

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Delia Kropp.
 Photo courtesy of Kropp

FIGHTING BACK

Delia Kropp talks using theater to battle Trump

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Lori Lightfoot among those talking about affordable housing

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Lori Lightfoot.
 Photo by Carrie Maxwell



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SHEER GRACE

WCT reviews Against Me! singer Laura Jane Grace new side project, Bought to Rot.

Photo by Ryan Russell

SET IN STONE(R)



Actress/dancer Alyson Stoner reflects on coming out, her new work and finding her center

Photo courtesy of Stoner

IN FASHION

WCT covers a very inclusive Chicago Fashion Week.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Taye Diggs, Glenn Close and Antoni Porowski.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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PASSAGES

Steven W. Jones

Steven William Jones, an architect, died Nov. 2, at his home in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. He was 48.

After earning his B.S. from The University of Virginia's School of Architecture and M.S. in architecture from Syracuse University, Jones moved to Chicago, where he attained his professional license in architecture.

He was the beloved son of William and Diane Jones of Mechanicsville, Virginia. Jones was also the brother of Mary Richardson of Wilson, North Carolina; Susan (Frank) Whorton of Alexandria, Virginia; and Brian Jones of Roanoke, Virginia, as well as the uncle of Madeline and Ryan Richardson; Benjamin, Logan and Elaina Whorton; and Aven Jones.

Steve enjoyed all the things that Chicago had to offer. He liked traveling, biking, photography and reading, and he was an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs.

He was a caring son, brother, uncle, nephew, godfather, and friend to many, and was taken too soon. He will be deeply missed.



Steven W. Jones.

Photo from Cremation Society of Illinois

A celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois, 773-281-5058 or Cremation-Society.com

Weiss psychologist earns WPATH award

Weiss Memorial Hospital's Randi Ettner, Ph.D., received the Distinguished Education and Advocacy Award from the World Professional Association For Transgender Health (WPATH) for her significant contributions for transgender health and rights through education and advocacy.

Ettner, recognized as an international leader in the field of transgender health, is a clinical and forensic psychologist at the Center for Gender Confirmation Surgery at Weiss Memorial Hospital, 4646 N. Marine Dr.

The 25th WPATH Symposium will take place Nov. 2-6 in Buenos Aires, Argentina; see <https://www.wpath.org/>. For more on the Center for Gender Confirmation Surgery, call 844-696-9834 or visit WeissGenderSurgery.com.

SAGE, NCLR hosting meetings Nov. 14

SAGE and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) are hosting two community meetings Wed., Nov. 14, regarding housing discrimination.

The events will be 2-4 p.m. at Affinity Community Services, 2850 S. Wabash Ave., #108; and 6-8 p.m. at Howard Brown Health, 6500 N. Clark St.

Speakers will include NCLR Senior Staff Attorney Amy Whelan, Pride Action Tank Executive Director Kim L. Hunt, activist/advocate Donald M. Bell, Chicago Housing Authority Director of Senior Services Paula Basta and SAGE Director of National Field Initiatives Serena Worthing-

ton.

People can register at <https://giveto.sageusa.org/pages/events/other/2018-housing-denied>.

Governors St. offers LGBTQIA scholarship

University Park's Governors State University Foundation has announced the creation of a new scholarship for Governors State University students.

The Jackie McKethen Scholarship aims to support students who are part of the LGBTQIA community or have shown substantial support for the community. Among the criteria are a 500-word essay and standing a GSU student with a minimum of six credit hours. The deadline is Friday, Jan. 11, 2019.

Those who wish to donate to this annual scholarship can call 708-235-7559 visit GovSt.edu/donate; under "other," select "Jackie McKethen Scholarship." For more information, email JBButler7@govst.edu.

Corrections

In the Oct. 24 issue, the correct information for the theatrical production Truman and the Birth of Israel should be:

—Playwright: William Spatz

At: Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: 773-404-7336; GreenhouseTheater.org; \$32-\$35

Runs through: Nov. 18

Windy City Times sincerely apologizes for the errors.

GUEST COLUMN

BY DELIA KROPP

**Battling Trump via art: An actor's superpower**

Let's acknowledge one thing, after two years of misery: Our president is not stupid. He is not an idiot or moron.

In fact, he is probably the most savvy leader America has ever had with regard to one key, under-utilized aspect of his office: namely, the so-called bully pulpit.

Other presidents have calmly enlisted support for non-legislative agendas, spoken eloquently for causes both popular and not. Trump on the other hand just grabs Americans by the balls and twists. You have no choice but to respond strongly: to either hate him or bend to his will.

Maybe he lacks the intelligence and reasoning to do things "presidentially" or maybe he knows that his way gets results. Hate him, he paints you as reactionary, mobilizes followers against you, and frustrates you into despairing inaction or violence. Or, submit to his litany of fear and then you'll submit on other issues too, because he's not actually convinced you, he's established a personal dominance. He's Daddy Trump, and you're his bitch.

The difference here is an unabashed use and manipulation of human emotions. What Trump says makes no legal or logical sense—it's our feelings that are tapped, stirred up, and put through the wringer. Unfortunately for us, Democratic leaders have spent their whole lives couched within the trappings of the law, of reason, and of intellectual rigor they are unwilling or maybe just ill-equipped to answer fire with fire.

Well, I am a great believer in civilized debate, and am highly-educated. But I also happen to be working in a field where feelings are my very bread and butter. I am an actor and director in the performing arts.

Also, I am transgender. And I am fighting back.

One-Two Punch

Last May, on these pages, I spoke out against America's long legacy of trans mis-representation in popular entertainment. Even today, our "treatment" in most films and television leans towards the sordid, exploitative, and it services the fears and titillation of cis people. At best, it reinforces only what you already misunderstand about us. At its worst, movies and most plays push us even further towards the margins of society.

Five months later, I'm now in a position to do something about that and, in the process, to meet our president squarely on his own turf.

Punch One: TransScripts

Onstage at Theater Wit this November 18, Chicago audiences will find seven transgender characters brought to life by—and this is critical—seven transgender actors.

I'm directing "TransScripts, Part I: The Women," a unique piece devised entirely from the verbatim testimony of transgender women. People of all ages, nationalities and ethnicities. Women who have suffered, tried to kill themselves, and nearly killed others; who have loved, yearned, hated and fought hard for their tenuous place in America. People that Trump would brand "losers" but who possess an integrity and strength he cannot begin to comprehend.

Even you allies, those who have us "all figured out," you need to experience this work too. TransScripts isn't just a "trans play." It's as close as you'll get to walking in someone else's shoes, to feel our humanity viscerally and not to merely appreciate it from a social justice or intellectual perspective. This play does what theater does best: In between the laughs and entertainment, grab you, shake you up a little, and open some windows.

Punch Two: Landlocked

Let's just admit it: The camera loves pretty faces. And young bodies. Accordingly we audiences love to be seduced by those impossibly passable and gorgeous trans girls who are so hot you can say, yeah, trans people are cool. The world should definitely have more hot-looking femmes.

Let me tell you: That is not what being trans is about, anymore than (insert famous Hollywood beauty here) represents the reality of being female in this world.

So come January 2019, I'm taking this 62 year-old-face, body, and matrix of complex life experiences down to Atlanta, Georgia, and pouring it all into a character you've seldom seen on any screen.

Not a cute babe but a trans father, long estranged from her son for decades after a terrible divorce, reunited under painful circumstances, with their entire history brought to bear in ragged, imperfect attempts at understanding and reconciliation.

In other words, it's not a "trans movie." This film cuts deep into a situation many of us have already lived in some fashion, trans or not. It will grab an audience where they live ... even without a pair of killer legs or augmented

Turn to page 5

ELECTIONS 2018

Personal PAC marks midterm successes

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago-based reproductive-rights organization Personal PAC marked a number of successes in the Nov. 6 midterms, particularly the defeat of one of its longtime foes who was also a key opponent of marriage-equality.

Personal PAC CEO/President Terry Cosgrove said that the organization put in about a year's work to help defeat state Rep. Peter Breen (R-Lombard), who was long associated with a conservative law firm, the Thomas More Society, which has issued legal challenges to both reproductive-rights- and LGBT-rights-related issues. Breen helped litigate against plaintiffs suing for the right to marry their same-sex partners. He lost to attorney and Democratic challenger Terra Costa Howard.

"I'm still in disbelief that we pulled it off," said Cosgrove. "We worked very hard in the district. There were a lot of people that stepped up to help out, and Personal PAC was definitely helping to lead the way, though there were a lot of organizations and people involved."

Personal PAC joined Equality Illinois and Men4Choice in launching a website and Facebook page titled "Come Clean Breen" that illustrated

the representatives voting record on reproductive-rights, LGBT issues and gun control, he added. The organizations organized door-to-door canvassing and phone drives, as well as candidate forums.

"We started educating voters on those issues, and making sure people knew who their state reps were," Cosgrove noted. "We put together a leaflet that we left at people's doors, mostly on reproductive rights but other issues as well."

Cosgrove also said that no state officials seeking reelection in 2018 who voted in favor of HB40—the House bill introduced by state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz that nullified a law automatically outlawing abortion should the United States Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision be overturned—lost their bids. Such was also the outcome when legislators voted on marriage-equality in 2013.

"I think it's important for legislators to understand that voting for reproductive-rights is actually a good thing—it helps you get re-elected," he added. "It goes back to the old saying, Good policy is good politics. That's exactly what supporting pro-choice initiatives is. It's good politics."

ELECTIONS 2018

Pritzker holds press conference, talks LGBT issues

On Nov. 7, Illinois Gov.-Elect J.B. Pritzker held a press conference at the Roosevelt Red Line CTA Station in Chicago's South Loop.

He posed for photos with constituents and took questions on first priorities, budget, his transition team and working with Republicans at the state and federal levels.

In response to a question of his administration's relationship with the LGBTQ community, Pritzker said, "Well, I have a long relationship, as you know, having a mother who was an activist on behalf of LGBTQ rights as well as the Equal Rights Amendment. I was marching in and as an activist when I was just a little kid. I haven't



J.B. Pritzker.

Photo by Paxton Anthony Murphy

stopped doing that. And I know that working together with the LGBTQ community, we will stand up for the civil rights of all people in Illinois."

Photo and story by Paxton Anthony Murphy

GUEST COLUMN from page 4

bosoms in sight.

And the winner is...

On the field of emotional combat, a war of hearts, the victor is anointed by those in the stands. You.

Please ask yourself, what's your biggest challenge in supporting transgender work? I'm going to guess: It's just heading to the theater, and trusting us to let these stories take their hold, and speak to your heart.

Remember that participating in this age-old

act of human storytelling, yields an extra bonus: you're also lending support to our critical struggle, what's been called the civil rights battle of the 21st century. You're landing a big one, bang on the nose of the worst president in American history.

TransScripts performs one night only, Nov. 18, 5 pm, at Theatre Wit. Admission is free. RSVP by email to: insider@aboutfacetheatre.com. To help out the film Landlocked, see their Seed and Spark page at <https://www.seedandspark.com/fund/landlocked#story>. Info for both projects is on my site, therealdelia.com.

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Author Miriam Frank headlines CTU LGBTQIA+ event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America author and Pride at Work founding member Miriam Frank was the featured speaker at a Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) LGBTQIA+ event, co-hosted alongside Pride at Work's Chicago chapter, Nov. 9 at CTU's West Side headquarters.

tled the leadership of Local 1 as well as the chiefs of Chicago's Public Schools (CPS). They have continued to work with activists in the ranks to reform the system."

Frank reminded the audience that they are continuing that work to keep the union "fair and strong, while reforming the system from the ground up and that among those teachers are rank and file activists who are LGBTQIA."



From left: Johannes Mosquera Wilson, Joseph Dunlap, Miriam Frank, Noa Padowitz and Elijah Eiler. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

The event also featured a panel discussion moderated by CTU LGBTQIA+ Committee and Pride at Work Chicago member, substitute teacher and University of Illinois, Chicago School of Social Work student Elijah Eiler.

Panelists included CTU LGBTQIA+ Committee member and Beethoven Elementary Teacher Joseph Dunlap; CTU LGBTQIA+ Committee Chair, Chicago GSA Prom founder and Suder Montessori Magnet School Students and Community Dean Noa Padowitz and Howard Brown Health nurse and union organizer Johannes Mosquera Wilson.

Ahead of the Frank's talk, Eiler spoke about the recent Supreme Court *Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)* decision that said public employees can opt out of paying agency fees and not become union members. They explained that recently there has been a labor uprising, including many teachers strikes under the movement Red for Ed, across the country that have resulted in better working conditions.

Frank spoke about the importance of the Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators (CORE) over the past decade in fighting against school closings and privatization of public education in Chicago.

"For four years CORE and its organizers worked to turn the union around," said Frank. "CORE bat-

Delving into the history of laws that rolled back progress for working people nationwide, Frank spoke about the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, which gave state legislatures a way to set limits on union power. Frank said this gave private employers the right to bar the union shop and this led to many right-to-work states, especially in the former slave states of the south. She explained that the "Red Scare" also led to unions, and other entities, being targeted as communists and this included driving LGBT people out of government jobs called the Lavender Scare.

Frank said when she studied labor laws she found the states that had adopted right-to-work laws also kept their criminal sodomy laws on the books for a much longer time, some of whom have not repealed those laws despite the 2003 federal Supreme Court decision *Lawrence v. Texas* that overturned criminal sodomy laws nationwide.

"Illinois was the first state to repeal its sodomy laws in 1961," said Frank. "Other states followed in 1971 and, by 1980, 27 state legislatures had struck down these statutes."

Frank explained that the original right-to-work states and the most recent (Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan) do not have LGBT state civil rights statutes. This means, Frank said, that although gay and lesbian couples can get married across

the country they can still get fired in states without LGBT protections.

"When union and LGBTQIA movements know each other's linked history, we will rise, and our anti-gay, transphobic and right to work enemies will fall," said Frank.

Eiler explained that the panel's focus would be how LGBT and union rights have played out recently in Chicago including the CTU.

Dunlap said CTU's LGBTQIA+ committee began by identifying areas where they could affect change within CPS in terms of student and staff/teacher non-discrimination protections. He explained that they also fought to get partner benefits for gay and lesbian staff/teachers before marriage equality was the law in Illinois. Dunlap said their work is not over because LGBT people are continually under attack, even in cities like Chicago.

Padowitz explained the process of becoming a member of CTU's LGBTQIA committee. She said that this year's Chicago Pride Parade saw record turnout for CTU's float participants. Padowitz also gave a shout out to the recent, first of its kind in the U.S., Chicago Charter school strike authoriza-

tion and that elicited cheers from the audience.

Wilson spoke about the high patient volume at Howard Brown Health and how much work the nurses do at each location to meet the patient's needs, including the nurse-led sexual health walk-in services. He said the reason why it was important for them to unionize a progressive place like Howard Brown Health was to show that there are issues in every workplace that need to be addressed. Wilson explained that the non-profit industrial complex can be a trap because the people who work there do so because they want to make a positive impact on the world.

Howard Brown Health was prioritizing billing over patient care and conducted arbitrary firings, said Wilson. When Howard Brown Health moved its recent conference from the Marriot Hotel, where workers were striking, to another location in solidarity, Wilson said the nurses found their opening to confront their boss to get union recognition which they achieved. Wilson said they are currently in the process of working out a union contract with Howard Brown Health management.

A Q&A session followed.

AVER hosts annual Veterans Day dinner

The American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) Chicago chapter hosted its 26th Annual Veterans Day Dinner Nov. 11 at Ann Sather Restaurant on Belmont Avenue. The dinner speaker was Vanessa Sheridan—an author and performer as well as director of gender equity and inclusion at Center on Halsted.

Sheridan served four years in the Air Force, holding a top-secret security clearance and working overseas in the intelligence community,

"I'm extremely proud to be a transgender veteran," she said, "and I hope you are equally proud to be who you are. I'm proud of my military service and only wish my country would honor my service in return."

She spoke of the conditions within which transgender service members live and work, using as an example the fact that in some cases, a person responsible for military benefits might refuse on religious grounds to process the paperwork of an LGBTQ service member, impacting such members and their families.

Dignitaries at the event included mayoral candidate Paul Vallas; Lori Cannon of the Heartland Alliance's Open Hand Pantry; and Victor Salvo of the Legacy Project. True to longstanding tradition, founder Jim Darby served as emcee, Dean Ogren sang the national anthem and Sue Jones performed "Taps." A Fallen Soldier Table symbolically honored all servicemembers who have died in the line of duty.



Vanessa Sheridan at the dinner.

Photo by Hal Baim

Erie marks success in HIV-suppression rates

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago-based Erie Family Health Centers announced in late October that it had reached its highest-ever success rates—about 93.4 percent—in HIV-positive patients achieving suppressed viral loads.

About 49 percent of Americans living with HIV are virally suppressed. Advocates and health providers look upon viral suppression as a key prong in public health strategies to reduce or—as in Illinois—potentially eliminate altogether new HIV transmissions. There has never been a case known to researchers wherein an HIV-positive individual who is virally suppressed has transmitted the virus to another person.

The national average of viral suppression for persons in treatment in Ryan White Act-funded programs is about 80 percent, noted Bridget Magner, Erie's HIV/Hepatitis C program manager, who manages Erie's comprehensive Lending Hands for Life (LHL) program.

