

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Sky Cubacub.
Photo by Kiam Marcelo Junio

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Photo by Jerry Nunn

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www.artsandtheaterweekly.com

SKY HIGH

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FAMILY TIES

Local couple talk softball, nephew

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Betty Kollar and Julie Iverson.
Photo courtesy of couple

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EDGE OF GLORY

The updated 2019 Edge is helping Ford
move away from cars.
Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

BELL OF THE BALL



The 10 Questions with Vic column
continues with Emma Bell.
Photo by Stephen Churchill-Downes

THE ROCK MARKET

WCT reviews shows by William Elliott
Whitmore, The Runnies and Bleach
Party.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Nick Jonas,
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plus
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COMPASS

The year in LGBT national news

COMPILED BY ANDREW DAVIS

This year is bound to be big, with events like the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots happening. However, 2018 had its major and unique events as well:

—Skate expectations: Figure skater Adam Rippon became the first openly gay U.S. athlete to qualify for the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea—and the first to win a medal, as he won a bronze in the team competition. Gus Kenworthy was another gay athlete who qualified, and he finished 12th in slopestyle.

—Arrested development: Two men were arrested on murder charges in the deaths of two women who were in a relationship and two children in their upstate Troy, New York, apartment. However, Justin Mann and James White remain in jail awaiting trial.

—Trans deaths: At least 26 transgender people were fatally shot or killed by other violent means in 2018 across the country—and the vast majority were people of color. Among the victims were Vicky Gutierrez, Celine Walker, Diamond Stephens and Chicago's Ciara Minaj Carter Frazier, Sasha Wall, Dejanay Stanton, Sasha Garden and Tydi Dansbury.

—Shifty: President Donald Trump fired all of the members the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS without explanation. Chicago-based Lambda Legal attorney Scott Schoettes, who had previously resigned from the council along with several other members, had tweeted that the remaining members of the council had been let go.

—Rocking the vote: Hundreds of LGBTQ candidates ran for office across the nation during the Nov. 6 midterm elections—and many made history, including the first openly gay governor in Colorado (Jared Polis), the first openly bisexual member of the U.S. Senate (Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema) and the first lesbian Native American congresswoman in Kansas (Sharice Davids).

—Remembering Matthew: Twenty years after gay Wyoming student Matthew Shepard's murder marked a watershed moment regarding LGBT rights, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History received a donation of papers and personal objects from Judy and Dennis Shepard, the parents of Matthew. Shepard died due to severe injuries he sustained during a vicious attack in October 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming.

—Movie kind of love: Nominations for the 90th Academy Awards were announced early on Jan. 23—and LGBT-themed film *Call Me By Your Name* was among those entries earning Academy Award nominations. Also, a history-making development occurred when out screenwriter/director Dee Rees became the first African-American woman ever to be nominated for Writing (Adapted Screenplay), for the movie *Mudbound*.

—Spacey case: Following an accusation by actor Anthony Rapp, dozens of men came forward to level sexual-harassment claims against actor

Kevin Spacey, who was removed from his hit Netflix series *House of Cards* and the movie *All the Money in the World*. In December, he broke his silence with a bizarre video in which he channeled his "Cards" character, Frank Underwood—one day after a sexual-assault indictment was filed against him.

—Settle down: A Wisconsin school district paid \$800,000 to settle a discrimination lawsuit that transgender former student Ash Whitaker brought. Whitaker filed the suit in July 2016, alleging that Tremper High School banned him from using the boys' bathroom and monitored his use of bathrooms.

—Pioneer dies: Dr. Mathilde Krim, a pioneer in the battle against HIV/AIDS, passed away Jan. 15 at age 91. In 1983, Krim founded the AIDS Medical Foundation (AMF), the first private organization dedicated to AIDS research.

—Comic passes away: Bob Smith—the first openly gay comedian to appear on the *Tonight Show*—died after a long struggle with ALS. He was 57.

—Filing: Immigration Equality and Sullivan & Cromwell LLP filed two lawsuits against the U.S. State Department for refusing to recognize the valid marriages of same-sex binational couples and disenfranchising their children by denying their rightful citizenship at birth.

—Grim statistics: The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) 2017 Report on LGBTQ Hate Violence Homicides reported the highest number of homicides in the 20 years NCAVP has been recording this data. According to the report, released Jan. 22, 52 LGBTQ people in the U.S. were murdered in hate-related homicides last year—a shocking 86-percent increase from 2016.

