & 80s 4:00pm Barbaras Bookstore, 111 N. State St., Chicago

Sunday, Sept. 30

Chicago Fringe Festival Fest offers 24 shows, one hundred performances.

7:30pm Various locations http://chi- Wed. Oct. 3 cagofringe.org

Tuesday, Oct. 2

Crown Fountain Architect Mark Sexton At the intersection of architecture, art and 21st century technology, Crown Fountain in Millennium Park, is one of the city's recognizable works of public art. Co-founder of the firm that designed the project in collaboration with artist Jaume Plensa, will tell the story. 5 p.m. cocktail reception 6:00pm New location University Club, 76 E. Monroe St., Chicago http://flwright.org/thinkingintothefuture

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

OPALGA Scholarship Gala Dine, dance, celebrate, honor peers, help emerging leaders. 6:00pm Nineteenth Century Club 178 Forest Ave Oak Park, IL 60301 http://opalga.org

Friday, Oct. 5

Tootsie Pre-Broadway World Premiere The story of a talented but difficult actor who struggles to find work until an audacious, desperate stunt lands him the role of a lifetime. Through Oct. 14. 7:30pm Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph http://www.BroadwayInChicago.com

Joan Baez: Fare Thee Well...Tour 2018 Tickets now on sale. 8:00pm The Chicago Theatre (Chicago) 175 N State St Chicago http://www.msq.com/calendar/ the-chicago-theatre-october-2018-joanbaez-fare-thee-well-tour-2018

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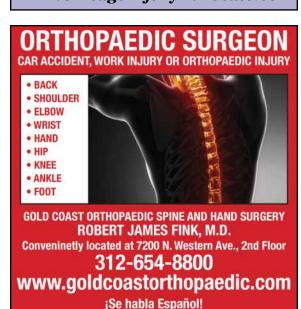
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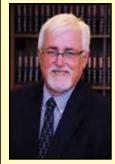


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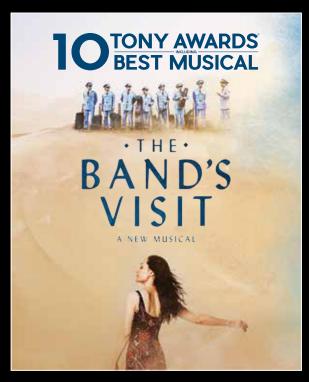
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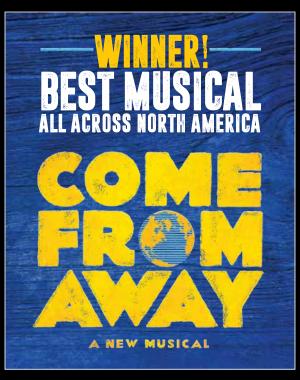
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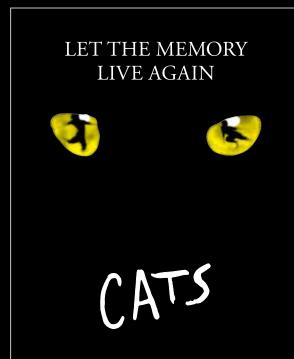
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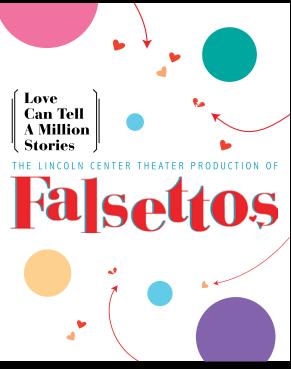
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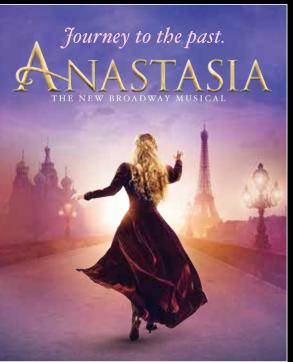
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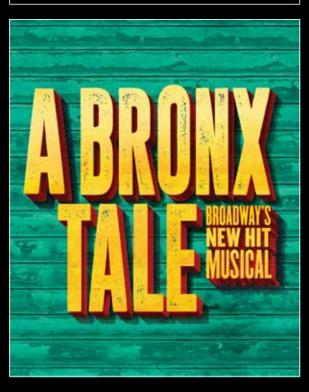












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