"We offer primary care, dental care and medical and non-medical case-management, PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis], behavioral counseling and psychiatry services, and labs and nutritional counseling," added Magner. "So we have a whole host of services we can offer to our patients. We also have access to legal, housing and employment partnerships, so that we can take care of our patients' social-determinants of health as well as their health care."

Erie staff keeps in close contact with patients receiving HIV-related services, of which there are about 380. Those individuals showing detectable viral loads are assigned what Erie calls a "champion"—an advocate on the staff who will work with the patient to help them reduce whichever barriers they might be facing, such as by arranging transportation or connecting them with mental health support-services.

"The team who serves our patients is one of the most dedicated groups of people that I've ever encountered, so they are kind of relentless



Bridget Magner.

Photo courtesy of Erie Family Health Centers

in making sure that our patients have access to care, are taking their medication and coming to their appointments regularly," Magner said, adding that the Erie staff was looking ahead to World AIDS Day on Dec. 1 for community outreach, staffing tables at events across the city and holding a patient luncheon. That entire staff, from administrative personnel to physicians, will also attend a training about PrEP to be presented by AIDS Foundation of Chicago. A key deterrent to PrEP use nationwide has been a lack of awareness by medical personnel.

LHL is based at Erie Humboldt Park Health Center with a satellite clinic at the Erie Foster Avenue Health Center. Erie is accepting new patients for its HIV, PrEP and Hepatitis C programs, and Magner said that no patients are turned away because of inability to pay. Those interested in receiving services should call 312-432-7220.

NGLCC honoring Heels & Hardhats

NGLCC: The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce will be honoring several organizations during the 2018 NGLCC National Dinner—including local company Heels & Hardhats Contracting Corp.

The Byron, Illinois-based company (headed by same-sex couple Jackie and Cyndi Richter) will receive the award for 2018 LGBT Supplier of the Year on Friday, Nov. 16, at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

Other of the night's recipients will include Bank of America (2018 Corporation of the Year), American Airlines' Todd Rice (2018 Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year) and the Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (2018 Affiliate Chamber of the Year).

Komen raises \$600K during October

Throughout October, Komen Chicago raised more than \$600,000 during this year's Breast Cancer Action Month.

These funds come in large part from Komen Chicago's 2018 Gala—an Oct. 27 event with the theme "The Greatest Show Under the Big Pink Top"—and corporate partners Jewel-Osco and Rivers Casino, both of whom received the Susan G. Komen Corporate Award.

Emmy Award winning anchor and breast-cancer survivor Roz Varon hosted the gala, which featured appearances from celebrities Miranda Rae Mayo (Chicago Fire), Annie Ilonzeh (Chicago Fire) and Andre Royo (Empire).

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The Merion: Offering an LGBT-inclusive senior living experience

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Nestled three short blocks away from Lake Michigan in downtown Evanston, the Merion offers older adults a place to live and thrive while also meeting their needs as they age.

According to its website, the Merion is “a small community of diverse individuals where you are a name, and not just a number. A place to grow intellectually and socially, helped by inventive programming and a fantastic social community where everyone takes care of one another. It is a place for people who desire a simpler, yet engaging lifestyle supported by an uncomplicated rental plan where residents and staff celebrate culture, learning, diversity and inclusivity and embrace confidence-inspiring, easily accessible and comprehensive health services.”

Recently, the Merion became the first Illinois senior living community to earn a SAGECare credential. It joins the almost 300 senior care providers and organizations nationwide to receive this credential from SAGE (Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders), the nation’s largest advocacy and services organization for LGBT elders.

The credential required that the Merion’s upper management staff complete a four-hour intensive LGBT cultural competency training program. Caregivers and team members completed one-hour in-person training, and all management and staff members will receive ongoing training and support.

Training topics included the needs of LGBT seniors, tools to reduce and respond to bias behavior and an overview of federal protections. The Merion subsequently made changes to its policies

and intake forms to be more inclusive.

What spurred the Merion’s leadership staff to get the SAGECare credential was a story they read about Marsha Wetzel, a lesbian who was physically attacked and verbally harassed with anti-LGBT comments at Glen St. Andrew Living Community in Niles, where she had lived for 15 months. Wetzel sued the facility and, after the trial court dismissed her claim, the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in her favor; now the case has been returned to the lower court.

“We are honored to receive the Platinum SAGECare credential, which means 80 percent of our entire staff attended the training,” said the Merion’s marketing coordinator and community outreach manager, RJ Alban. “Most importantly, it is the right thing to do, and we wanted to make sure people who live or work at the Merion never feel discriminated against. Older adults who want the lifestyle and wellness benefits from a senior living community that provide high quality services, amenities and care should feel welcome, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Residents’ LGBT kids, friends and extended family should feel welcome in our community as well. We have a saying: ‘The More, the Merion,’ and we try to live it every day.”

“We are proud to be the first in the state to earn this distinction, to demonstrate our inclusive environment and dedication to serve a growing population of older adults,” added General Manager Vicki Botefuhr. “No one should be discriminated against or feel isolated like so many LGBT seniors unfortunately do. Our staff is trained to foster a supportive environment.”

“We at SAGE could not be more pleased about The Merion receiving their Platinum SAGECare Cre-



The Merion’s Anne Ryand and RJ Alban.

Photo by Tash

dential,” said SAGECare CEO Tim Johnston. “The leadership at the Merion strongly believes that all of their residents should receive the highest standard of care, and that includes LGBT seniors, and this credential helps them communicate that commitment to the community.”

According to SAGE, conservative estimates suggest both that there are three million LGBT people aged 55 and older and that the number will double in the next two decades as the Baby Boomers retire. Of this number, approximately 56,000 LGBT adults 45 and older live in Chicago.

Currently many seniors, and especially LGBT seniors, have opted to age in-place rather than move to a senior living facility due to many factors. According to MerionCares Manager and Social Worker Anne Ryan, that is detrimental to their physical and intellectual wellness because they do not experience enough social interaction.

“Social wellness means connecting with others, sharing experiences and opportunities to interact,” said Ryan. “LGBT seniors who age-in-place experience higher rates of isolation and do not get the social activity they need. Doctors say isolation is a killer. We have heard numerous times it is as dangerous as long-term smoking. It is sad to see older adults who are unable to experience this key dimension of wellness.”

“Studies have shown that people in a community like ours live an average of two good years longer than their homebound counterparts. LGBT elders are more likely to not have children, more likely to be supported by friends who are age-peers, and their support networks and social wellness can evaporate very rapidly in their golden years.”

One of the Merion’s lesbian residents, Judith (who has asked that her last name not be disclosed), is an 80-year-old retired physical thera-

pist.

“I was married to a man for 20 years and when I divorced him and came out, I felt as if I had been released from a jail I did not know I had been keeping myself in,” said Judith. “I did not want to follow someone else’s script for my life.”

Judith said the idea to live at the Merion was her daughter-in-law’s, and at first she was not sold on living there. After visiting the facility multiple times, however, she felt like it was the right community for her.

“I was tired of cooking for myself and feeling isolated,” said Judith. “I needed a place like the Merion and I am glad I am here. I have been here for four months and my son comes to visit me often. I have found friends and a wonderful, active life here.”

In terms of living in an LGBT-inclusive community, Judith said it has been liberating and caused her to open up about her life to more people. Her favorite things to do at the Merion are Barbara Meyer’s integrated movement class, music classes and going to the pool.

“This change has been a feather in my cap, and I feel safer in this community than any other place I have lived,” said Judith. “I would recommend the Merion in a heartbeat. I take the best walks by the lake and through Northwestern University. I feel safe, and the people and the food are so good. Make the change before you feel like you are ready, and while you can enjoy it.”

“At the Merion, we consistently host educational events on senior health and wellness topics, as well as LGBT-related topics,” said Ryan. “We have some planned for this fall and welcome you to attend.”

See MerionEvanston.com or call 847-570-7815 for more information.



Seniors are active in the LGBT-inclusive Merion, with offerings such as tai chi.

Photo courtesy of The Merion



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Judge orders IDOC to thoroughly review trans prisoner case

BY MATT SIMONETTE

In a ruling that lawyers called “historic,” a federal judge ordered that Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) review the case of Strawberry Hampton, a 27-year-old transgender woman who is being-held in a male-only detention facility downstate.

Hampton, currently an inmate at Dixon Correctional Center, has been seeking a transfer to a female facility, maintaining that she has been subjected to extensive physical, verbal and sexual abuse at Dixon and elsewhere. She has been housed at four different male detention facilities over the past two years; according to court documents, she described the experience as being a “sex slave.”

Judge Nancy Rosenstengel of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Illinois ordered Nov. 7 that IDOC had two weeks to present steps that it will take to ensure that Dixon staff be trained on transgender-related issues; that

Hampton be allowed to attend a transgender support group while she is segregated from other prisoners; and that the Transgender Care Review Committee “considers all evidence for and against transferring Hampton to a women’s facility.”

Rosenstengel denied a request that del Valle be released from segregation.

Vanessa del Valle, a co-counsel for MacArthur Justice Center, which is litigating the case along with Uptown People’s Law Center, said that this ruling marks the first time that a federal judge has acknowledged that trans prisoners have constitutional protections, both from discrimination and for personal safety.

“While we didn’t get the [immediate] relief we were seeking, the judge ordered them to review the case closely,” del Valle said, noting that Hampton had not even been interviewed by Dixon or IDOC officials until now. “In the interview, they should be able to determine not just what is best for Strawberry, but also what is best for IDOC.”

State AG opposes fair housing suspension

Attorney General Lisa Madigan, along with 16 other attorneys general, urged the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to reverse its efforts to dismantle critical fair housing regulations.

The comment letter from the attorneys general was submitted in response to HUD’s proposal to amend the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule, which provides states, local communities and public-housing agencies with the data and tools they need to reduce racial disparities and concentrations of poverty in their housing and community development initiatives.

Joining Madigan in sending today’s letter were the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia and Washington.

ELECTIONS 2018 Heurman, Reneau secure victories

Among the LGBTQ-related victories in Illinois during the Nov. 6 elections were those of Dustin Heurman and Rob Reneau.

Heurman won his race for Champaign County sheriff. He is a criminal-justice instructor at Lake Land College. On his website, he touted that he has 19 years of experience in that field. Among other accomplishments, he has been vice chair of the Human Relations Commission for the City of Champaign. He was lived in the county with his

husband, Tony, since 2008.

Reneau was elected to the Peoria County board (representing District 10). According to his Facebook page, the forensic scientist has led the Knoll Crest Homeowners Association since 2014. He and his husband have been partners for nearly 23 years, and they are parents of 10-year-old twin boys.

Chris Miller, also an out gay man, was also involved in a race, for Madison County treasurer, according to the Victory Fund website. However, he came up short in his bid. The county includes cities such as Alton, East St. Louis, Edwardsville and Granite City.

ELECTIONS 2019 Chicago NOW PAC backs Preckwinkle

The Chicago NOW PAC is endorsing Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle for mayor of Chicago.

“We are extremely excited to be supporting Toni’s candidacy for mayor. She is the only progressive in the mayoral race with a proven track record and vision to unite Chicago,” said Kelly Marie Murphy, President of Chicago NOW PAC, in a statement. “Toni has been a lifelong advocate for women, putting women’s issues at the heart of her agenda by strengthening health care, addressing gender disparity issues, and helping elect strong women. As mayor, we are confident that Toni will continue to advocate for women’s issues and expand protections for women in Chicago.”

Should she be elected, Preckwinkle will make history by becoming the first African-American

woman to be elected and serve as mayor.

Chicago’s mayoral and aldermanic elections will be held Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019.

Nigerian activist in Glen Ellyn on Nov. 18

Nigerian-born LGBT-rights activist and interfaith minister Davis Mac-Iyalla will speak Sunday, Nov. 18, at the First Congregational Church of Glenn Ellyn, 535 Forest Ave., Glen Ellyn, about the important work he is doing to advance the dignity and rights of LGBT people in Africa. He will speak after the 11:30 a.m. service.

Mac-Iyalla established the Interfaith Diversity Network of West Africa (IDNOWA) in 2016 to advocate for the affirmation, inclusion and human

rights of LGBT+ though faith and non violence dialogue. He currently lives in Accra, Ghana, and his travelling with his partner, Olivet.

Rev. TJ Williams-Hauger will also preach, at 12 p.m. His sermon will be entitled “When Movement Becomes Prophetic.”

Call 630-469-3096 or visit <https://fccge.org/> for more information.



Davis Mac-Iyalla.
Photo by Andrew Davis

2nd Annual ‘Sleep Out’ Nov. 15

Covenant House Illinois (CHIL) will host its 2nd Annual Sleep Out on Thursday, Nov. 15, at 7 p.m. at St. James Commons, 65 E. Huron St.

Members of the community, celebrities, business leaders and young professionals will come together to raise funds and awareness for Chicago’s homeless, trafficked and at-risk youth by sleeping outside.

Now an international human-rights movement, Sleep Out spans 19 Covenant House sites across the United States and Canada. On

this one night, thousands of participants (aka “Sleepers”) will give up the comfort and security of home and spend the night outside so that, one day, no youth will have to.

In addition, a candlelight vigil will take place at 6 p.m., and will feature youth and community advocates as attendees light a candle to raise visibility for homeless and at-risk youth.

With a goal of \$200,000, this year’s event aims to expand on the success of Chicago’s inaugural event, which raised more than \$160,000.

Visit CovenantHouseIL.org or call 312-759-7875.



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HIV/AIDS researcher receives MacArthur Genius Grant

BY SARAH TOCE

It seems unlikely in this social media ravaged climate to find a humble genius among us, but Yale University Assistant Professor Gregg Gonsalves has set the bar high. \$625,000 with no strings attached high.

Gonsalves, a 54-year-old epidemiologist and global health advocate, was just dubbed a recipient of the 2018 MacArthur “Genius” Grant. The human rights and public health researcher received the recognition by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—and was legitimately in shock.

“I had no idea that anybody was scrutinizing what I’ve been up to lately,” Gonsalves shared.

“I don’t accept the ‘genius’ moniker,” he told *Queerty* following the announcement. “And they don’t describe it that way either. They talk about it as an award for creativity. I’m creative, I can say that. If I take myself out of the picture, I think they do tend to honor people who’ve done creative work that doesn’t necessarily fall within the guardrails of their disciplines. But it feels good.”

Gonsalves discovered the news the day after Labor Day, but kept it a secret from everyone except his partner. “And then after I told everybody, I heard from everybody in my past—everybody from people I went to school with to old employers. It was sort of overwhelming,” he said.

His mother, Norma Gonsalves, 84, told *Newsday*, “The best thing is, he may be a genius, but he’s got a big heart, he’s a loving son, and he knows the importance of family, so I think he’s worthy of the award. ... It’s something that I’m not only proud of him, but not surprised.”

The MacArthur Fellowship is a five-year grant to individuals who show exceptional creativity in their work and the prospect for still more in the future. The Fellowship is designed to provide recipients with the flexibility to pursue their own artistic, intellectual, and professional activities in the absence of specific obligations or reporting requirements. There are no limits on age or area of activity. Individuals cannot apply for this award; they must be nominated.

Nominators write a letter to the program director, usually a page or two, describing the person they are nominating and their reasons for doing so. These letters focus on the quality and creativity of the nominees and their work, and on the likely benefits of the award to the recipient.

According to the MacArthur Foundation, Gonsalves spent three decades as an HIV/AIDS activist, working with domestic and international organizations such as AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa. His efforts to connect the HIV/AIDS community with top-tier researchers and scientists were a critical catalyst to fundamental advances in scientific knowledge of the

disease.

These experiences paved the way for his later training in epidemiology and current efforts to optimize the effectiveness of health programs for epidemic diseases, particularly within poor and marginalized communities.

A genius indeed—even if he’ll never admit it.

Gonsalves was responsible for determining a method that identified hot spots for HIV testing in real time in order to maximize identification of undiagnosed HIV-positive persons. His work has helped shed light on ways to minimize dropout of HIV-positive patients at key points in the care continuum. He’s also assessed the epidemiological costs of emerging epidemics of HIV in the United States due to intravenous drug use and lack of needle exchange programs.

In another line of research, Gonsalves examined the link between high rates of sexual violence against women living in informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa, and the lack of indoor sanitation - the remote location of facilities left women vulnerable to attacks. He developed a mathematical model that determined the optimal number of new facilities and demonstrated that sanitation investments by the city would significantly reduce instances of sexual violence as well as their associated costs.

Gonsalves co-founded the Global Health Justice Partnership (GHJP), an interdisciplinary initiative between the schools of law and public health at Yale University, to further advance human rights and social justice perspectives in public health and legal research, practice, and teaching. Working in cooperation with local nongovernmental organizations, GHJP mobilizes research and evidence around pressing health issues and translates that evidence into action.

Currently, GHJP is working with organizations in Brazil to investigate the role of the war on drugs and high incarceration rates on the community burden of TB as well as advocacy for wider availability of hepatitis C treatment in U.S. prisons.