—Biden its time: The Biden Foundation announced the formation of two advisory councils that will support its work to end violence against women and advance LGBTQ equality. Advisory council members are respected leaders, experts and advocates said to be at the forefront of their fields.

—An issue with therapy: An estimated 20,000 LGBT youth ages 13 to 17 will undergo conversion therapy from a licensed healthcare professional before the age of 18, according to a new study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. (The institute later indicated in a separate study that 1,000 LGBT youth ages 13 to 17 will be protected from conversion therapy by a licensed professional in the five U.S. states that banned the practice in 2018: Washington, Hawaii, Maryland, Delaware and New Hampshire.) Conversion therapy reached a boiling point in 2018, thanks in part to Hollywood, which rolled out two films (*The Miseducation of Cameron Post*; *Boy Erased*) dealing with the subject.

—Launch: The Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP)—a first-of-its-kind program housed at Transgender Law Center (TLC) and made possible by a 2017 Open Society Foundations Soros



Rachel Tiven resigned from Lambda Legal.

Photo by Matt Simonette

Justice Fellowship—launched with an accompanying 20-minute documentary and opportunities for community members to get involved.

—Anti-trans decision: The U.S. Department of Education confirmed Feb. 12 that it will no longer investigate civil-rights complaints from transgender students who are barred from school bathrooms that match their gender identity. Transgender students said this development will subject them to bullying.

—Family ties: The Human Rights Campaign Foundation released a report detailing the results of its nationwide survey of LGBTQ people that reveals an urgent need for inclusive employer-paid family and medical leave. It came on the 25th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act, a federal law guaranteeing certain employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year.

—Graham crumbles: The Rev. Billy Graham—an author, presidential advisor (who met every president from Harry Truman to Barack Obama) and famed evangelist who became known as "America's Pastor"—died at his North Carolina home on Feb. 21 at age 99. Graham was known for his televised "crusades," which filled stadiums—but he was also known for being anti-LGBT (although not as overtly homophobic as son Franklin).

—Art-felt: The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery announced that former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama had picked the Black artists Kehinde Wiley and Amy Serrano, respectively, to paint their official portraits—with Wiley being openly queer.

—Oh, baby: A 30-year-old transgender woman has become the first officially recorded to breast-feed her baby. An experimental three-and-a-half-month treatment regimen that included hormones, a nausea drug and breast stimulation enabled the woman to produce milk.

—Behind bars: In Texas, Chancler Encalade, 20, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for assaulting a man because of the victim's sexual orientation. Encalade admitted he, Nigel Garrett and another co-defendant used Grindr to arrange to meet the victim at the victim's home, where he was assaulted.

—Ad news: The Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal, OutServe-SLDN, American Military Partner Association and Gender Justice League published a full-page USA Today ad featuring leading military, national security and bipartisan officials who felt the Trump administration's ban on transgender troops is wrong and hurts military readiness.

—We are family: The longest-running study on any LGBTQ-parent families, the National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS), released results showing that young adults with lesbian parents are as mentally healthy as their peers.

—Mississippi turning: Leaders in Starkville, Mississippi, voted to permit a gay-pride parade, reversing a previous denial and moving to defuse a lawsuit alleging discrimination and free-speech violations. Also, the Clarksdale Board of Commissioners passed city-wide non-discrimination protections that include sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, public accommodations and employment—making it only the third city in the state to do so.

—Nixon defeated: Emmy-winning *Sex and the City* actress Cynthia Nixon threw her hat in the ring for governor against Andrew Cuomo in September's Democratic primary—but came up short in the election.

—Activist passes: Donna Red Wing passed away April 16 after a battle with lung cancer. Red Wing served as executive director of One Iowa during 2012-16, expanding the organization's work into new arenas after the battle for marriage equality ended.

—Farrow path: Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ronan Farrow officially came out as gay at a Point Foundation event.

—Black is beautiful: Out Magazine named African-American transgender woman Raquel Willis as its newest executive editor, while The Advocate named African-American LGBT journalist Zach Stafford as its most recent editor-in-chief.

—Fatal protest: Well-known Lambda Legal attorney David Buckel, 60, was found dead in a public park in Brooklyn, New York, having apparently taken his own life in protest over the use of fossil fuels.

—Bushes pass: Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and wife Barbara Bush died several months apart in 2018—after being married for 73 years. The couple were not known as the strongest LGBT allies, but did attend the wedding of longtime lesbian friends Bonnie Clement and Helen Thorgalsen in 2013.

—Sad Joy: The *Daily Beast* suspended future columns from Joy Reid due to the fallout over anti-gay comments she made on an old blog a decade ago. Reid apologized, adding she thought her account had been hacked—although cybersecurity experts couldn't prove her claim.

—Cosby convicted: In Pennsylvania, a jury found Bill Cosby, 80, guilty of three counts of drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, an out lesbian, in 1994. He was sentenced to three to 10 years behind bars.

—Monae, Monae: "Being a queer Black woman in America, someone who has been in relationships with both men and women—I consider myself to be a free-ass motherfucker," singer/actress Janelle Monae told *Rolling Stone's* Brittany Spanos for the magazine's May cover story.



Zach Stafford (right, with Jack Halberstam) now heads The Advocate.

Photo courtesy of MCA Chicago

—Controversy: Queer Pittsburgh residents were shocked after a local gay nightspot Brewer Bar scheduled (and then canceled) a drag night seemingly inviting people to celebrate the birthday of Adolf Hitler.

—Bad behavior: Although a report stated the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) the agency had removed LGBT questions from a federal health survey (the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, or BRFSS), it insisted no decision has been made to omit the module.

—Troop, there it is: There was a back-and-forth between the Trump administration and transgender military members, with (most recently) civil-rights organizations filing a suit saying the latest court rulings that blocked the Trump administration's restrictions on military service by transgender individuals should be allowed to stand.

—Barr none: The Roseanne reboot, television's most-watched show, was canceled in the wake of star Roseanne Barr's racist tweet regarding former Obama aide Valerie Jarrett. The ABC show The Conners (sans Barr) rose from her ashes.

—Not-so-sweet ruling: The Supreme Court ruled in June that the Colorado commission showed anti-religious bias when it sanctioned Colorado baker Jack Phillips for refusing to make the cake, voting seven to two that it violated Phillips' First Amendment rights. However, he's now back in court over a second LGBT-related allegation.

—Somber anniversary: Pride Fund to End Gun Violence—the country's only national LGBTQ political organization focused solely on gun violence prevention—recognized Pride Month by holding a series of events to raise a hand in the air for Pride and kneeling to remember victims of the Pulse Nightclub massacre.

—Springs' time: The Palm Springs City Council was recognized June 11 by the California Legislature LGBTQ Caucus in Sacramento for being the

nation's first elected all-LGBTQ council.

—Playing ball: This year's NYC Pride Parade made history with the participation of the NFL and MLB in the LGBTQ march. The two leagues are registered for the parade alongside the NHL, NBA and WNBA.

—Windsor knot: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a proclamation recognizing June 20 as Edie Windsor Day, in honor of her birthday. She was the lead plaintiff for the U.S. Supreme Court case *United States v. Windsor*, which struck down the Defense of Marriage Act and laid the foundation for the 2015 case *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which led to marriage equality throughout the country.

—Aspirational: Politico reported that at least three Democratic mayors are mulling presidential campaigns—including openly gay South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg. Buttigieg later announced he's not running for re-election in South Bend, fueling further speculation.

—Faces in the crowd: The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), along with the Cook County Sheriff's Office, released new facial reconstructions for two of John Wayne Gacy's six unknown victims. Gacy raped and murdered young boys and men between 1972 and 1978 in Cook County, Illinois. He was arrested in 1978 and was convicted of killing at least 33 young boys.

—Rachel resigns: Rachel B. Tiven resigned as CEO of Lambda Legal, saying she was leaving to work on the 2018 midterm elections.

—Letter or worse: More than 200 national, state, and local civil rights, religious and child-welfare organizations (such as AIDS United, the NAACP and Lambda Legal) joined the American Civil Liberties Union in a letter to members of Congress opposing legislation that would authorize discrimination in the child-welfare system.

—Freedom: The ACLU of Massachusetts has an-

nounced that 14 transgender asylum seekers who were detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Cibola County Correctional Center in New Mexico were released.

—The old college try: Seth Owen—the openly gay valedictorian of his senior class at First Coast High School in Jacksonville, Florida—will be able to attend his choice of Georgetown University, thanks to a GoFundMe page and the university's choice to reduce his costs to zero. Owen, who was also on his school's swim team, had split with his Southern Baptist parents because of the family church's anti-gay views.

—Holding court: After a hearing that was contentious, to say the least, Trump appointee Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed as the newest member of the U.S. Supreme Court. Several pro-LGBTQ groups criticized the confirmation.

—Survey says: In the wake of the Trump administration's decision not to allow Americans to identify as LGBT on the U.S. Census, two Democratic senators—Kamala Harris (D-California) and Tom Carper (D-Delaware)—introduced legislation that would require those questions in major federal surveys.