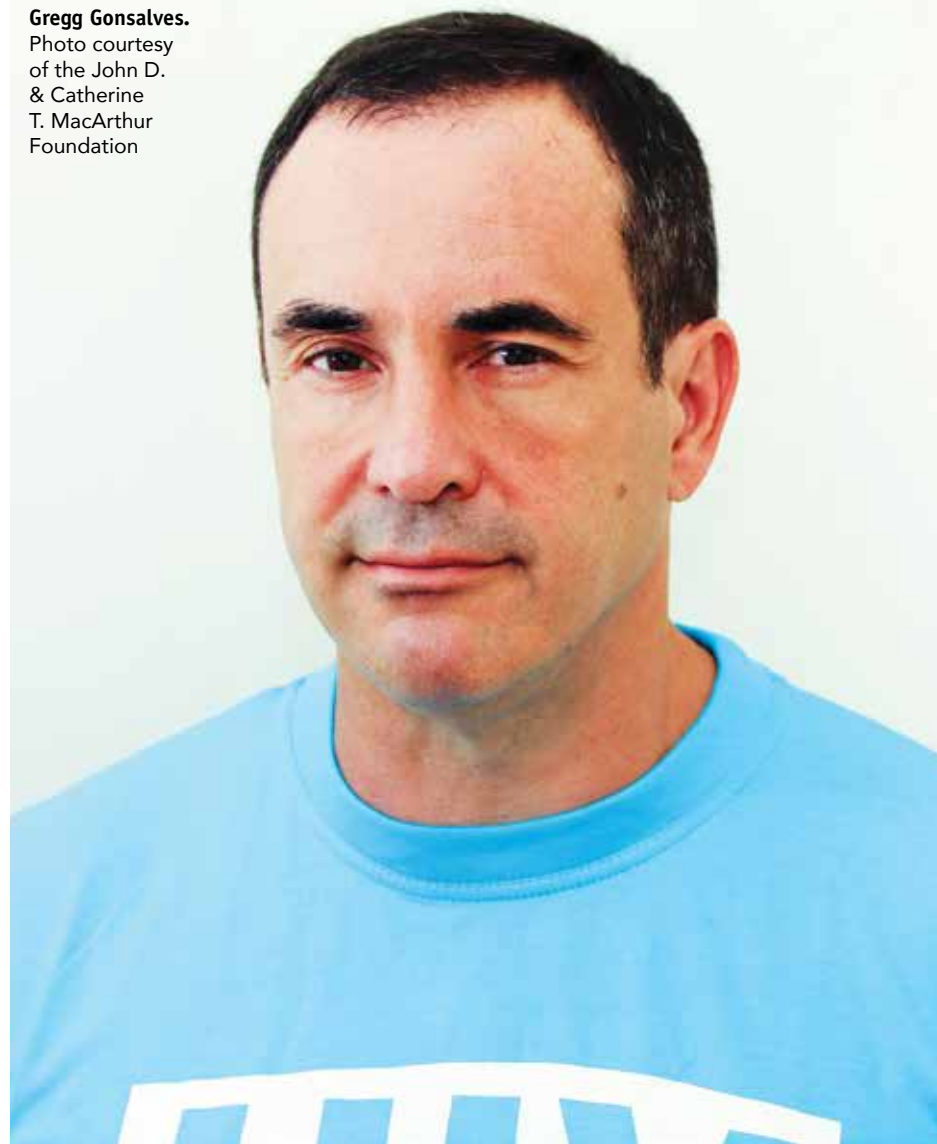
Through these initiatives, Gonsalves is training a new generation of researchers who, like himself, work across public health and human rights sectors, scholarly research, and activism to correct disparities in global public health.

About that “no strings attached” concept, the MacArthur Fellowship ascertains that “we provide the maximum freedom for the recipients to follow their creative vision, whether it is moving forward with their current activities, expanding the scope of their work, or embarking in entirely new directions. There are no restrictions on how the money can be spent, and we impose no reporting obligations.”

To learn more about Gonsalves’ work and the 2018 MacArthur Fellowship, visit <https://www.macfound.org/fellows/1011>.

Gregg Gonsalves.

Photo courtesy of the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation



Madigan files suit after inn fails to pay damages

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed a lawsuit against a downstate bed-and-breakfast that has failed to pay damages directed by the Illinois Human Rights Commission after the Commission determined that it had discriminated against a same-sex couple, according to an Oct. 23 statement.

The commission ordered in November 2016 that Walder Vacuflfo Inc.—doing business as TimberCreek Bed and Breakfast in Paxton, Illinois—pay Todd and Mark Wathen damages after ruling that the inn’s refusal to allow the Wathens’ 2011 commitment ceremony there was discriminatory. The commission directed Walder Vacuflfo to pay the Wathens \$15,000 each in damages, \$50,000 in attorneys’ fees and more than \$1,200 in additional costs. Walder Vacuflfo has not yet complied, and had

unsuccessfully attempted to appeal the ruling.

“Discriminating against people on the basis of sexual orientation is against the law,” Madigan said in the statement. “My office is committed to holding businesses accountable if they refuse service to members of the public based on sexual orientation.”

The complaint was filed in the Ford County Circuit Court.

YEPP’s ‘Rise Up’ taking place Nov. 14

In recognition of the Transgender Day of Remembrance/Resilience and Youth Homelessness Awareness Month, Youth Empowerment Performance Project (YEPP) will host “Rise Up” Wed., Nov. 14, at Chicago Theater Works, 1113 W. Belmont Ave., 6-9 p.m.

Through performance and communion, attendees will honor those whose lives were taken, rejoice in the resilience of Trans youth, build community and raise funds.

See “Rise Up - A Celebration of Resilience” on Facebook.

Brynn Tannehill: Trans activist calls for action in new book

BY FRANK PIZZOLI

Many readers remember Dr. David Ruben's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)*—a 1969 best-selling book and then a 1972 Woody Allen movie.

Published the same year as *The Stonewall Riots*, the book crested at 30 million copies in print worldwide, plus later reissues. Hailed as humorous and up-to-the-minute, that was not the case for LGBT readers, especially transgender individuals. One description lists gay readers with "infidelity, plastic surgery for the genitalia."

Brynn Tannehill's *Everything You Wanted to Know about Trans (But Were Afraid to Ask)* is a refreshing walk through, well, all those questions you may be timid about vocalizing. In a highly-charged PC environment in which every word counts, or can mean something different to two folks in a conversation, Tannehill's book is a good guide.

Windy City Times: You wrote your book because...

Brynn Tannehill: People like stories. ... A confidant once told me not to think about writing the

great trans book that would change everything; the market was already flooded.

WCT: What motivates you to write?

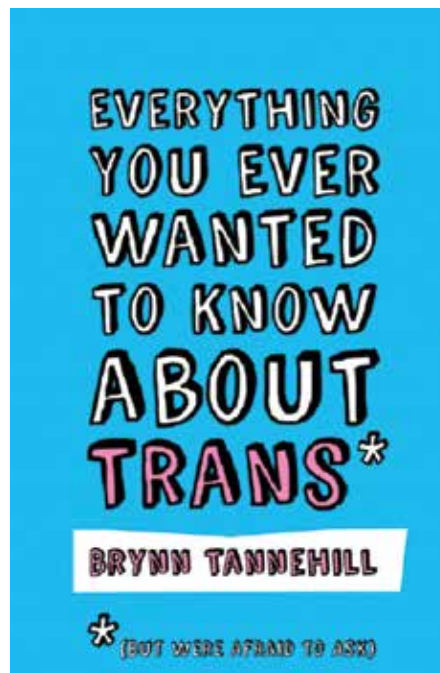
BT: What motivates me in life is when someone on the internet is wrong. ... I realized I had been writing pieces of what could easily be a book. I was a columnist writing on health, trans health, religion, politics, economics, allies, academia—all with a trans slant—all of which could be assembled into a book. No one seemed to be writing about the trans experience "holistically" so I put together my book.

WCT: Your book will help people to...

BT: You could give your Mom or sibling my book. Use it in a classroom. We need to cut through the chatter, which is so much PC and it gets exaggerated. I advise following the classic Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated.

WCT: From your perspective, what's the state of affairs for transgender people these days?

BT: We are in scary times right now. The Trump administration, and its religious allies, want to legislate and regulate transgender, all of us on the LGBTQ continuum, out of existence. They



claim there is only "sex" and no "gender." Our opponents have us on their list—Muslims, immigrants and transgender people. For example, the party platform of the Texas GOP is about one-third anti-LGBT screed.

WCT: We celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Stonewall Riots next year. Like in 1969, are trans people again at the forefront of the movement?

BT: We are quickly losing our rights as the 50th anniversary of Stonewall arrives. The movement and its players—allies, all of us—will have to take more direct actions, much like resisters did before the digital age, at Stonewall, like ACT UP.

WCT: What's different from 50 years ago?

BT: What is different now is that public opinion has fundamentally changed in our favor. It gets better and better. I've always said, "Population is the ocean in which insurgents swim." We need to swim out to our allies, band together with other oppressed groups, not only our own community.

WCT: Are they at the forefront because marriage and military service have been accomplished, although the status of trans individuals in the military is in flux.

BT: The situation is more severe right now. Gerymandering by the GOP and their attempts at voter suppression, religious exemptions to LGBT civil rights in public spaces, the marketplace, and the workplace, all pose serious threats to our well-being. Even in states with basic protections, religious groups are hoping to carve out their exemptions. It's even scarier than the AIDS Crisis and the plaque years.

WCT: Are queer folks the pariah again, as in the AIDS years?

BT: While our expressions of sex, sexuality, sexual identity expand, as individuals identify as pansexual, polyamorous our reigning political structures want to return to a male/female dichotomy. There's lots of power in regulating our sex lives.

Turn to page 13

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Competition aims to bring starter homes to working-class families

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

As gentrification seeps into various Chicago communities, affordable housing sits on the opposite side of the table, especially in the design and architectural communities. The American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Chicago chapter is launching an affordable housing competition for architects to submit designs to create affordable starter homes to help fight rising rent costs, displacement in gentrifying areas and use undervalued property.

The three-part competition, called Disruptive Design, is in partnership with the Chicago Housing Policy Task Force, a group of organizations invested in creating affordable housing that include Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), LISC Chicago, AIA Chicago, Northern Trust and Chicago Neighborhood Initiative Group. It invites architects from anywhere in the world to submit ideas and designs for building affordable starter homes at a low price—under \$150 per square foot. The total sales price for each home is not to exceed \$250,000 and each submission needs to meet rigorous accessibility, environmental sustainability and social sustainability goals. The task force is working with Ald. Walter Burnett (27th Ward) and Ald. Pat Dowell (3rd Ward) to produce two affordable, replicable and dynamic housing prototypes on city-owned vacant lots in their wards. The competition opens Nov. 15 for a general questions period and Phase I, a written phase, opens Dec. 1–Jan. 31, 2019.

AIA Chicago Executive Vice President Zurich Esposito said the competition was created to give affordable housing units with innovative design

to all kinds of households. Esposito, who is part of the first LGBTQ networking group at AIA Chicago, said the design results of the competition should be open to nontraditional families and be accessible by diverse communities.

"[We want] to be sure all kinds of households have access to well-designed housing," Esposito said. "We want these new communities to be exceptional and not just run-of-the-mill and that is why we are doing the competition."

Sarah Brune, manager of innovation and public policy at NHS, echoed the inclusivity aspect, saying anyone in the low-income bracket can benefit from these affordable starter homes, regardless of race or gender. NHS is one of the leaders of the project and works with various communities in Chicago to provide affordable housing options.

"We want to address the rising cost of construction in Chicago and around the country," Brune said of the competition. "We also want to make sure that young families, working families or first-time homebuyers are able to find starter homes in Chicago."

LISC Chicago also supports homeownership and has several programs in place that work with local organizations to give low-income residents access to home investment. Jack Swenson, Housing and Neighborhood Development officer with LISC Chicago, said LISC's goal with this design competition is to generate wealth creation for homebuyers and surrounding businesses.

"That wealth creation happens through access to affordable housing that allows neighborhood residents to become homeowners and remain homeowners in their neighborhoods," Swenson



Mayoral candidate Lori Lightfoot is concerned about the lack of affordable housing.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

said. "But also wealth creation happens as we begin to think about homes as more flexible spaces where business developments can occur."

Connecting these two ideas is at the crux of the competition, Swenson said, and exploring them through design is an exciting approach that speaks to the housing needs of Chicagoans in underserved communities.

"We are trying to retain wealth in emerging neighborhoods across the city," he said.

The competition is trying to do what the city has not been able to. In 2016, the demand for affordable housing outstripped supply by nearly 120,000 units—and the gap is growing. That is according to a 2018 study by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, which looked at how rental supply and demand is affecting housing access.

The city government has not done enough to address the affordable housing issue, said Lori Lightfoot, a mayoral candidate and proponent of affordable housing, education, community investment and public safety. If elected, she would be Chicago's first openly lesbian Black mayor.

Lightfoot said this issue brings housing stress to all demographics, including members of the LGBTQ and particularly, LGBTQ homeless youth.

"There's a significant number of homeless youth that are members of the LGBTQ community so this issue cuts across a lot of demographics and ethnicities in the city," Lightfoot said.

Her plan to create more affordable housing for low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness starts with having city agency to prioritize renovation and preservation of homes by lowering costs for community-based developers and creating deals that benefit local organiza-

tions with better engagement.

"The city has to be proactive and much more of a partner in creating options that are affordable, particularly for families," she said.

Lightfoot's second goal is to limit aldermanic prerogative, which is the amount of control alderman have on stopping or limiting real estate developments in their wards. She said while alderman do their job well and have a role to play in shaping policy and projects, they cannot have unchecked veto power as they do now. Limiting this would grant access to more affordable housing options and break down segregation barriers, she added.

Changing the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) in areas with 10 percent or less affordable housing options is her third step, one that needs to hold developers responsible to expand more affordability in projects or close proximity to them.

"Right now, what's happening is developers are opting out and paying an 'in lieu of' fee but that's not getting affordable housing units built," she said. This can be seen with developments in Logan Square and Humboldt Park. "There is a huge deficit in the amount of affordable housing units that the city itself has projected and we are way behind those projections."

She called affordable housing "an issue of our time" and said there needs to be more creative, transparent activism—particularly from the City of Chicago—on it to stop the exodus of displacement. Groups like the Chicago Housing Policy Task Force are shaping the housing market and the architecture competition brings together design, policy and social justice to address a big Chicago issue.

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PFLAG's Northern Illinois chapter holds 'Positivity' conference

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

PFLAG Northern Illinois held its fall conference, "Power of Positivity: Time to Thrive," Nov. 10 at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights.

Among the events of this day-long conference were remarks by Diversity and Inclusion Consultant and GenderCool Project Co-Founder Gearah Goldstein, Equality Illinois Policy Director Mike

her focus is on tolerance and respect for people's differences no matter who they are. She explained that in the most conservative communities she has found allies.

"We need to talk about our [LGBTQ] community as thriving from the beginning," said Goldstein.

In addition, Goldstein spoke about the importance of the Legacy Project Chicago and its Legacy Walk on Halsted Street because knowing LGBTQ history is one of the keys to moving forward.



Back, from left: John Hickey and Don Donahue. Front, from left: Tristan Harter, Ali Tannenbaum, Monica Skeels, Julie Witzczak and Lisa Brough. Photo by Carrie Maxwell

Ziri and PFLAG National Chapter Engagement Director Jamie Curtis as well as a panel discussion entitled "Creating Inclusive Middle Schools."

During Goldstein's remarks on "LGBTQIA+ Positivity: Moving Beyond the Surviving to Thriving Narrative," she explained that the work she does as a consultant is not usually within the LGBT community. Goldstein said the key to supporting family and friends who have come out is through love.

Goldstein said, when talking with businesses,

She explained that in California they passed an LGBTQ-inclusive history curriculum law in 2012 and now Illinois is working on passing their own version of that law.

Ziri focused on two issues around "Advocacy and Policy: How to Create Change"—tips for effective meetings with elected officials and LGBTQ legal advancements and challenges.

In terms of meeting with one's elected officials, Ziri said the most important thing is to

tell one's story, even to anti-LGBTQ legislators. Ziri explained that leading the conversation with elected officials on the values of inclusion and fairness is important to getting one's message across. He said thanking legislators for the good things they have done (even sending thank-you cards) and making a specific ask when meeting with them are things people should do regularly.

Ziri added that Illinois is the anchor in the Midwest in terms of LGBTQ-inclusive laws but that things still need to be addressed legislatively. He said the emerging trends are non-discrimination employment protections, battles over the license to discriminate, safer schools for LGBTQ youth, proper treatment of LGBTQ people in the criminal justice system, and adequate and affirming healthcare.

Speaking about the LGBT Inclusive Curriculum Bill (SB 3249), Ziri said the most important thing to do now is call one's state senator and ask them to vote "yes" on the bill since it has already passed the Illinois House.

Ahead of the panel discussion, PFLAG Northern Illinois Council Vice President and Membership Chair Don Donahue spoke about how, for his gay son, a GSA (gay-straight alliance) at his middle school would have helped him immensely. Donahue also moderated the discussion.

The "Creating Inclusive Middle Schools" panel-

ists included Valley View Community Unit School District (CUSD) 365U Jane Addams Middle School Psychologist and GSA Advisor Tristan Harter, Glen Ellyn School District (SD) 41 Eighth Grade Literacy Teacher and LGBTQ+ lunch program creator Ali Tannenbaum, Indian Prairie CUSD 204 Computer Teacher and GSA Advisor Monica Skeels, Deerfield SD 109 Communication Media Arts Teacher and GSA Advisor Julie Witzczak and Hinsdale Community Consolidated SD 181 Middle School Spanish Teacher and Safe Place Co-Sponsor Lisa Brough.