—It's a first: Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf established the nation's first statewide LGBTQ commission. Commissioners will serve two-year terms.

—McCain passes: U.S. Sen. John McCain—who was a naval bomber pilot, prisoner of war in Vietnam and presidential candidate—died Aug. 25 at age 81. McCain did not always back LGBTQ rights (calling the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" a "sad day"); however, he became more of an ally as his career progressed, doing things such as

backing the confirmation of Eric Fanning, the gay man President Obama nominated to be secretary of the Army.

—Soul sister: Iconic singer Aretha Franklin—the long-reigning "Queen of Soul" who had countless hits ranging from "Respect" to "Freeway of Love" to "I Knew You Were Waiting" (the latter with the late George Michael)—died Aug. 16 at age 76.

—Bullying: A school district in southern Oklahoma was forced to shut down for two days after parents used a Facebook group to threaten violence against a transgender seventh-grade student.

—Senior moment: California Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 2719, authored by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) and co-sponsored by Equality California (EQCA) and SAGE. This new law adds sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression to the definition of elderly communities to be given priority consideration for programs and services administered through the California Department of Aging.

—Guide me: Lambda Legal, interACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth and Proskauer Rose LLP released the nation's first intersex-affirming hospital policy guide, offering concrete steps for medical providers to provide sensitive, non-discriminatory care to intersex patients, a press release stated. "Intersex" describes up to 1.7 percent of the population born with natural variations in chromosomes, hormones, or genitalia that transcend an outdated understanding of biological sex as a male/female binary.

See the entire list of national LGBT events at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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AFC holds Getting to Zero draft-plan webinar with stakeholders

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) held a Getting to Zero (GTZ) Illinois project draft plan webinar Dec. 19 with community stakeholders. The project is coordinated by AFC and the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health and has partnerships with a host of organizations, providers and agencies across the state.

GTZ Illinois Program Manager Sara Semelka and GTZ Illinois Project Specialist Meg McElroy led the discussion.

Semelka explained that the plan was created around two pillars: increasing PrEP uptake and

that increasing that number means more people will live longer, healthier lives. She also explained that people who have undetectable viral loads for at least six months cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.

Semelka explained what they did in 2018 to build the plan and McElroy said that in addition to the draft plan, they are currently in the public comment (survey) period which ends Friday, Jan. 18.

McElroy said that after they get the survey results they will share it with the steering committee members and then decide how to incorporate that feedback into the final GTZ Illinois Plan



Getting to Zero promotional image.
Image courtesy of campaign

viral suppression by 20 percent points each. She said that if these two goals are accomplished there could be less than 100 new HIV cases by 2030, a functional zero where the epidemic cannot sustain itself.

In terms of getting people to take PrEP, Semelka said that currently only 10-20 percent of people who need to take it are doing so and populations most vulnerable to HIV—Black gay men, trans women of color and Black women—are not aware of the drug or are not taking it. Semelka said the goal is to root out why this is occurring so more people take PrEP who need it.

As for increasing the numbers of people living with undetectable HIV viral loads, Semelka explained that only 50 percent of people with HIV are currently virally suppressed. Semelka said

which will be released in early 2019.

The five principals that drove this draft plan, McElroy explained, were eliminating stigma, undoing racist systems, providing trauma-informed care, having cultural humility and being outcomes-driven which means having functional zero new HIV cases and zero people living with HIV who are not on treatment.

Both Semelka and McElroy outlined GTZ Illinois' six domains that flowed from the five principals of the plan using the WHEELS acronym—workforce, health care, equity, efficiency increases through governmental coordination, linked or co-occurring conditions including access to behavioral health care and surveillance and data measuring of the plan's progress.

Semelka said building the HIV healthcare work-

force is key and that includes learning new approaches for people living with or vulnerable to HIV. She explained that this also includes finding employment opportunities for people living with HIV who are able to work.

McElroy explained that increasing access to healthcare services for people living with HIV is key and that includes outreach, education and marketing as well as HIV screening and medication use.

In the equity category, Semelka outlined the nine special-focus populations they are target-

ing—gay and bisexual men with a focus on Black and Latinx men, Black cisgender women, transgender people, people who use drugs, people who involved with the criminal justice system, adolescents and youth, immigrants and migrants, sex workers and people living with HIV who are aging, long-term survivors and older adults.

To read more about the draft plan and/or participate in the survey, visit <https://gtzillinois.hiv/plan-draft-2/> and <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9TZFXGT>.