Everyone spoke about the strategies they used to get GSAs into their schools and the challenges they faced from district administrators and some parents.

The panel also talked about how they measure their successes, the level of support they have received from other teachers and staff, and how PFLAG can help them in this work.

Curtis closed the conference with a how-to on "Creating Thriving Chapters" that centered on having strong leadership, reaching out to new people in one's community and integrating what PFLAG is and does into everyday conversation. She explained that the key is to make meetings warm and inviting by being there for new members without overwhelming them with a lot of information or requests for future actions.

See <https://www.pflagillinois.org/>.

'Unicorn Ball' Dec. 15 at The Shapiro

The 2018 Unicorn Ball—Brave Space Alliance's largest annual fundraiser—will take place Saturday, Dec. 15, at 9 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Shapiro Ballroom, 1612 W. Chicago Ave.

This has been called the official queer "coming out" party of the year, as Brave Space celebrates trans liberation and power in the city.

Tickets are \$20-\$250 each; visit "2018 Unicorn Ball" on Facebook or Eventbrite.

Black Alphabet Film Festival Nov. 16-17

Black Alphabet returns Nov. 16-17 with its signature event, the Black Alphabet Film Festival (BAFF). It will take place at Malcolm X Col-

lege, 1900 W. Jackson Blvd., and the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E. 60th St.

In its fifth outing, the festival shifts to fall while continuing to showcase works highlighting and exploring Black LGBTQ and SGL (same-gender-loving) experiences.

BAFF returns to the Logan Center thanks in large part to the support of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Center for HIV Elimination, Howard Brown Health and the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus. Media sponsors for the 2018 season of Black Alphabet Film Festival include Windy City Media Group, Newcity Magazine, Colour Magazine, BoiMAGazine and Pride Labs.

Single-block (\$10), one-day (\$20) and two-day (\$30) tickets are currently available for purchase at BlackAlphabet.org or through the all-new Black Alphabet Film Festival app.

TANNEHILL from page 11

WCT: Can the marketplace play in relaxing oppression? Trump captured a lot of cisgender, white, gay votes.

BT: Let the market fix it is an approach might work in select circumstances. But we're only 3.5 percent of the population. African-Americans are 12.3 percent and we all know, if we read history and follow current events, what they went through and continue to go through.

WCT: Martin Duberman's latest book, Has the gay movement failed?, posits that heteronormative issues—namely marriage and military service—have headlined the movement to the detriment of trans and bisexual people, i.e., most non-cisgender people of color. Thoughts?

BT: I'm going to give you the Washington, D.C., answer: Everything is "transactional." That means we need to be strategic, focused and understand how it all works. We need to be politically pragmatic.

WCT: How can we summarize what might be a good political posture of our community?

BT: My Uncle Rocky, who fought and died in Iraq in 2003, told me his two rules of life. One: The truth has changed again and, two: I can be convinced. Those are good fundamentals in times like these.

Frank Pizzoli's work has appeared in The Brooklyn Rail, Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide, Windy City Times, and POZ. He is founding editor and publisher of The Central Voice, chosen Newspaper of the Year (2018) by the PA NewsMedia Association.



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viewpoints

LEE
LYNCH

THE AMAZON TRAIL

Going to
the doctor

"Visiting the doctor doesn't have to be all gloom and doom," said my sweetheart. "We can make it fun."

Remember the all-powerful, usually white male doctors of childhood? From the waiting room you could hear kids scream. Vaccines were terrifying. You had to undress. Sometimes my mother would take me for a milkshake afterward, yet, to this day, my blood pressure is higher (and I always weigh more) in the examining room.

I was seeing a hand surgeon for a left thumb brace to balance the one I wear on the right. I have Eaton stage III thumb CMC arthritis bilaterally, etc., blah, blah, blah. Which means arthritis with a capital "A."

As with most things in our rural area, the surgeon is located a bit over an hour from our home, but, oh, the hills and valleys we pass! Someday, we agreed, we would explore them. It's hard to pry us from our cozy nest on weekends, but until my sweetheart is hired for a so-far elusive new job, she's free. A light bulb went on for her: Why not explore those hills and valleys on the way to the doctor's?

It was a fine autumn day. We stopped for breakfast sandwiches and took off for our excellent gay adventure. My sweetheart loves the historical markers and I love the old west architecture. Old, that is, in terms of the West, where the Native Americans were able to retain their lands a while longer than they did farther east.

As we drove, we came across a sign for a town with a covered bridge. It wasn't exactly a town—Wren is too small for an official population count. The 1929 Harris Covered Bridge was a spanking clean white and spanned Mary's River, which at that point is a lively stream. We've happened upon a bunch of covered bridges on our expeditions along Oregon's Coastal Range.

The bridge led to tidy farmland and a long hill where two black cows roamed. The proud settlement of Wren has a Community Hall and a few family businesses, including an organic quince farm that sells its jellies worldwide. There were five small wineries.

We hadn't planned to explore a covered bridge, or sweet little Wren, and then we happened on Beazell Memorial Forest. The 586 acres were donated to the



Fort Hoskins.

Photo by Elaine Lynch

county by a husband in his wife's honor. On site was a pioneer home, the Plunkett House, built in what was called the Revival Gothic Vernacular style. It was a small T-shaped place. Two adults and seven, nine, 12 children were somehow crammed inside homes like it, minuscule compared to today's private homes.

The doctor a distant menace for now, we wandered toward the trails of the temperate rainforest, so termed because of the abundant rain that falls on this north-facing site. We heard a Pileated woodpecker thumping at a tree somewhere out of sight and picked up a few acorns for our chipmunks and golden mantle squirrels back home. We poked around an enormous renovated barn. The trail offers four loops through big-leaf maples and a dense Douglas-fir plantation. No one was around except for one hurried birdwatcher. We'll be going back to catch sight of that big old woodpecker.

Up the road a piece, past yards filled with rusty cars, weathered travel trailers permanently up on blocks, and stacks of treadless tires, we entered the site of U.S. Army Fort Hoskins, with its extensive interpretive trails. Who knew, hidden not far from the highway, was an important archaeological site listed (like The Stonewall Inn) on the National Register of Historic Places. Though it's always intriguing to step into history, why did the plaque indicate that 600 soldiers were stationed there to protect Native Americans? I read the words twice to confirm them. When I got home and researched the fort, though, its purpose was not to protect, but to monitor the

Coastal Indian Reservation—something like a large internment camp for many tribes driven from their lands. And we, offspring of the colonists, are still rewriting history.

We peered in the windows of the timber frame Commandant's house/Infirmary and surveyed what had been the parade ground. We admired the flight of two mewling Osprey way overhead. We walked a trail past a weedy meadow and up into pine woods. The foundation of an old schoolhouse surprised us, the base of its red brick chimney intact.

There was no one around except two county employees. Hi, fellas, just a couple of woman lovers doing that mysterious thing lesbians do—visiting backcountry surprises.

As usual, we took a wrong turn—all part of the adventure. We were blithely cruising along, enjoying the pastoral scenery: unusually vibrant autumn leaves, grayed tumbledown farm buildings, and pristine farm houses, when a sign appeared: "Paved Road Ends." Whoops.

Eyes on the clock now, we u-turned, retraced our route and made for the doctor's. There was no screaming, not a needle in sight, I kept my clothes on, and the surgeon is a woman. On the way home, with my new brace fitted, yes, we stopped for a milkshake.

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The Revolutionists' Kamille Dawkins.
Photo by Jon Cole



INTERSECTIONAL TEAM
CREATES CHANGE IN
**THE
REVOLUTIONISTS**

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THEATER REVIEW

110 in the Shade

Playwright: Harvey Schmidt, music; Tom Jones, lyrics; N. Richard Nash, book

At: BoHo Theatre @ Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: 773-975-8150; BoHoTheatre.com; \$35

Runs through: Dec. 16

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

It's not quite the Dust Bowl, but the drought won't end in this 1930s southwest rural town and people have just about run out of hope. So has Lizzie Curry (Neala Barron), on the brink of being an old maid as she keeps house for her rancher father and two brothers. They are so desperate, they're willing to put their faith—despite legitimate skepticism—in Starbuck (Tommy Thurston), a con man rainmaker. Within 24 hours it's pouring



Tommy Thurston and Neala Barron in **110 in the Shade**.

Photo by Liz Lauren

rain and Lizzie must choose between two suiters.

This musical of N. Richard Nash's 1954 play, *The Rainmaker*, is a sweet story about ordinary people, rural folks with natural reticence about personal feelings, and what happens when someone extraordinary blows into their lives. How-

ever, in director Peter Marston Sullivan's interpretation, even Starbuck is ordinary. The lyrics speak of his "bright, shiny wagon" but he pulls a poor peddler's handcart and his clothes are dull. He's not the imposing, handsome fantasy hero of most productions. This shaves a considerable layer of magic off the tale, but it also levels the playing field between Starbuck and File (Denzel Tsopnang), the divorced local sheriff who becomes Lizzie's other suitor. This Starbuck is more imaginative and verbal than most, and has more chutzpah, and is a masterful intuitive psychologist, but he's neither happier nor more fulfilled than anyone else, which is crucial to understanding the strength of Lizzie's smaller dreams.

Another layer is lost by this being a scaled-down version of the original, with big choral numbers and dances cut or shortened. The authors themselves reduced it some years ago to encourage more frequent productions, but it robs the show of Broadway musical pizzazz and size. The remaining chamber musical elevates the or-

dinary and mundane in the manner of, say, *Our Town*, which does a pretty good job of it.

The sweet story is intact, of course, with a lovely, lilting score by the authors of *The Fantasticks*, delivered with great intelligence and feeling under musical director Ellen K. Morris. Barron, Thurston and Tsopnang have fine musical chops and big voices, and the supporting company is strong. The three-piece orchestra (piano, violin and reeds) is lovely and provides considerable instrumental variety despite its tiny size. These performances are the real reason to see the show, as few readers will be aware—as I am—of differences from the original.

Costume note: if it's scorching hot, why do the men wear vests?

Starbuck is the name of Capt. Ahab's pure-hearted first mate in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and I don't know if N. Richard Nash intentionally borrowed the name. The charlatan weather-maker and the good, doomed sailor seem like polar opposites ... but you be the judge.

THEATER REVIEW

Cosmologies

By: David Rabe

At: The Gift Theatre, 4802 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets: TheGiftTheatre.org; \$35-\$50

Runs through: Dec. 9

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

Cosmologies, now in its world-premiere production at The Gift Theatre, is a confounding crash course in absurdist existentialism according to playwright David Rabe.

After a violent incident in a seedy hotel, teenager Eric (Kenny Mihlfried) must confront the mysteries of the universe with Richard (James D. Farruggio) and Teddy (Darci Nalepa), who may or may not be a pimp and a prostitute from the hotel, or who may or may not be his parents.

Director Michael Patrick Thornton is given a lot of material to work with by Rabe. One might claim it is too much material. Rabe's unfolding of an otherworldly or interdimensional scenario would lose momentum entirely were it not for Thornton's energetic staging of Eric's philosophic discursions on the nature of reality and love. Thornton shuttles actors all over the vertically epic Gift space, giving their attempts to gain understanding from one another an active and concrete project. He draws particularly physical performances from Farruggio, as a hard-hitting, space-devouring bully, and John Kelly Connolly, who plays a convict that intervenes in Eric's musings unexpectedly. There is less interest in Nalepa's use of space, and that may be partly Thornton's choice, and partly the fault of Rabe, who gives her two identities to play — despairing whore and adoring mother — with little opportunity to control the stage, or have much of a say in the confusing goings-on.



Hannah Toriumi, Kenny Mihlfried and Martel Manning in **Cosmologies**.

Photo by Claire Demos

Overall, Rabe's purpose is unclear. There are plenty of references to characters mistaking one another for other figures, but there is never a sense of stakes within those mistakes or recognitions. The audience does not understand what

it is being primed for on a plot level, and that means there is little to make viewers care about Eric's philosophizing. Likely, Rabe does not, but by eschewing choice and consequence for long-winded discussions and obfuscation for obfuscation's sake, he creates an impenetrable play with an impenetrable purpose for his audience.

Scenic co-designers Courtney O'Neill and Angela McIlvain create a solid sense of place in the otherworldly realm, and Charles Cooper's lights set the changing mood and time of that space expertly. Izumi Inaba's costumes feel old-fashioned in a way that fits both the real world and this alternate space. While Rabe may not provide an accessible story, the director, actors, and design team do their best to make his dialogue concrete, and the impact of his ideas specific.

CRITICS' PICKS

THEATER REVIEW

This Bitter Earth

Author: Harrison David Rivers

At: Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: TheaterWit.org; \$20-\$38

Runs through: Dec. 8

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

In bringing *This Bitter Earth* to Chicago, About Face Theatre and director Mikael Burke are taking a very current, not always flattering snapshot of our range of responses to national violence as it creeps closer.

With his time-hopping, poetic drama, author Harrison David Rivers explores the boundaries set and broken by two men in an interracial relationship. When Rivers' characters are allowed to revel in their specifics, they are endlessly compelling. In the same stroke, they can get bogged down with exposition and playwright perspective, and are often turned into plot devices. This has not deterred Burke and the ar-

tistic team from investing in this frank look at love in the time of rampant racism. Perfection is the enemy of important storytelling.

This Bitter Earth cascades like a pile of loose photos of a normal relationship made idyllic with the knowledge that something sweet and meaningful is done. Writer/teacher Jesse (Sheldon Brown) has just met activist/trust-fund baby Neil (Daniel Desmarais)—or maybe they have spent years together—with growing loyalty and annoyance. The true courtship isn't between them; it's watching their interplay with something irreconcilable as it grows between them.

Neil has buckets of white guilt and is a passionate protester, whereas Jesse is just trying to exist as a Black gay man, and stay under the radar. Neil can't understand Jesse's ability to see injustice and stay stone faced, any more than Jesse can understand what drives Neil to spend his days chanting into bullhorns for the disenfranchised. Their love can feel like a refuge and a trap, especially as Neil struggles with the concept of not asking a black man to do his

emotional labor, no matter how good his intentions may be.

The true strength of *This Bitter Earth* lies in the pair of fearless and expressive performers at the helm. As Neil, Daniel Desmarais shares his deep thoughts and hopeful outlook unashamedly. You don't have to reach very far to find the uncomfortable thing that inspires his white guilt: his vast net worth. His outlook is trapped in 2016, and it's deeply disheartening to hear him predict a bright future with "less crazy white people" from our 2018 vantage point.

However, Sheldon Brown, as Jesse, is droll and reserved, forever lowering his societal expectations. It takes some chipping away to catch a glimpse of his beating heart, and that should be the riveting focal point of this show. There's no landscape you'll want to dive into more than Jesse's Essex Hemphill-inspired theatrical poetry. *This Bitter Earth* is scattered with pockets of beautiful truth designed to make Chicago appreciate the impossible soil from which Black art grows.

Rock 'N' Roll, The Artistic Home, through Nov. 18. Tom Stoppard's clever play channels the collapse of European Communism through rock music, centered on a Czech idealist and a British Communist. It's vigorously and intimately staged and performed. JA

Frankenstein, Remy Bumpo Theatre at Theater Wit, through Nov. 17. You have one last chance to see Shelley's preternatural fable of science's misbegotten child portrayed with a shocking candor you won't forget. MSB

1776, Porchlight Music Theatre at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, Nov. 14-15. Porchlight Revisits presents a concert version of 1776, with a killer cast that includes Joseph Anthony Foronda as Benjamin Franklin and Heather Townsend as John Dickensen. CES

Neverland, Prop Thtr, through Dec. 2; Peter Pan, Bros Do Prose at the Mercury Theater, through Dec. 23. You've got two Peter Pan options this month, with Prop and Bros Do Prose both telling the story of the boy who refused to grow up. If you're a J.M. Barrie aficionado, this is your season. CES

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan

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'TransScripts' brings lives of transgender women into the light

BY KAREN TOPHAM

In the shadow of President Trump's alleged memo that seeks to define them out of existence by declaring that gender is immutable from birth and has to do with chromosomes, trans people are under fire in this country as they never have been before.

Most Americans simply don't know any trans people (that they are aware of). Paul Lucas's play *TransScripts* seeks to remedy this issue by bringing to the stage the true stories of seven trans women in their own words. Lucas' work gets a staged reading at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 18, at Theater Wit. Tickets are free.

Tatiana Nadiya plays Eden in the *About Face* Theatre staging. "The only narrative I had growing up of trans people was the woman trapped in a man's body. I'm happy that this project tells these various stories in a way that allows experiences to be valid, emotional and reflective of trans women's lives in the world," Nadiya said.

Mel Blasingame, who plays Zakia in *TransS-*

THEATER

cripts, concurred.

"Trans stories are rarely told," they said, "When they are, it usually isn't by trans people. The opportunity to represent the community and tell our stories is one I am excited to be a part of. This show especially, is all about telling our stories."

The play has been years in the making: Lucas interviewed 70 trans women all over the world before culling their stories down to seven. Actor/activist Delia Kropp directs a cast whose stage experience ranged from none to professional, and believes that the play is "as close as you'll get to walking in someone else's shoes, to feel our humanity viscerally and not to merely appreciate it from a social justice or intellectual perspective."

According to a 2016 study by the Williams Institute, approximately 0.6% of the world's popu-

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Alexia Jasmene.
Photo from Jasmene

Intersectional team creates change in 'The Revolutionists'

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

The Revolutionists, opening at Strawdog Theatre in mid-November, may center on the concerns of 18th-century women during the Reign of Terror, but Lauren M. Gunderson's feminist script provided a dynamic opportunity for director Denise Yvette Serna to create an entirely intersectional Chicago production team made up of femmes, women of color and non-binary folk.

"I am a Brown queer woman, and in the course of my few years in Chicago, I am really thankful that I have been able to be in a lot of great rooms, but a lot of times, I am the only person in that space," Serna said. "I asked myself, How can we get more perspective in this space?"

She started by investigating the casting of previous productions. "The play is about all these feminist ideals," she told *Windy City Times*. "But historically, it has been cast with all white women and one woman of color." In fact, the front of the printed script features the portraits of historical figures that appear in the play, three of whom are white women: feminist playwright Olympe de Gouge, assassin Charlotte Corday and deposed Queen Marie Antoinette. The fourth fig-

ure, Marianne Angelle, a free woman from the Caribbean and a spy, is a composite figure, and often the only woman of color onstage.

The play's narrative revolves around De Gouge exploring different actions to take in response to the French Revolution. Charlotte Corday barges in demanding final words after she has killed Jean-Paul Marat. Queen Marie Antoinette visits demanding an explanation as to why she has been imprisoned, while Marianne Angelle serves as a sounding board and motivator for the upper-class writer. Gunderson writes in comedic contemporary dialogue, and even addresses the fact that her characters are in a play by having them reference what events they would prefer to see onstage.

Serna approached auditions not by focusing on the familiar, but on the personal. In addition to asking actors to read sides from the script, she requested they prepare a minute of the Declaration of the Rights of Women, written by De Gouge, who was an outspoken feminist of her time. "I wanted to see which ideas got them excited and what fire got them into that passionate delivery," she said. Passion and point of view developed the casting, rather than focusing on appearance or



The Revolutionists' Kamille Dawkins.

Photo by Jon Cole

historical accuracy for historical accuracy's sake.

Forming an intersectional design team took more effort, however. Serna searched in the databases developed by the Alliance of Latinx Theater Artists of Chicago, a volunteer organization that catalogues Latinx actors, directors and designers working in the area. She also touched base with the Latinx Theatre Commons, a convening based out of the online Howlround Theatre Commons, that shared designer spreadsheet lists with her.

In many cases, the people Serna contacted were already booked, and couldn't take on more design work. "Because so few people had opened the door before, there was a lack of people to pull from," she said. "I want to be really responsible about the stories I'm telling and the identities I'm uplifting." The lengthened search proved fruitful, as the entire production team is made up of non-binary folk, women, and women of color. "What we are making is a new version of this [play]," Serna stated.

Alex Casillas' scenic design is focused on the harshness these women endure at the height of the French Revolution. The few pieces of furniture onstage—De Gouge's writing desk, an archway entry, the chairs—are functional and concrete, based in brutalist architecture. But the set's background painting is inspired by Xu Longsen's *Light of Heaven*, which was on display at the Art Institute this past winter and summer. The background blends in images that create a softer and more natural tone for the actors to play against. Likewise, Claire Chrzan's light design can contrast the neutral-toned costumes designed by Leah Hummel, creating a fantastical experience that allows us to remain in De Gouge's point of view from scene to scene. Meanwhile, Spencer Meeks' sound design keeps the women contained in their hidden space, with live looped sound effects reminding them they live in revolutionary times.

Having an intersectional workspace brought a lot of ease and immediate respect to the production process. "So many different viewpoints from designers and actors helped drive each other," said Kamille Dawkins, who plays Marianne

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THEATER REVIEW

Neverland

Playright: Devised by the ensemble

At: Prop Thtr, 3502 N. Elston Ave.

Tickets: PropThtr.org; \$20

Runs through: Dec. 2

BY ADA CHENG

How can the story of Peter Pan be imagined for 2018, a year marked by our individual and collective reckoning about #MeToo Movement and violence against women?

That's the ambitious question Prop Thtr's 12-member ensemble, directed by Director Olivia Lilley, takes on with their newly devised version of Sir James M. Barrie's story of a boy who won't grow up. This *Neverland* tells not one but three stories from distinct—and often contradictory—points of view.

The ensemble first presents the story of Never-



Neverland.

Photo by Beth Rooney

land from the perspective of Peter Pan (an energetic, dynamic Gaby Labotka). Peter is presented as the savior and guardian of this imaginary wonderland where members of "The Lost" tribe do not have to grow up. Yet staying innocent (or assuming innocence) and not growing up does not mean being free. Peter guards Neverland with an iron fist and a dictatorial command.

Next is the story of Wendy (the engaging Valeria Rosero), a young woman from Mexico. Wendy

depicts a different picture about Peter Pan and Neverland, showing his capacity for violence and the illusion of this fancy land where innocence can be presumed. Wendy—who constantly challenges the simplistic dichotomy between the innocence of childhood and the complexity of adulthood—compels Neverland's Lost tribe to tell more complex stories about themselves, and insists that we are all heroes and villains at the same time.

Finally, *Neverland* offers the story of The Hook (Kate Black-Spence, who brings great presence and depth to the role), who reveals herself to be the original builder, owner and guardian of Neverland. Through her telling, she contests Peter Pan's version about the origin story of Neverland and reveals how he has betrayed her and has come to claim the ownership of Neverland. In her revisiting the creation and the genealogy of Neverland, The Hook makes most revelatory comments relevant to our time.

Set against contemporary gender and racial

politics, the play intends to raise some thought-provoking questions about the world we live in and the challenges we face, particularly issues of identity, reality and truth. How many versions of truth can there be? Whose version prevails in time of judgment and redemption?

Fundamentally, *Neverland* asks who is capable of vulnerability and who is truly fragile and lost in our time. Ultimately, it asks how we assert our story and our truth when no one listens? How do we reclaim our sense of self when no one remembers? And how do we rebuild a world that's already lost?

I truly applaud the production's intent and its attempt to re-envision the story of Peter Pan and juxtapose it against the contemporary politics to raise critical issues of our time, particularly by asking provocative question about who is telling the story/truth and thus defining our reality. However, the devised script, at times, seems fragmented and falls short of the depth necessary for its ambitious intent.

REVOLUTIONISTS from page 18

Angelle. "You have this open for anything atmosphere."

"To have a barrier taken down, to have the relaxation of not having to prove yourself [to an all-white room], is really amazing," Serna explained. "These characters have their flaws and blind spots, and being able to talk about blind spots, to be able to have a dynamic conversa-

tion, is everything." She pointed out that having a wider variety of voices in the room helped develop a complex scene in which Marie Antoinette remarks that Marianne Angelle must be a slave, rather than a free woman, due to the color of her skin.

Strawdog won't be the first company to produce *The Revolutionists* in Chicago this year, as Organic Theater Company staged the show this past summer. Serna is not worried about the two

productions appearing so soon after one another. "If we can see a dozen men play Hamlet in one year, then I think we can see a play about women twice. We should have the same liberty in doing scripts about women. We're so multifaceted and to be able to see us strong and revolutionary and also to see us be soft and fragile is really important."

"It's kind of funny, in that I feel very similar to Marianne," Dawkins said. "I don't post online

or attend protests, but when I see something wrong, I will speak up then. When she sees someone losing faith, she urges them to keep going. I keep trying to do that. It's finding where you are in the revolution."

The Revolutionists, produced by Strawdog Theatre Company, runs Nov. 15-Dec. 29 at Strawdog Theatre, 1802 W. Berenice Ave. Tickets are \$18-\$35 each; visit Strawdog.org or call 773-644-1380.

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Ike Holter: The 'Right(lynd)' stuff

BY REGINA VICTOR

Last week's midterm elections taught us that political engagement is more crucial than ever.

This makes Ike Holter's *Rightlynd*—opening this week at Lincoln Park's Victory Gardens Theater—more timely than ever. Helmed by Lisa Portes, Holter's drama is part of his seven-play "Chicago Cycle," which began in 2013 with *Exit Strategy* and wraps up this spring with the world premieres of *Red Rex* and *Lottery Day*. *Rightlynd* follows Chicago Ald. Nina Esposito as she navigates politics and gentrification.

Windy City Times caught up with Holter, 33, for a conversation about art, aldermen, Star Wars and the rarity of work on a production when there aren't any white guys in the room.

Windy City Times: Where does *Rightlynd* fit in to your Chicago Cycle?

Ike Holter: When I started working on *Exit Strategy* in 2013, I knew I had to make up a neighborhood that was totally real but at the same time completely fictional. When I developed a neighborhood, I thought of the stores and gangs and rules and lore. [It] was way too much for one play.

I was working on a Goodman commission for a show about people in a Chicago neighborhood around the same time, so I fused them together. It seemed like a natural thing to think about many of these characters knowing the others, and all of them frequenting similar establishments and growing up in a similar way.

It became a really exciting thing: the idea of telling the story of how, over the past decade, a neighborhood could grow and thrive and then slide into collapse. It's happening in so many places in Chicago right now, and it's an issue that a lot of people pretend isn't going down.

WCT: This is Lisa Portes' first time directing a full production of one of your plays. What makes her fit with *Rightlynd*?

IH: Lisa and I worked on a musical for young audiences I wrote called *Night Runner* a couple of years ago; she's one of the quickest, most emotionally honest directors I've ever worked with.

THEATER

When I started developing *Rightlynd*, I knew I needed someone who could make a small play out of a big play.

[*Rightlynd*] has more than 50 scenes and goes in and out of style and genre; sometimes it's a romantic comedy, sometimes it's a Star Wars-style epic, [and] many times it's blunt and grounded. Lisa has made a career out of doing pieces like *This Is Modern Art* that live in those criss-crossing worlds. She also saw eye to eye with me on having a room that mirrored the people on stage.

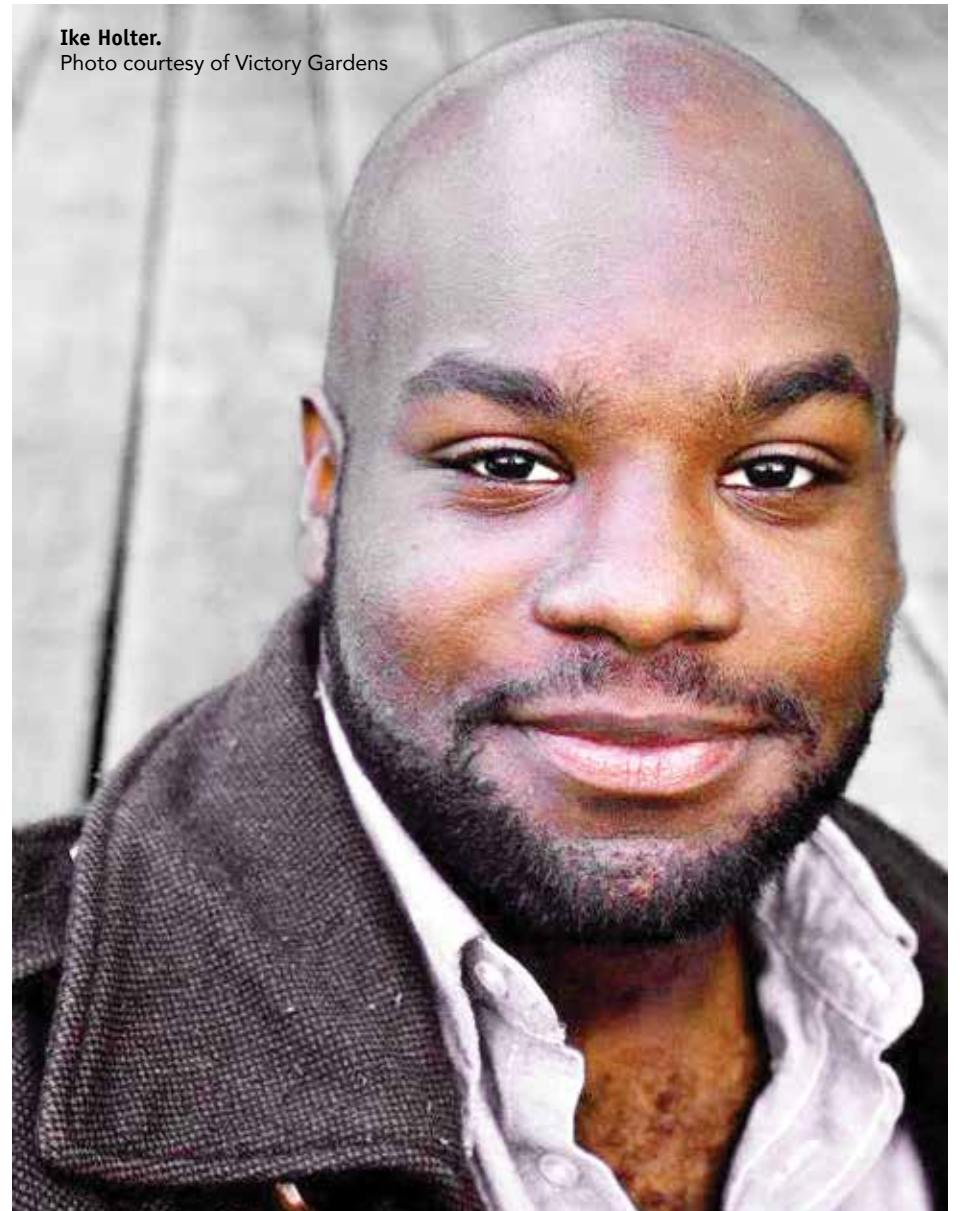
There were many days when we didn't have any white men in the rehearsal room, and for a show that deals explicitly with an all-people-of-color ensemble, it was new for me and made the process that much better. Lisa is Latinx and I'm Black. [The] conversations we were able to explore in the room were essential.

WCT: The main character in *Rightlynd* is an alderman. Were you influenced by any real events in Chicago politics? How does her story reflect the lives of everyday Chicagoans?

IH: For each of the shows in the [Chicago Cycle], I've done a lot of research: about politics or schools or the crime rates, etc. With this show I got to dive deep into the shaky political history of Chicago—deep enough that I understood the lingo and the rules and the cycles, but not deep enough so I was taking pieces of the real people in Chicago. You're not going to hear any name dropping of people who have been an alderman in the past or serve that title now.

The play is having a conversation about power, and how easily even the best people can be corrupted by it. In a time where we push for people of color and women—finally—in offices across the country, the play asks what happens when we're not just voting in the booth. Do we watch them more closely? Do we watch white people in positions of power that closely? There's an election coming up in [April] that will legit change the future of Chicago. Thinking about these ideas is important [and] can be empower-

Ike Holter.
Photo courtesy of Victory Gardens



ing.

WCT: You've been in London, working at the National Theatre. How does the London theater scene compare to Chicago's?

IH: There is no better place for new plays in the world than Chicago—not a diss on London or any other city, I'm legit stating the facts. Audiences here are incredible and they will constantly surprise you.

WCT: You've won two Jeffs—awards from a committee under fire both its lack of diversity and for not giving many awards to women, POC or genderqueer/trans individuals. What do those awards mean to you?

IH: In a city like Chicago that is more Black and Brown than it is white, you just can't trust any system which believes that 75 percent of the awards need to go to white men. Having a Jeff hasn't helped out my career at all, but I think many of the people on the committee are incredible people and I hope they change their game around.

WCT: What's next for you? You've been flying in and out of town for television work, can you tell me about that?

IH: I'm doing a lot of talk-backs and audi-

ence engagement things for *Rightlynd*, so I'll be around, and then getting ready for Steep's *Red Rex* [opening in January]. I traveled back and forth to New York as a staff writer for [the FX series] *Fosse/Verdon*. I'm also seeing every movie imaginable with my movie gang. Some of the best plays I've seen this year were Jackalope's *In the Canyon*, *Mixed Blood's Is god Is* and *Steppenwolf's You Got Older*.

WCT: If you were an alderman, what is one thing you would change?

IH: A lot of my dreams and nightmares about what the position of alderman can do are trapped in *Rightlynd*. I'll leave it up to the audience to decide where my politics lie within that. That could be a fun drinking game.