Local passages in 2018

COMPILED BY MATT SIMONETTE

—Chicago lesbian pioneer and civil-rights activist Jackie Anderson died after a short illness on Jan. 7.

—Chicagoan Therese Curran passed away Jan. 8 unexpectedly from a tragic fall.

—Phlebotomist and amateur photographer Adrien Iris Pakovsky passed away in January.

—Elpidia Casillas Gomez Valle—mother of Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle—died peacefully in her sleep on Jan. 16. She was 78.

—Native Chicagoan Darlene Lorraine Cross passed away Jan. 17.

—Elizabeth E. Owen passed away peacefully Jan. 27 at home in Chicago. She was 43.

—Frasier actor and longtime Oak Park resident John Mahoney died Feb. 4.

—Dr. Kathryn Noel Farrow, 46—physician, scientist, wife, mother, and mentor—died peacefully on Feb. 7 following a three-year battle with cancer.

—Joseph Thomas Stack, 54, visual artist and award-winning architect of Chicago's Lake View neighborhood, passed away peacefully Feb. 11.

—George Malcolm Mariner, attorney, longtime of Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood, passed away gently at home Feb. 25.

—Miriam U. Hoover passed away at her home in Palm Springs March 6. Miriam, the aunt of Chicago LGBT activist and philanthropist Michael Leppen, followed her nephew's guidance on her support of HIV/AIDS and LGBT causes for decades.

—South Side Help Center founder Betty L. Smith, 76, died March 6 at home from Alzheimer's disease complications and a long illness.

—Varoujan "Var" Ketenjian, 56, of Barrington, passed away unexpectedly on March 9. He was 56.

—Original TriKone Chicago board member Deepa Patel, 31, died March 9 at Loyola Medical Center.

—Chicagoan Daniel Joseph Howard, 53, passed away April 1.

—Community activist Bruce Barnes Jr. died April 4 at home due to complications from HIV and cancer. He was 62.

—Northwestern University reproductive biologist Neena Schwartz—who discovered the hormone inhibin and its role in the regulation of reproductive cycles—died April 15. She was 91.



Jackie Anderson.
Photo by Hal Baim

—Sharon Avalon O'Flynn, a longtime Lake View resident and retired airline sales rep, passed away peacefully April 17.

—Attorney and River Forest resident Howard Wax passed away May 12.

—Chicago-based singer/songwriter, therapist and activist Paula A. Walowitz died May 23 after a short battle with cancer.

—Playwright Ron Weaver, who wrote Hell in a Handbag's 2017 Bewildered production, died June 4.

—Longtime LGBTQ activist Arthur Gursch died June 22. He was 72.

—Chicagoan Nancy Wynne Crane passed away June 24.

—James M. Schulze, a lifelong Chicago Heights resident, passed away in July.

—Val's halla Records store owner Val Camilletti, 78, died July 24 at the British Home in Brookfield, Illinois of complications from breast cancer. She was a resident of Cicero at the time of her death.

—Edward George Raap, 78, of Chicago and Puerto Vallarta passed away unexpectedly but peacefully after a brief illness in August.

—Transgender Chicagoan Dejanay Stanton died by homicide on Aug. 30.

—Marcia J. Lipetz, who was prominent with in several significant organizations in Chicago's LGBT community, passed away in September.

—Ciara Minaj Carter Frazier, who was transgender, died by homicide on Oct. 3.

—Writer Robert Klein Engler, of Chicago and Omaha, passed away Oct. 3 in Omaha. He was 75.

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

—Todd Anthony Lillethun—a filmmaker and social worker who was a resident of Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood—passed away peacefully at home on Nov. 14. He was 46.

—Kathleen Ada Shaw died Dec. 20 of endometrial cancer. She was 62.



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Lesbian couple talk relationship, softball, bone-marrow search

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

During the summer of 1989, Betty Kollar and Julie Iverson met through a mutual friend and began hanging out at the now-defunct lesbian club, Paris Dance, after their 16-inch softball games. Soon after, on May 5, 1990, they went on their first date and have been together ever since. They had a civil union Oct. 6, 2012 and, two years later, Cook County classified it as a marriage, retroactively.

Both Kollar and Iverson were born in Chicago and lived on opposite sides of the city—Kollar in Hermosa Park and Iverson in South Shore. Kollar graduated from Lane Tech High School and received her BA in liberal arts from Chicago State University. Iverson went to Aquinas High School and got her BA and MA in physical education from Chicago State University and MA in educational leadership from Governors State University.