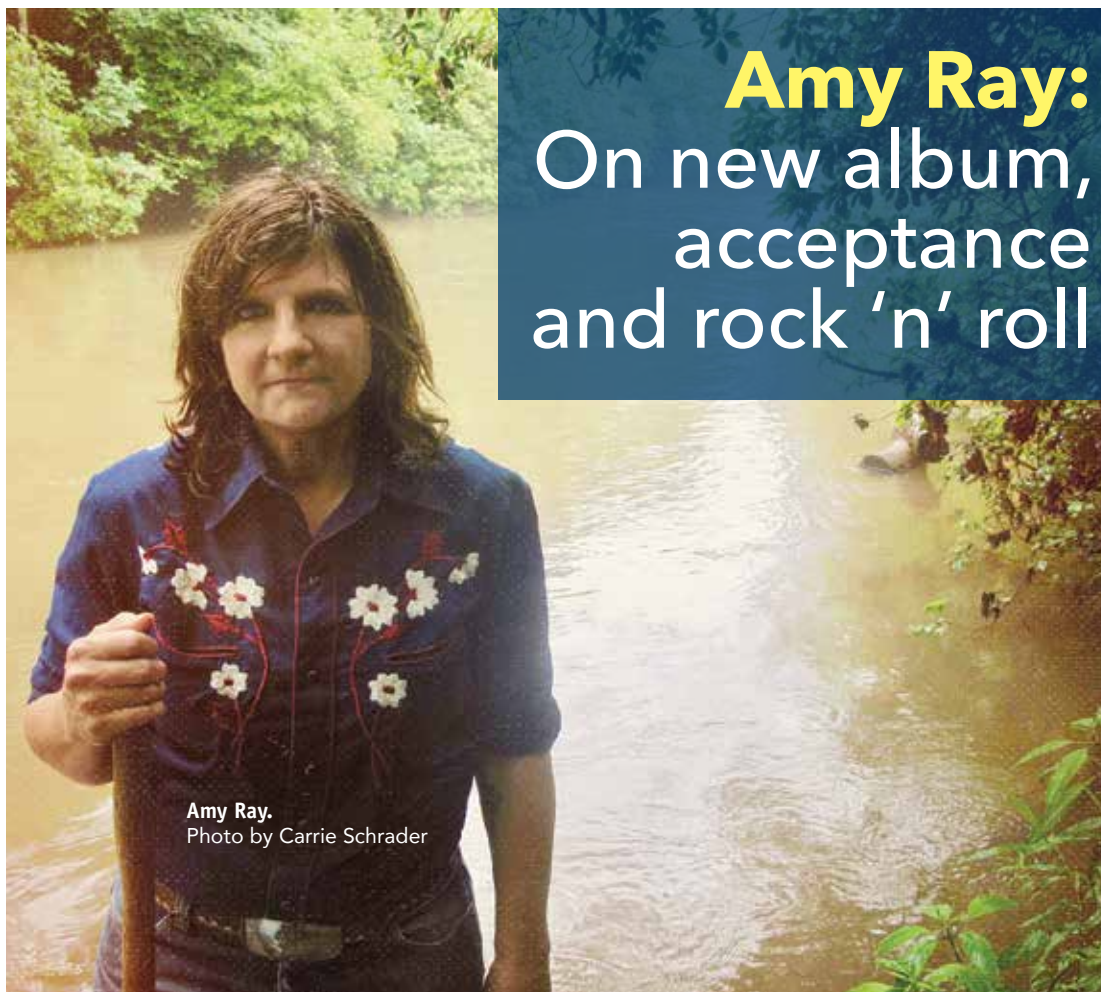
Rightlynd runs through Sunday, Dec. 23, at the Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Tickets are \$41-\$61; visit VictoryGardens.org. For information about the world premiere of Holter's *Red Rex* (opening Jan. 24 at Steep Theatre), visit <https://steeptheatre.com>. For information about the world premiere of Holter's *Lottery Day* (opening March 29 at the Goodman Theatre), visit GoodmanTheatre.org.

SPOTLIGHT

Beware the unvetted babysitter. In Lukas Barfuss' *Malaga*, an estranged couple gets more than they bargained for after failing to do due diligence before hiring a young woman to care for their child. Things go grotesquely awry in a hurry in the Swiss playwright's pitch-dark comedy, helmed for Theatre Y by Hector Alvarez and Melissa Lorraine. The Theatre Y production runs through Sunday, Dec. 16, at the Ready, 4546 N. Western Ave. Tickets are free. <http://www.theatre-y.com>



Photo by Devron Enarson



Amy Ray.
Photo by Carrie Schrader

Amy Ray: On new album, acceptance and rock 'n' roll

BY JOHN STADELMAN

Indigo Girl Amy Ray's September release, *Holler*, is a rich mixture of folk, Southern rock, mountain music, bluegrass and gospel, with her characteristic thoughtful and layered lyricism.

Windy City Times talked with Amy about the album, her Southern roots and the issues she addresses in *Holler*.

Windy City Times: Congrats on the album! As a liberal born and raised in North Carolina it's cool to get that representation, because it's a weird spot to be in.

Amy Ray: It's definitely a fertile spot. There's lots to think about and learn from, but it can be really good. ... For me, the South has been a lot of great lessons over and over again.

We were the epicenter for a lot of hard stuff, but also for a lot of great Civil Rights stuff, and right now because it's so polarized and hard. But the thing is, you can't judge a book by its cover, so just when you think you've given up on some aspect of your community someone surprises you and does something amazing and you're like, "Oh, I shouldn't be so narrow."

WCT: And did that influence "Sure Feels Good Anyway?"

AR: Oh yeah. That was just straight out of where I lived and the people I loved and my community and the differences I often have—just politically.

One thing to preface everything with is that I have a certain amount of privilege as a white person, to have a certain perspective on living in rural north Georgia, where if I was a person of color having a dialogue with people up here it might not be easy.

Race is going to be the hardest thing for us to beat. It's been easier for people to accept me as a queer person in

MUSIC

Georgia than if I was a person of color. ... It's the last thing we have to conquer somehow and I think in that song I was saying, "I love this place anyway, I want to stay here and I want to change it."

And it's saying, "Look, I know that you talk about the flag like this and I know that there's a part of you that's a good person that helps people when they need help." ... And that's the part of you that you got to remember and draw on when you're trying to learn acceptance and tolerance and be brave enough to look at something that's hard to look at.

WCT: In "Fine with the Dark" there's a reversal of the light/dark, good/bad metaphor, celebrating darkness. With the line, "Baby, I'm fine with the dark," what are you getting at with "darkness" and accepting it?

AR: There's two levels the song operates on and one level is really simple, it's just after working so hard and being tired and busy I'm all right with just laying down in the dark with you and I don't need any more light. I need darkness and quiet.

And then of course there's always the [inspiration]. ... I put this line in about Nina Simone's recording of "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair." She came out with that recording that was so controversial and the precursor to "Black is Beautiful" and the movement to look at the imagery of darkness as something that didn't have to be: "Black is evil and dark is evil," and all the equations that have racist overtones.

It was saying, "I don't have a problem with darkness. I

Turn to page 29

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Tig Notaro and Octavia Spencer in *Instant Family*.

Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Tig Notaro adopts a new role in 'Instant Family'

BY JERRY NUNN

Out comic, actress and writer Tig Notaro has a new movie this November called *Instant Family*. The film also stars Mark Wahlberg, Rose Byrne and Octavia Spencer, telling the story—based on director Sean Anders' real-life experiences—of two parents that attempt to adopt three children at the same time. Notaro plays a social worker named Sharon, who helps the family through the adoption process.

The Mississippi native worked in the music industry, leading her to LA, where she first tried stand-up comedy. She has released several comedic albums and stand-up specials on TV, most recently on Netflix this year with a program titled *Happy to Be Here*.

Notaro also wrote a memoir called *I'm Just a Person* and a Showtime documentary about her post cancer stand-up tour. She married her wife Stephanie Allynne in 2015 and has two twin sons, Max and Finn, through a surrogate. She discusses family and the new movie in this exclusive interview:

Windy City Times: How did you become involved with *Instant Family*?

Tig Notaro: My agent called and told me they were offering me this role. I found out all my scenes would be with Octavia Spencer and I didn't feel I could say no to that.

I read the script, which I felt was heartfelt and funny. I personally had been interested in adoption and adopting siblings. I had been to many adoption agencies for meetings. That was when I was single. At the time I had some health issues and that didn't make me a great candidate for it. Now that I am married with kids, the movie has kept that spark going. So several things drew me to that film.

WCT: I'm a gay adopted kid so I was crying.

TN: I'm sure!

WCT: Do you want to have more children?

TN: I would love to adopt siblings still. I think

my wife needs to take a beat, since we have had our twins just two years ago. I am hoping the premiere will push her in the right direction, we will head home and she will say, "Let's do it!"

WCT: There is a surprisingly large amount of content for LGBT audiences in *Instant Family*.

TN: Yes. There's a lot of gay representation in the film.

WCT: How was working with Octavia Spencer? I loved interviewing her in the past.

TN: She's the best. I was a little intimidated because she is the big Oscar award-winning powerhouse. We had mutual friends, but had never met in person. When we did, we had an immediate connection. We had great talks and hard laughs. I think the connection we had transferred on film.

WCT: You adopted a cat so there's an adoptee living in your house already.

TN: [laughs] I did adopt a cat. You did your research!

WCT: I did and watched your *Happy to Be Here* special on Netflix. You should bring the *Indigo Girls* that were in your special to Chicago.

TN: I will do it in a heartbeat. They wanted to go on tour together and I just didn't have time, but I would love to hit the road with them.

WCT: Where does your sarcasm come from?

TN: I don't know. My mother and father were really funny. My stepfather was very buttoned up, but still was funny in his own serious, dry way. I don't know where I can trace each little part of me back to, but I was surrounded by a lot of funny people.

WCT: Talk about the new *First Ladies* project?

TN: My wife and I are writing that. We just finished the first draft of the film. We are waiting for notes from the producers. It has been so much fun to work on and write scenes with Jennifer Aniston as president of the United States. Everything becomes so silly. Me as first lady is ridiculous. We are going to start filming in the spring.

WCT: There must be a lot of great material

FILM

with all of the political things going on these days.

TN: I think so. My wife and I are writing the movie based on our dynamic, so there is non-political relationship humor in there also.

WCT: You are about to do *Star Trek*?

TN: Yes, I am on season two of *Star Trek: Discovery*. I am doing a few more episodes. That has been really fun, having been a fan as a kid. I haven't really followed it in my adult life. When I got that phone call, I knew I couldn't turn down *Star Trek*!

WCT: I hope you are ready for the Trekkie fans.

TN: I know. I think I am in denial. I just try to do what I want to do that makes me happy. I just ignore the fact that I will be in a movie with Jennifer Aniston and will be on *Star Trek*.

WCT: Do you feel starstruck?

TN: I don't feel starstruck. I just feel they are really talented people and I am having a blast working with them. I get more starstruck around musicians than comedians or actors.

WCT: When are you coming back to Chicago?

TN: I don't know. I don't have a proper stand-up tour planned. My wife and I are working on a pilot for ABC. It is an hour-long dramedy. We are in the middle of that as well. We have a lot going on.

WCT: Anything else you want to tell readers about *Instant Family*?

TN: Go see it. Tell your friends, family and anyone that has considered adoption or fostering children. Aside from watching a documentary, this is the closest you can come to getting some real information. I think it will change a lot of people's minds and do some good.

Instant Family delivers on Nov. 16 at theaters everywhere just in time for National Adoption Month.



Operatic baritone Will Liverman performed at the 11th annual 3Arts Awards Celebration.

Photo by Robin Subar Photography

3Arts announces award winners

Chicago-based nonprofit grantmaking organization 3Arts awarded 20 Chicago artists with unrestricted grants at the 11th annual 3Arts Awards Celebration Nov. 5, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave.

The celebration, which drew more than 300 attendees, honored the 10 annual 3Arts Awards recipients with \$25,000 grants, along with 10 recipients of Make a Wave, an artist-to-artist giving initiative in which recipients receive \$1,000 each.

The 2018 recipients of \$25,000 3Arts Awards are dancers/dance educators T. Ayo Alston and Anna Martine Whitehead; musicians Brittany "BrittanE" Edwards and Ben LaMar Gay; teaching artists Leida "Lady Sol" Garcia and Elgin Bokari T. Smith; playwright/actor Sandra Delgado and costume designer Christine Pascual; and visual artists Dianna Frid and Hýong Ngo.

The 2018 Make a Wave recipients include Nura Aly (violinist, educator and dancer); Silvia Inês Gonzalez (interdisciplinary artist and educator); Krystal Grover-Webb (visual artist and educator); Jo de Presser, aka Marlon Bil-lups (DJ); Joelle Lamarre (soprano, teacher and playwright); Jenna M. Lyle (experimental musician and performer); Krystel V. McNeil (actor); Gonzalo Escobar Mora (visual artist and experimental filmmaker); Carolyn O'Brien (composer); and Ana Santos (actor).

'Santuario' readings Nov. 16-18 at Piven

Evanston's Piven Theatre Workshop, 927 Noyes St., will present a staged reading of *Santuario/Sanctuary* on Nov. 16-18.

Santuario/Sanctuary is a bilingual documentary theater piece exploring the migrations of monarch butterflies and youth crossing the United States-Mexico border. The work is based on more than 30 interviews with (im)migrants, nuns, volunteers, conservationists, and law enforcement in both countries.

Tickets are \$10-\$15 each; visit <https://boxoffice.diamondticketing.com/piven/> events.

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A Cradle Song: Part Five

WRITTEN BY MARK ZUBRO; ILLUSTRATED BY W.S. REED

A Cradle Song, written by Mark Zubro and illustrated by W.S. Reed, debuts in the Windy City Times as the new holiday classic. Filled with travail and woe, warmth and great joy, it is a story for the ages. It will appear in ten installments from Octo-

ber 17 to December 19 and will also be available for gift giving as an e-book and as a paperback. For the true joy and meaning of the season, this is the book you want to read.

Today **A Cradle Song: Part Five.**

Chapter Five Part Two

Matthew shied away from the indoor kitchens as the people who worked in them had knowing eyes. They'd find out his secret and maybe take him away. He'd had friends who were in the government system. The authorities had come into his school and taken them away. Lost and alone and never back in their old neighborhoods, never seeing friends again.

So he waited every night, scrunched down in the dark shadows of different churches until everyone was gone, and then snuck to the front and grabbed a few coins from poor boxes. Sometimes, there was more cash than others. Usually just enough. Or the boxes were already broken and emptied by desperate people. He had to learn to dodge bigger kids, bullies, who took his money.

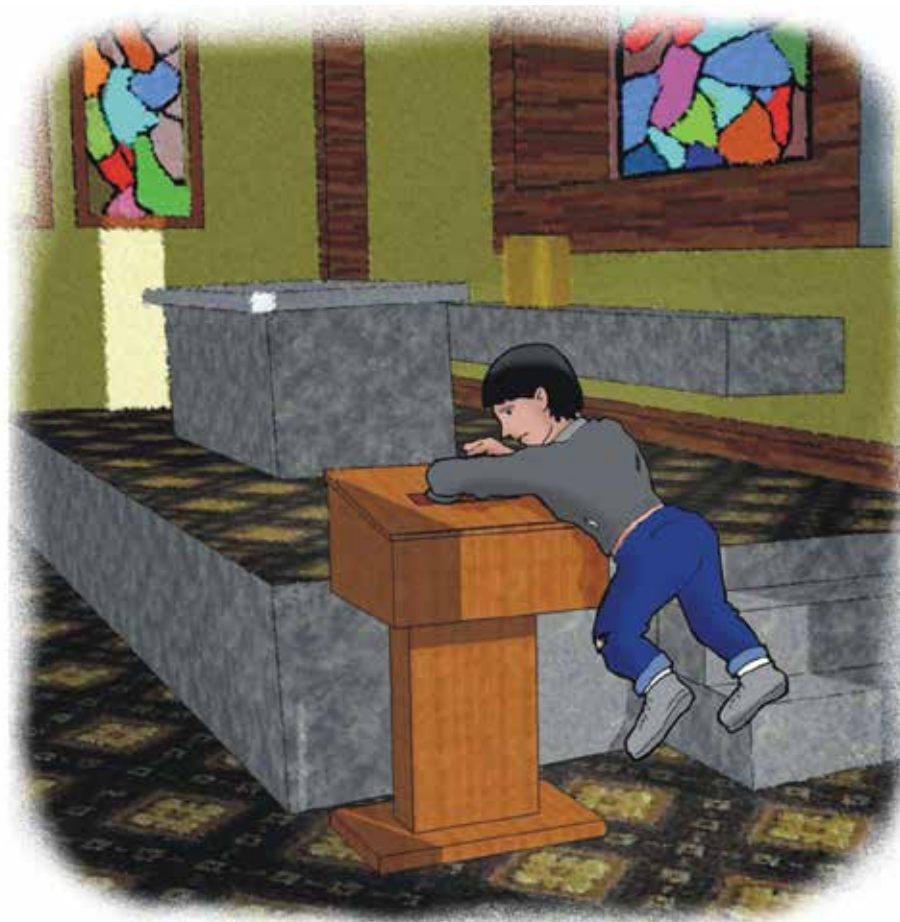
Matthew wasn't strong enough to break into the poor boxes. He had no weapon to use.

When he thought it was the perfect time, he crept and slid over, under, and around the pews and pillars until he arrived at the poor box. He had one advantage. His little hand managed to move the locks just enough and because his hand was small and slender, it fit into the openings.

Inside the Catholic Church, the priest stood in the shadows as he did every night. He didn't really have much more than the boy, but he always made sure there were a few coins so the boy could have at least something. He'd noted the missing collection, meager as it was, and watched, and then he noted the thief, but he was a wise old priest, and he followed the boy, and before he lost him in the crowd as he always did, he saw the boy make sure other little lost children were fed.

The priest observed as the boy looked fearfully into every shadow, put his hand in as he did every night, grabbed the coins, then sprinted through the shadows and out the side door of the church.

The priest shook his head sadly. He wished he could do more, but this church



would be closed soon. Once the priest tried to approach the boy, but before he could get close, the boy spotted him and fled.

The priest watched again. The boy didn't come back, or at least he never saw him although the coins once again began to disappear. Maybe it was someone else or perhaps it was the boy. It made no difference to him. The priest left a few coins and abandoned his hiding place.