After working numerous jobs, including at a health club, Kollar spent 30 years as a FedEx Express courier and recently retired. Iverson spent 38 years in education, with the last 15 years as an administrator until she retired in 2014.

Not only does the couple love softball, but they also have favorite baseball teams: Kollar's is the Cubs and Iverson's is the White Sox.

Due to their excellence on the softball field over 20-plus years, they were both inducted into Chicago's 16-inch Softball Hall of Fame—Iverson in 2019 and Kollar in 2012.

For most of their softball careers, they played on different teams and were very competitive even when they played against each other.

"The Beverly and Mt. Greenwood neighborhoods were big on 16-inch softball," said Kollar. "When the local [now former] Alderwoman Ginger Rugai was diagnosed with Breast cancer, a 16-inch 'Y-Me' women's softball tournament was born. We played at St. Christina's Fields. Since then it has grown into the largest tournament in Chicago and has raised thousands of dollars."

"It was a powerful day," said Iverson. "Survivors playing, teams whose name was a family member who had lost the battle. It was an all day and all night dancing party of women supporting women."

"We loved softball so much that we even played outside in the winter," said Kollar. "Lincoln Park was the site of an annual snowball tournament. Looking back, how crazy was that?"

"Playing 16-inch softball brings you a unique Chicago connection that you will not find anywhere else in the city," said Iverson.

"It has brought us lasting relationships with teammates, coaches and sponsors," said Kollar. "The 16-inch Softball Hall of Fame exemplifies this fact. The founders have included everyone and continue to promote the game in the city. Go check out the museum located at the corner of Harrison Street and Desplaines Avenue in For-

est Park to see memorabilia from our games and tournaments."

Now the couple calls Fort Myers, Florida, home, having moved there five years ago. For Iverson, the move was necessary for health reasons.

"FedEx offers job transfers and when a position was posted there I joined Julie five months after we sold our Beverly home," said Kollar.

"We like South Florida because of the warm winter weather," said Iverson. "We love the wild-life and beautiful flowers. The gay community may be small in comparison to Chicago but they have pride fest and some businesses we try to frequent. Also, there is always Key West."

"We miss some of our favorite Chicago foods,—pizza, Italian beefs and gyros," Kollar added. "When we come visit here, those are the foods we gravitate to."

Over the years the couple has celebrated Pride month, supported human-rights causes and the ACLU. Recently, they attended the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C., and worked on Dem. House candidate David Holden's campaign (who lost to incumbent Rep. Francis Rooney) in what



Nephew Kyle Kollar.

Photo courtesy of Betty Kollar and Julie Iverson



Julie Iverson and Betty Kollar.

Photo courtesy of the couple

they call "a very red district."

They also love spending time with their nieces and nephews—of which there are more than 60 of them. Of the many things they did with their nieces and nephews, the couple cited trips to baseball and football games, skating rinks, state parks, Disney World, the District of Columbia and Cancun, Mexico, along with celebrating weddings and graduations as the most memorable over the years.

However, one of their relatives is involved in a critical battle. Their youngest nephew—18-year-old Kyle Kollar, whom they took to music lessons and on camping trips—recently graduated from

Taft High School and is currently battling leukemia, which was discovered when he was admitted to Lutheran General Hospital with headaches and a low blood count. The family is looking for a bone-marrow donor match, but have been unsuccessful thus far.

They are working with Vitaliant's Be The Match program and have asked anyone willing to take the test to fill out the registration form at https://join.bethematch.org/s/landing?language=en_US&ref=match4kyle&refUrl=ENDREFURL.

For those who are eligible to donate bone marrow, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/a-match-for-kyle-kollar>.

Report: Lack of support for student survivors of domestic violence

A report published by Chicago's Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law shows that while coverage of the incidence of sexual abuse in Chicago Public Schools has spurred critical dialogue around how school officials respond to students who've experienced gender-based violence, there are widespread blind spots to domestic and sexual violence in schools all over Illinois.

The report underscores the what it calls current inadequacies in Illinois schools that can hold student survivors back. Among the report's findings:

—Most schools lack a written policy or customary protocol for school personnel to deal with revelations of domestic and sexual violence.

—Despite a 2007 Illinois law requiring training for teachers, guidance counselors, and other school personnel likely to deal with students who've survived domestic and sexual violence,

training is not taking place.

—School personnel often respond inappropriately to vulnerable students who disclose their experiences, and breach confidentiality by publicly sharing details of students' experiences.