An even more ancient rabbi, a frail and broken imam, a clergyman from the Episcopal Church, and the priest sipped tea together late most nights.

"Has the thief returned?" the rabbi asked. The priest nodded. "Someone has."

The imam said, "I wish we could do more."

The priest said, "We all wish we could do more for all of the children of the city."

It was an impossible task.

Matthew visited the library as many days as he dared. If he went after school hours, he was most likely safe as there would be other children there. Always after school hours so no one would be suspicious about whether or not he went to school. He went to the same little cubby every day. He barely glanced at anyone. Matthew just sat and read and got warm and wondered where he'd find something to eat. He drank deeply from the water fountain every day so that was something. Warmth and water in the same place without having to trudge through the city.

The meanest librarian was Belinda Marcellus. She ruled from the Information desk. She hated anyone who spoke above a whisper. Her coworkers were afraid of her because Miss Belinda was very strict and enforced every rule.

She had a severe nose on a hatchet face. Glasses dangled from a silver chain around her neck. She wore dresses that hung to mid-calf. Mostly gray: dark grey, light gray, medium gray, sometimes a washed-out navy blue. In her earlobes were two tiny pearl earrings you might need a microscope to see. She had slashes of blush under high-cheek bones and deep black eyes. If she smiled, Matthew had never seen her do so. She didn't like disruption, and she didn't seem to like children.

Miss Belinda noticed everything. If you were shabbily dressed, she was on high alert. Matthew barely said a word, but he knew she watched everyone's every move.

When Matthew finished with a book, he always put it back on the shelf and in the spot where he got it from. Miss Belinda would know if he didn't. She missed nothing.

She let him sit and read in the children's section. He just started at the beginning of the alphabet and read. The worn chairs were comfortable, and cushy, and warm. He loved snuggling down into them. He often nodded over the books but no one ever bothered him.

One day, he stayed later than usual. He'd fallen asleep in his chair. He awoke to find the room nearly empty, but he could hear the murmur of voices.

He crept to the end of the bookcase. Matthew looked into the small children's play section. There was a thick throw rug, bigger than any rug Matthew had ever seen. The floor was strewn with safe nerf toys, large stuffed animals, and brightly colored chairs.

In the middle of the floor sat Miss Belinda. With her was a boy named Edwin. Matthew had seen Edwin almost every day. They were about the same age. Edwin always came in with his little sister who must have been about three. The little sister was asleep at his feet.

Matthew knew Edwin stuttered. He'd heard him talk at times to his sister or a librarian. Edwin always turned very red when he spoke to someone.

Edwin and Miss Belinda were reading.

Matthew listened in. He realized it was a play. Matthew could see the cover of the book. He recognized the author's name. She wrote plays for children. Matthew had read many of them. He liked them.

Edwin was reading the leading role of a brave boy who fought bad people and monsters. Miss Belinda acted out all the other parts in dramatic voices, or low voices, or happy voices, whatever the character and scene needed.

After eavesdropping for a short while, Matthew realized that Edwin wasn't stuttering. Not once.

Matthew didn't know that, if they were acting, people who stuttered often spoke clearly and without hesitation.

Right then, Matthew was enchanted. He slid to the ground at the base of the bookcase. He was out of sight. He listened.

He wondered about Miss Belinda and her reputation for being nasty. He'd seen her be pretty mean to some kids and even adults. He also knew Miss Belinda's shift was over. Matthew noted things like that. And here she was spending her time being kind.

Matthew left them and felt a little warmer in his heart.

On that Christmas Eve, Matthew was on his way back from begging for a few coins from the passengers at the train station.

The few bits of cash he gathered while sitting next to a hot air vent would allow him to buy a few morsels for his dinner.

It was a good spot, and he'd been at the train station for hours. Matthew had to be careful because several of the large adult homeless also used this location at busier times of the day. Twice, he'd been chased away by others claiming it for their own. He couldn't fight them. He was too small. He always moved along.

Today, the gloom of a late December afternoon surrounded him. He'd made enough money to buy his dinner, a few scraps from a shabby store, but then the bigger boys had come and pushed him down and taken his precious little.

His face was dirty and smudged from the attack. When he'd dried his tears, he'd smeared the dirt even more. His little brown eyes peeked from under his unruly dark hair. Sniveling and dirty, wiping his nose on his sleeve, which he tried to conceal.

He trudged on. He wanted to wear clean clothes, but it cost a lot of money to go to the laundromat and use the huge machines that he didn't understand.

His thoughts whirled. He'd been happy with his few coins, and now he was devastated and hungry. The big boys didn't have enough?

He wondered when he saw cruel people do good things. Or when a policeman was supposed to help but did mean things. He didn't understand. But then the policeman helped Mr. Schermerhorn. He also knew that the officer looked the other way when people worked in the garden.

Sometimes, like today, Matthew wanted to run away. And run and run and run and never come back. Ever.

But if he did, he feared his dad would never find him. In their apartment, Matthew remembered a Christmas tree and tiny blinking lights, a star at the top, good food, laughter, and warmth.

The vision faded.

His dad had been called to war.

Chapter Six

Each afternoon, Matthew walked by a toy store. He'd stop every day and look in the window. He never went inside. The owner was a gruff old man who stomped around the store using a cane to help keep his balance. Hair grew out in tufts around his ears and peeked out in black and gray strands from his nostrils. He had a few stray wisps around the edge of a shiny empty baldness.

Matthew had seen the old man eye with great suspicion every kid who entered his

store. The man saved his nastiest looks for the kids who were not accompanied by an adult. More often than not, those kids wound up being unceremoniously ushered out of the store. Sometimes, they were rude to the man and said bad words. Matthew didn't like that. He might be scared of the man, but he knew better than to treat an adult like that, especially an old man.

The owner moved in jerky motions. He shooed many kids out the door, mostly big kids who would laugh at him. The old man always spoke gruffly when he saw kids touch the toys. The old man didn't like when they did that. He hated when kids weren't there with parents who could pay.

There were a few younger clerks, but they stuck close to unaccompanied kids. They caught a kid once who stole a toy. Matthew saw that the thief wore rich-kid clothes. He wondered why the child of wealthy parents had to steal. They had called the police who had been meaner than the owner. The boy had sassed them back and looked stubborn. He'd been marched away. Matthew didn't think that boy was much older than he was, but even so, through the boy's defiance, they'd been merciless.

End of part five. Part six coming next week.



"A Cradle Song is my very favorite of Mark Zubro's books. Tender, full of insight and love, it made me cry—but they were happy tears."

—*Jeanne M. Dams,*
author of the *Dorothy Martin*
mysteries

"A Cradle Song is a wonderful, heartwarming story, and just right for Christmas. Open this present and enjoy!"

—*Barbara D'Amato,*
author of the *Cat Marsala*
series and the recent
Other Eyes

A Cradle Song will be available soon as an ebook and as a paperback online and from **Unabridged Bookstore** in Chicago and **Outwords Books** in Milwaukee.

Mark Zubro is the author of thirty-six books and seven short stories. He has won the Lambda Literary award for *A Simple Suburban Murder* and been nominated eight other times. All are available as ebooks and most as paperbacks online or at **Unabridged Bookstore** in Chicago and **Outwords Books** in Milwaukee.



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Lakeside Pride to honor Stonewall, LGBTQ history

BY JOHN STADELMAN

It may be a difficult, shaky time for equality right now, but Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles continues to play on, promoting positivity and love: The 2018-19 season will honor the rich, diverse legacy of LGBTQ history since the Stonewall Riots.

"This June of 2019 is the 50th anniversary. ... We wanted to celebrate and honor the work that has been put in by everybody ... toward equality and the momentum behind the modern gay rights movement," said Bradley Fritz, Board Chair of Lakeside Pride. "So we decided to take the approach of picking some of the more monumental times over the last 50 years."

These times will be presented in reverse chronological order: October's "Love and Marriage" celebrating marriage equality, November's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" honoring LGBTQ veterans, "Pay it No Mind" for Stonewall activist Marsha P. "Pay It No Mind" Johnson, "New York, New York" celebrating the titular city's role in promoting diversity and a homage to the Latinx influence in "Fiesta de Baile," culminating on June 2019 with

MUSIC

"Stonewall: Love and Liberation" on the 50th anniversary of the riots.

Storytelling is an important aspect to the shows this season. "Love and Marriage" featured ensemble members telling their love stories on-stage with their spouses (including Fritz with his husband, Dan). This intimate human touch will be a recurring feature.

"Each show will take its own unique artistic approach," said Fritz. "The Nov. 17 show is going to be emceed [by] and feature AVER [American Veterans for Equal Rights]. They are a national organization that have a Chicago chapter, and many of their members are members of the LGBTQ community."

"Two of the Chicago chapter members will be emceeding and sharing their stories of what it was like to serve in the armed forces as closeted ... individuals. They will be sharing their own stories as well and then we'll also have participation by a couple other AVER members in the presenting of the colors."



Lakeside Pride Marching Band at the 2018 Chicago Memorial Day Parade.
Photo by Stephen Carey

The Stonewall anniversary show will "feature spoken word narratives and music accompaniment with firsthand accounts of people who were at the Stonewall Riots."

The shows will be performed by various Lakeside Pride ensembles—the Jazz Orchestra, Symphonic Band, Latin Band and Chamber Ensembles—between the Center on Halsted, Rosehill Cemetery's May Chapel and the Holtschneider Performance Center at the DePaul School of Music.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be partnering with DePaul and moving our Symphonic Band rehearsals and concerts ... to the Holtschneider Center," Fritz said.

The move is indicative of Lakeside Pride's growing success.

"Our Symphonic Band has grown significantly in the last two to three years," Fritz added. "Just last year, we had 120 members with about 80 on stage at each performance and since we moved to

DePaul this fall, we're going to have close to 160 members with about 130 on stage. Across the entire organization, we have about 250 members."

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" marks another important milestone for both Lakeside Pride and DePaul, said Fritz. "The Nov. 17 show is our first performance in the new space."

Next May 5, "Fiesta de Baile" will be performed at the Center on Halsted.

With its focus on celebration, love and honoring the accomplishments of the LGBTQ community, Lakeside Pride offers a much-needed light in the dark.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" will be performed by the Symphonic Band on Saturday, Nov. 17, at DePaul's Holtschneider Performance Center. For tickets and further information on this show and the rest of the season, visit <https://lakesidepride.org/season/>.

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Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band
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"Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

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From 1993-2011, the U.S. government kept gay, lesbian and bisexual soldiers in the closet with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band celebrates the soldiers and veterans who have served during DADT by performing military-themed band repertoire, with select compositions by gay and lesbian composers. For those who have served this country and those who simply love a parade, "WE WANT YOU!"

Tickets and details available at
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BILLY Masters

"I'm not gonna say that if you vote then I'll have sex with you, but if you don't then I can promise you that I won't."—**Gus Kenworthy** does his part to get out the vote. If you didn't vote, have no fear—he'll never find out.

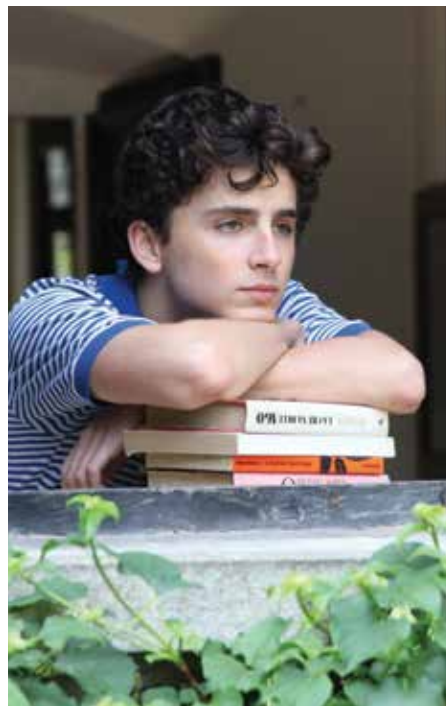
I love an election. Or do I love an erection? Either way, I'm up for it. Someone who hoped to get people all hot and bothered was **Larry Sinclair**. The name may not ring a bell, nor will the fact that he was running for mayor of Cocoa, Florida. But you may recall him as the guy whose self-published memoir vividly described a two-day sex romp with former President Barack Obama. Oh, he also said they were high on crack at the time. And Trump thought he cornered the market on "fake news!" What is real is Sinclair's police record. He's served jail time in Florida, Colorado and Arizona, and he's been convicted of forgery, fraud and larceny. Forget running for mayor: He should be appointed a Supreme Court justice! P.S. He lost by a landslide.

I do hate to sound crabby, but if I can't be crabby, who can? I'm really disappointed in most of these reboots. **Murphy Brown** might as well be filmed in slow motion at an old-age home, **Roseanne** was fine until Roseanne died, and **Charmed** has no magic. Perhaps it's these disappointments that explain my fondness for **Dynasty**—as long as I don't compare it to the original. Last week, **Nicollette Sheridan** had a great moment when her Alexis popped a potato chip in her mouth after saying, "If you haven't noticed, Cristals come and go around here." We're barely into season two, and we're already on our second Cristal.

But wait, there's more—Steven is out. The current actor, **James Mackay**, revealed, "While Steven had a choice to leave, unfortunately, I didn't." Executive producer Sallie Patrick was not pleased. She blames the firing on "notes from the network," mentioning that "the series just lost its sole queer couple. Let's hope Steven's leave of absence is temporary." My sources tell me that the network has an intriguing idea—recast the role. Why? Because that's what they did in the original series.

I told you that **Armie Hammer** and **Timothee Chalamet** would be reteaming for a sequel to Call Me By Your Name. Recently, Chalamet did an interview with **Harry Styles** for i-D (don't ask—I don't know). Harry asked, "Can you still eat peaches?" Oh, that little scamp. Chalamet said, "Umm I can, but not without thinking about it." He also said, "That's the most awkward scene to see with your parents in the whole world. My poor father." Inexplicably, Styles followed that up with the following quip—"I'm sure he's done it, too." Oy!

Most weeks, I'd only have one questionable masturbation story. But this week, I've got two. **John Stamos** told **Busy Philipps** about going to the sperm bank when he and his wife were doing IVF. He was led to a little room and my first thought was, "Did someone give him enough tokens?" Then I realized the little room he was in



Timothee Chalamet (above) had an intriguing time with Harry Styles, Billy says.

Image from Sony Pictures Classics

probably didn't require tokens ... nor did it have a hole in the wall. (Who are you to judge me?) John said he turned on the TV (you know, for stimulation) and what was on? Fuller House! He said, "If I'm gonna masturbate to myself, it's my old self and not the new self." He swore the story was true, and actually said, "hand to God." I just hope he washed it first!

There is not a member of the **Grande** family who interests me. But, I know my readers like little **Frankie**, so here goes. On Halloween, he announced that he is a part of a throuple. For those of you not sexually adventurous, that means he's in a relationship with two people. What I have learned in my time around the block is that most throuples consist of the actual couple and a third who either doesn't last long, or takes one member of the couple with him when he leaves. I suspect this throuple is no different since Frankie revealed his boyfriends are a legally married couple. I'll say this for Frankie—he's nabbed a hot couple. And they bring something to the table—one's a doctor and one's a lawyer. When asked what his favorite part of the relationship is, Grande said, "Dick." Times two. With Frankie, I'm sure nobody is waiting for a turn.

We interrupt this gossip with some breaking news. **Stormy Daniels** has just been sainted. Yes, our beloved Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence have named Stormy Daniels a saint. The Sisters surprised Stormy at her show at the Penthouse Club in North Beach, and we hear she couldn't have been more delighted. And I bet it was a treat for the audience—how many times do you get to motorboat a saint? No, Mother Teresa doesn't count.

Last week, a contestant on The Voice claimed his porn past contributed to his elimination. What most outlets skipped was that the porn he did was gay porn. **Tyshawn Colquitt** said, "I did

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it when I was going through a rough time. I got a presidential scholarship, but I didn't have any money to pay for any type of living expenses, so I couldn't go to college. I was trying to do so many different things and it was just not enough." So often, amateur gay porn isn't enough. In this case, it happened to be amateur gay porn group scenes. If you're interested in viewing more of Tyshawn's body of work, check out BillyMasters.com.

In lieu of a formal "Ask Billy" question, I'll address the elephant in the room—yes, we've seen **Chris Pine's** penis in Outlaw King (although, if you ask me, the flip side is even better). And speaking of elephants, you can see it on BillyMasters.com.

When we're comparing peckers to pachyderms, it's definitely time to end yet another column. As always you can get your fill of gossip (and other things) at BillyMasters.com—the site that's a real peach. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I whip up a yummy cobbler with my leftovers. Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Fulton Market Kitchen; options for Thanksgiving

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Fulton Market Kitchen (311 N. Sangamon St.; <https://www.fultonmarketkitchen.com/>) continues to be an assault on the senses—and I mean that in a very good way.

FMK, as it's often called, is part art gallery, part cocktail bar and part restaurant. The art is thought-provoking (like the bar support made entirely of trunks and suitcases), the cocktails are soothing and the food is provocative. In essence, there's something here for everyone, although it would be a special occasion for most (more on that later).

Things started swimmingly with the cocktail known as the Fall Smash, which, in this case, consisted of vodka, smashed ginger and blackberry, along with a lemon cordial. It was incredibly tasty, but it was also the kind of drink that could sneak up on you—leaving you dazed in some forsaken place the next day, wondering what happened.

But what really stand out are the culinary creations—and they really are creations. For example, the sourdough ciabatta appetizer (which



Apple-and-Asian pear pie at Fulton Market Kitchen.

Photo by Andrew Davis

the server incorrectly called an “amuse-bouche,” for a couple reasons) is accompanied by beef jus, tomato jam—and a beef tallow candle that melts into the mix, all to be spread on the bread. And the foie mousse features bread accompanied by an “orange” that turns out to be foie gras sculpted to look like the fruit. You almost don't want to cut into it, but it's wonderfully tasty.

The short rib raviolo is a cool dish consisting of a large pasta pocket filled with meat, herbed ricotta and molten egg yolk. From gustatory and visual standpoints, the striped bass bouillabaisse was the most varied, with fish along with mussels and (head-on) prawns in a spicy tomato broth. My dining companion thought this and the salmon tartare were too fishy, but I thoroughly

enjoyed both—although I was slightly put off seeing the crustaceans' heads. As for sides, we loved the crispy red potatoes, and I was more of a fan of the glazed carrots (with pistachios and honey-whipped goat cheese).

And if you have room, definitely order dessert. There's pumpkin cake (although I was dreaming about the butter cake I had previously) and the scrumptious apple-and-Asian pear pie.

However, all of this creativity comes at a price—literally. (I have to keep it real.) While the ciabatta app is only eight dollars, the main dishes start at about \$30 (and my friend wondered, more than once, if the quantity justified the costs). While the items were heavenly at times, the prices might warrant visiting FMK for your birthday, anniversary or some other special time. Otherwise, you may just want to order a cocktail and explore your art-filled surroundings.

Thanksgiving options

Believe it or not, Thanksgiving is a week from this Thursday. So if you need some options and you don't feel like cooking that turkey (or tofurkey), here are a few restaurant options:

—Thanksgiving dinner will be offered at **Ace Hotel Chicago's City Mouse**, 311 N. Morgan St. Patrons can enjoy meat, wine and four servings of mashed potatoes served family-style and curated by Executive Chef Pat Sheerin—and there will be vegan holiday favorites on offer. Dig into roasted turkey, whole grain risotto, poached shrimp and pumpkin pies. The cost is \$56/person. Visit <https://www.acehotel.com/chicago/events-and-spaces/calendar/2018-11-22/thanksgiving-dinner-city-mouse/>.

—Italian spot **312 Chicago**, will serve a tradition Thanksgiving four-course menu on Thursday, Nov. 22, 5-9 p.m. Items will include

acorn squash soup, homemade pesto lasagna, Italian-style roasted turkey, roasted salmon and pumpkin cheesecake, among other items. The costs are \$60/person and \$25 for children 12 and younger; see 312Chicago.com.

—On Nov. 22, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., **Chicago Chop House**, 60 W. Ontario St., will feature a Thanksgiving feast including a family-style menu serving a whole turkey and including a choice of mushroom, sage and wild rice stuffing or oyster dressing; stuffed artichokes, green beans with sliced almonds, Brussels sprouts roasted with honey and butter, and homemade cranberry sauce. (Also, guests take home all of the leftovers to enjoy the next day.) Individual Thanksgiving dinners feature a five-course menu including Waldorf salad, roasted turkey, chocolate lava cake and much more. Call 312-787-7100 to find out costs and to make reservations.

—**Frontier** Chef Brian Jupiter's Thanksgiving menu is available throughout November and on Thanksgiving day for pick-up and delivery. Holiday favorites include smoked turkey (\$75-95), Chef Brian Jupiter's famous five-cheese mac (\$40), seafood gumbo (\$50), traditional mashed potatoes (\$30), cornbread stuffing (\$35), kale-and-apple salad (\$35), string beans (\$30), buttered rolls (\$16/dozen) and sweet-potato pie (\$20). The feast serves a minimum of 12 people for \$24/person. For ordering details, visit <http://bit.ly/FrontierThanksgiving>.

—On Thanksgiving, **Texas de Brazil** will open at 11 a.m., and guests will enjoy the full rodizio-style menu that includes the 50-item salad area and selection of churrasco grilled meats. Along with this, a variety of traditional Thanksgiving fare will be offered, such as roasted turkey, stuffing and other holiday side dishes included with regular dinner pricing.



MIR 22 @ COH

It's a slippery slope at the Mister International Rubber weekend at Center on Halsted.

Joseph Stevens Photography. See many photos from the weekend online at www.WindyCityTimes.com

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RAY from page 21

don't want to classify that as being something bad or evil and I don't need to think that there's this great heavenly white pure light at the end of life, because the comfort of darkness is good, too."

WCT: In "Didn't Know a Damn Thing," you have this cool line: "If anything will save the world, it's rock 'n' roll." Could you talk about how you see rock 'n' roll saving the world?

AR: That song is a trajectory of what was going on ... with the civil-rights movement, the Atlanta child murders and the Wounded Knee American Indian movement and all the activity [that] was just the background of my life. I had no idea what was going on when I was in high school, thinking I was so liberal and progressive. I didn't really know—what I didn't know, y'know? [Laughs]

But the thing about rock and roll is that I also had this earnestness where I dove in with this idea that music can set us free and help make change. I was taught that by everything I listened to, and so that's why I put that in there.

It's like me saying that all this stuff is true, but the other thing that's true is that I still have that belief that rock and roll is this thing that was always a savior to me. As a kid it set me free and helped me not feel like an outsider—like David Bowie was such a great formative person for me because he was so queer, which is just so beautiful. And all the women that mentored me ... were musicians, in Atlanta, the punk-rock people, and so that's where that comes from.

See Amy Ray in Chicago at the Old Town School of Folk Music on Thursday, Nov. 15. Tickets at <https://www.bandsintown.com/e/1010213980>.

TRANSSCRIPTS from page 18

lation is transgender. While this may seem a minuscule group to be worried about, it still represents over 1.4 million people in America alone, 1.4 million people who are the only minority in America that lacks equal-rights protection from the federal government. Only 20 states and the District of Columbia currently have laws protecting trans rights, while in many of the rest, the law specifically allows discrimination.

Members of the TransScripts cast believe that their show can help make a statement about why transgender people should be protected.

"This is a time when identity is fiercely contested, and there is much fear surrounding it," said Allie Stephens, who plays Dr. Violet. "We are a much richer cultural body when we find the courage to embrace difference, whether trans, cis, black, brown, white, rich, poor, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, etc."

Peyton Robbins, who plays Tatania, has a different take. "I think it is largely part of the 'trans experience,' to struggle with the unknown of what lies ahead for us, personally, emotionally, and politically, and still find the strength and pride in oneself to live as truly to our personal truth as we can," she said.

"Reading into the trials and tribulations of trans women fighting for validation, fulfillment, and survival in different cultures and decades apart from my own experience has constantly enlightened me to the struggles that came before me, and how much progress was paved by the sacrifices and the blood, sweat, and tears of countless trans individuals," Robbins said.

"Looking back, I realize how much privilege I had and still have," Nadiya said. "I want the audience to walk a mile in these women's shoes to understand how difficult, but rewarding, [it is] to live their authentic selves."

Alexia Jasmine, who plays Sandra, feels that the show highlights the incredible variety in the trans community. She wants audiences to understand that "there's not one way to be trans, that we are a newly forming community that disagrees vastly on almost everything, that there are as many ways to be trans as there are ways to be human, that we are human, we are women, men, and folks, and we are beautiful. And that trans is beautiful.

"Due to trans voices finally being heard, people can see just how insanely diverse we are, as well as our struggles, and yet how that very difference is what makes us the same. We just want to be seen and loved just like all of humanity," Jasmine said.

Being "seen" is a necessary ingredient to being loved, and assistant director Iris Sowlat (the lone cisgender member of the team presenting TransScripts) believes it is an important element of the play. "With seven trans characters, based on real people, played by trans actors, [the play] kind of

says, 'Yes, we're still here,'" she said.

Blasingame added, "In Trump's America, everything that makes us more visible and humanizes us is important. It is my sincere belief that all of this world's problems stem from people failing to see other people as human."

Robbins summarized the importance of telling this tale now: "As the current political atmosphere in the United States has grown more dangerously divisive as ever, the fight for transgender rights and the visibility of transgender people has never felt more important. Our tales must be told. We will not be erased."

TransScripts will be performed at 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Admission is free. To RSVP or get more info, email insider@aboutfacetheatre.com or go to therealdelia.com; <http://aboutfacetheatre.com/productions/transcripts/> or <https://www.facebook.com/events/322502258535297/>.

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WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Nov. 14

Youth Empowerment Performance Project hosts Rise Up In recognition of the Transgender Day of Remembrance/Resilience and Youth Homelessness Awareness Month, through performance and communion, those whose lives have been taken and the resilience of Trans youth will be honored. See "Rise Up- A Celebration of Resilience" on Facebook. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Chicago Theater Works, 1113 W. Belmont Ave

Celebrating LGBTQ Latinx Leaders 2018 The Association of Latina/os Motivating Action (ALMA Chicago) honoring this year's Crain Business' Chicago Notable LGBTQ Executives and Windy City Times 30 under 30 honorees. RSVP online. 6:00pm - 9:00pm La Catedral Cafe & Restaurant, 2500 S. Christiana Ave., Chicago <https://tinyurl.com/LGBTQLatinx>

Out at Wrigley Thank You Party Hosted by OUT at Wrigley and Center on Halsted. Entertainment and light bites 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago http://www.facebook.com/events/707343809652377/?active_tab=about



IN REMEMBRANCE
Tuesday, Nov. 20

Center on Halsted will observe the Trans Day of Remembrance.
WCT photo from 2016 of ResonaTe member Chiqui

Thursday, Nov. 15

The WOMB Open Mic Nite Open-mic poetry event. Affinity Community Services is a social justice organization serving the needs of the Black LGBTQ community of Chicago with a particular focus on Black women. 7:00pm Affinity Community Services 2850 S. Wabash Ave. #108 Chicago <http://affinity95.org>

Sleep Out to Support Homeless Youth Community, celebrities, business leaders, young professionals raise funds and awareness for Chicago's homeless, trafficked, and at-risk youth by sleeping outside. Each Sleeper sets a personal funding goal. Preceded by a candlelight vigil at 6 p.m. 7:00pm St. James Commons, 65 E. Huron 773-752-0058 <http://www.CovenantHouseIL.org>

Indigo Girl Amy Ray Amy and her band with rootsy new solo album, Holler. Original music inspired by traditional country, Southern rock, mountain music, gospel and bluegrass. Amythyst Kiah will open. \$26 member; \$28 general public 9:00pm Old Town School of Folk Music 4544 N Lincoln Ave Chicago 773-728-6000 Tickets: <http://www.oldtown-school.org>

Friday, Nov. 16

Queer & Undocumented: Clinical Considerations Education for BH providers. Free 10:30am - 2:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/BHEvent?erid=8957853&trid=5c1cba5c-3646-4aa5-9dad-4f97dfdb4f60>

BTQ Book Group Meet at the library each third Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Vanessa Davis Band 40th Anniversary Show High-energy vocalist Vanessa Davis and group formerly known as The Blues Twisters. Celebrate four decades

of the blues. Doors open 7 p.m. \$20; 8:00pm, Fitzgerald's 6615 Roosevelt Rd. Berwyn, IL 60402, <http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com>

Saturday, Nov. 17

Jack Daniel's Chili Cook-off 2018 Attendees will be able to sample chili from Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce restaurants and vote for their favorite. Drink samples from Jack Daniel's. Giveaways. \$10 per person. Proceeds benefit Heartland Alliance and Lakeview East Chamber. 1-5 pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., <https://www.facebook.com/events/1337613429708815>

Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band Fall Concert "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" From 1993-2011, the U.S. government kept gay, lesbian and bisexual soldiers in the closet with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band performs military-themed band repertoire, with compositions by gay and lesbian composers. 7:30pm - 9:30pm DePaul School of Music's Holtschneider Performance Center, 2330 N Halsted St., Chicago <http://lakesidepride.org/event/symphonic-band-performance/> Tickets: <http://lakesidepride.org/dadt>

Tuesday, Nov. 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance Center on Halsted's annual event to honor the memory of trans persons who have been murdered in the U.S. during this year. Candle-lighting ceremony, a reading of

the names of the victims, and a keynote speech from Channy Lynn Parker of Broadway Youth Center. Free 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Transgender Day of Remembrance Service Rev. Pam Rumancik (she, her, hers) will be providing a service both in memorial of those lost and celebration of love found and a hopeful future. 7:00pm Unitarian Church of Hinsdale 11 West Maple Hinsdale, IL 60521 <http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org>

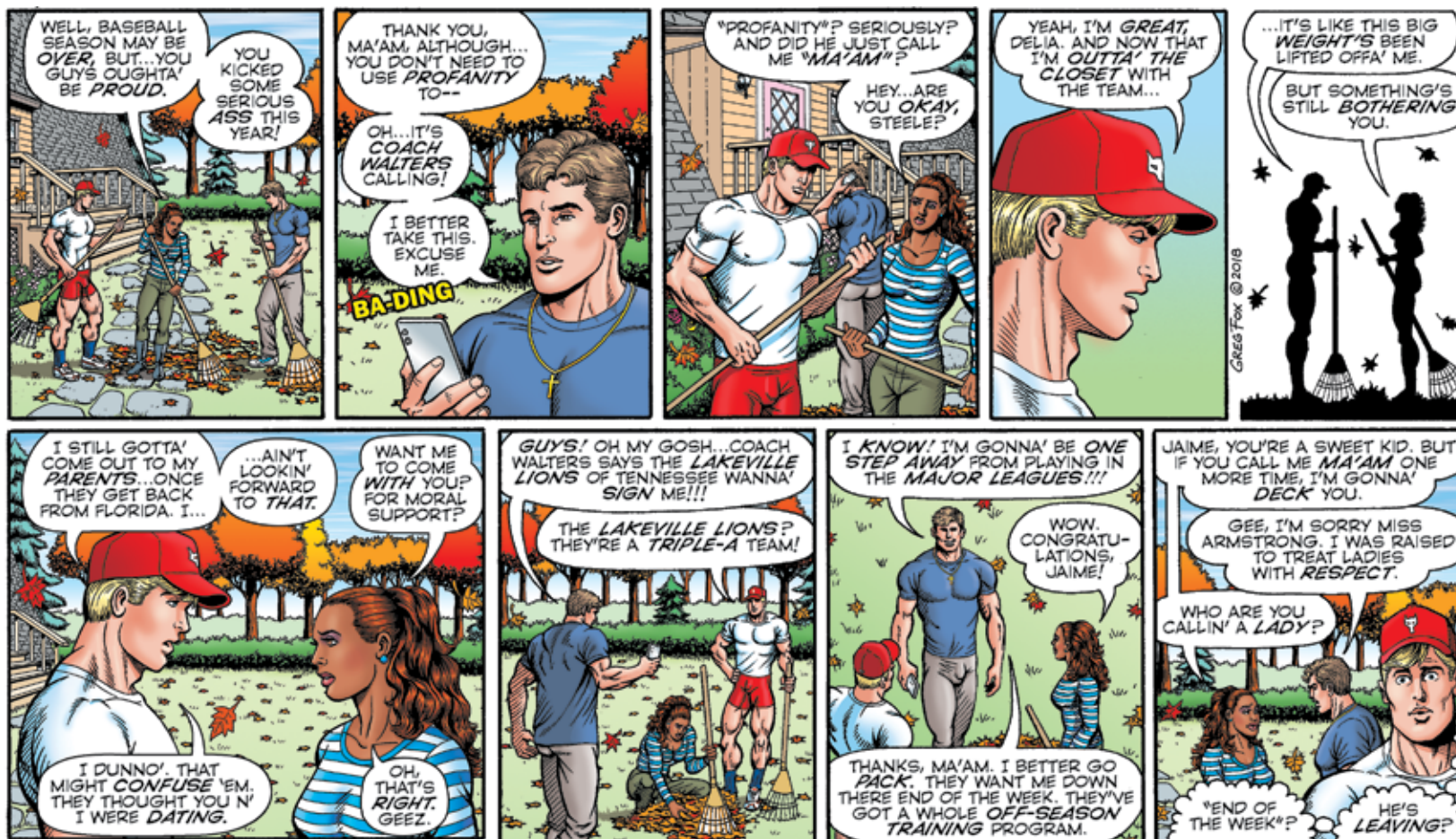
Wed., Nov. 21

Thanksgiving is a Drag... All Building Event Drag show and disco, quality time with your queer family. Get ready to dance and laugh it all away with: Bambi Banks, Dusty Bahls, Lucy Stooles, Nasty Bois, Tenderoni, Travis Fiero, Valentine Addams, Willy LaQueue and hosts Nico, Dominic Ferrera & Kristen Kaza. Doors 9 p.m. 10:00pm Metro Chicago 3730 N Clark Chicago

Friday, Nov. 23

Trans/Gender Affirming Name Change Mobilization Hosted by Transformative Justice Law Project. olunteers will assist Cook County residents with filling out the documents required for a name change. Last Friday of every month in room 1202. 9:00am - 3:00am Daley Center Plaza 50 W Washington St Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/transformativejusticelawproject/>

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