—School officials' inexpert responses result in intrusive questioning and peer bullying of survivors.

—Many student survivors are left to fend for themselves in the wake of their trauma and, as a result, miss classes, move schools or drop out.

The report's findings are based on four focus groups and 31 in-person and phone interviews conducted in 2015 and 2016; a total of 59 students (middle school and high school students) and service providers participated. The participants were diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and LGBTQ status; in addition, the participant service providers served diverse student populations.

The report calls for all K-12 schools across Illinois to develop survivor-centered, trauma-informed policies for responding to the needs of students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence.

The full report is at PovertyLaw.org/student-survivors.

Howard Brown Health changes clinical leadership

Howard Brown Health announced changes to its medical leadership structure in response to growth across its citywide network.

With 10 clinical locations across the city—and an 11th location opening in Humboldt Park in 2019—Howard Brown has added to its clinical leadership, which oversees 35,000 patients.

Under the new structure, site medical directors will now report to Maya Green, MD, MPH or Patrick Gibbons, DO. As regional clinical directors, Gibbons and Green will support Chief Clinical

Officer Dr. Magda Houlberg in managing Howard Brown's expanding citywide practice.

Green has served as the site medical director for Howard Brown Health 63rd St. and Thresholds South since the clinics opened in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Dr. Green will oversee clinical leadership at Howard Health's 55th St., 63rd St., La Casa Norte, Thresholds South and Diversey clinics.

Gibbons, a physician in family medicine, came to Howard Brown in September 2013 after completing his residency at Advocate Christ Medical Center. He will oversee the clinical leadership at the Broadway Youth Center, Clark, Halsted, Sheridan and TPAN clinics.

In addition to the promotion of Green and Gibbons, Howard Brown has created a new posi-

tion. Dr. Cori Blum—former site medical director at Howard Brown Health Sheridan and Broadway Youth Center—is now the organization's first medical director of new initiatives.

Blum will oversee and support medical providers in the delivery of family planning, anal health, family medicine and other initiatives designed to expand the range of medical specialties Howard Brown offers.

Family's Pride flag stolen; neighbors rally

In the suburb of Barrington, a family's gay-pride flag was stolen and replaced with an American flag—but then neighbors rallied by displaying their own rainbow flags, ABC7Chicago.com reported.

Casey Handal said, "The outpouring of support was just immediate. Everyone said they are so sorry, this is not reflective of our community."

Handal and Zedette Rosado have lived in the neighborhood for only several months—but Kim Filian ordered a bunch of pride flags for neighbors.

The article is at <https://abc7chicago.com/neighbors-line-street-with-pride-flags-to-support-family-after-flag-stolen/4937850/>.

No Women's March in Chicago in 2019

Women's March Chicago organizers have decided not to host a march in January—an event that has attracted hundreds of thousands of supporters to Grant Park in concert with similar marches across the globe, The Chicago Tribune reported.

High costs and limited volunteer hours were cited as the main reasons for canceling the annual rally/march, although organizers have said they'll commemorate the anniversary of the original march with another activity.

Marches and rallies are still planned for Jan. 19 in Washington, D.C., and dozens of cities nationwide. Chicago suburbs such as New Lenox and Woodstock are also slated to hold events.

The Tribune item is at <https://www.chicago-tribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-womens-march-chicago-global-march-womens-wave-20181225-story.html>.

Dept. of Corrections moves trans inmate

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has moved Strawberry Hampton, a 27-year-old transgender woman, from the all-male prisons where she was held to Logan Correctional Center, a women's facility, according to a press release from Uptown People's Law Center and the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center.

This development comes after a year of IDOC rejecting Hampton and her lawyers' pleas, and opposing a lawsuit that sought this transfer. Hampton has reportedly suffered repeated abuse and sexual assaults in various male prisons.

Hampton's lawsuits against IDOC allege extensive periods of solitary confinement based on false allegations of rules violations; and prolonged isolation in cells covered with urine and feces and without running water or a mattress; being called derogatory terms; and being forced to undergo series of sexual assaults by a group of officers, who ordered her to strip to her underwear and forced her to perform sexual acts with her cellmate for the officers' entertainment; among other charges.

Correction

In the Dec. 12 issue, it should have been stated in the story on Monarch Thrift Shop that the HIV status of the youths was unknown.

Windy City Times apologizes for the error.

PASSAGES

Kathleen Ada Shaw (Cathy Shaw, Coach Shaw)

Kathleen Ada Shaw died Dec. 20 of endometrial cancer. She was 62.

She was the daughter of Ada Pye Shaw and Eddie T. Shaw. She was born and lived most of her life in the Chicago area. She is survived by her wife, Martha Keenan Anderson; in-laws and their children and grandchildren; and numerous foster siblings.

Kathleen was a graduate of Chicago's Immaculata High School; Clarke College and University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa; and Teachers College in Columbia University, in New York City, where she obtained an MA in education and curriculum design in 1982. For 25 great years of her career, she taught physical education at Martin Luther King Jr., Laboratory School (King Lab), in Evanston, from which she retired in 2012.

Kathleen and Martha, her partner and wife for more than 20 years, moved to Carbondale, Illinois, in July 2014, for Martha to pursue a graduate degree in counseling.

Kathleen loved singing, sports and wood-working. She received classical voice training at the famed Julliard School in New York City. She loved solo and ensemble work and was a founding member of Chicago's UNISON Lesbian and Gay Chorus and Aria, which are affiliated with Windy City Performing Arts. In sports she was good at any game that featured a ball. She competed in the Pan Am Games in volleyball (ca. 1975), and in the Olympics in basketball (1976). She was a lifelong Chicago White Sox fan. Woodworking was a relatively recent love and she started her company, Shawdust, to create small decorative wooden boxes and urns.

In 1977-78, she went to India as a soloist with the Clarke-Loras Singers. She returned and taught for a year at India's American university New Delhi and, at the same time, she lived with and worked for Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity. Her primary job for the sisters was to make gruel at 4 every morning.

Kathleen also performed on the Outlines (now Windy City Times) newspaper's late-1990s CD High Risk, a collection of lesbian



Kathleen Shaw.

Photo courtesy of Shaw's Facebook page

musicians performing to benefit the Lesbian Community Cancer (now Care) Project.

Kathleen will be missed by Martha, her family, and the thousands of friends she made from all walks of life; but in the sure and certain hope of life everlasting, she is being greeted now by the friends and family members who preceded her. Thanks be to God.

Services took place Dec. 29 at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship, 105 North Parrish Lane, Carbondale. A second service will be held in Evanston, Illinois at a future date. For those who prefer, please consider a memorial to the Strong Survivors Fund/SIU Foundation, Colyer Hall, 1235 Douglas Dr., Carbondale, IL 62901.

For more information, visit <http://www.walk-erfuneralhomesandcrematory.com>.

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viewpoints



**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

An evening with Michelle

Former First Lady Michelle Obama swept into Boston recently as part of the national book tour promoting her memoir *Becoming*; the event was held at the TD Garden. The evening before the event, my spouse and I were gifted with front-row seats.

OMG! The event was simply magical and the audience was wildly excited.

Michelle Norris, a former NPR host, interviewed Michelle Obama. The two Michelles had a fabulous time lollygagging and laughing, making us all privy to their intimate conversation.

Obama conveyed a universal message of hope. However, her message of self-empowerment to women—young and old—spoke a truth across generations, centering it as the theme for the evening. Walking into T.D. Garden mothers had daughters in tow and both carrying *Becoming*.

Obama's concept of "swerve" is connected to one of the many messages in her book. The idea grabbed my attention, not only in the delightfully relatable and meaningful way she conveyed the concept, but it also caught my attention in ways she shared examples from her life.

"Swerve," is about embracing flexibility. "Swerve" is the ability not to be tethered to a perceived and rigid trajectory of your life, but rather it is about being open to life's journey, and at times merely living in the question about what to do in your life. (And, do I know about the latter!)

"You're not supposed to know at 20" what you'll be for the rest of your life Obama told the audience. Obama stated that we'll have many lives and chapters in our lifetime because we're always discovering, evolving, and journeying into "becoming."

For example, Obama shared with the audience that, in her late teens and 20s, she had mapped out a straight and perceived unerring path for her life—college, law school, job—to achieve happiness and success. She disclosed, however, that she abhorred being a lawyer, albeit it was one of the many checkboxes on her achievement list.

Her candidness on the topic has inspired others.

"Being that Mrs. Obama's path was not straight, it's just been inspiring to know that my path may not be straight either but I will be successful," Alana Underwood, a senior at Berkley School of Music, told the Boston Globe. Underwood was one of the twenty young sisters chosen as part of the Black Girls Rock program to visit with the First Lady.



Michelle Obama.

Photo courtesy of Live Nation

The book, as in her promotional tour, takes the audience into the interior of her life—from a happy working-class childhood growing up in a multi-cultural community on the South Side of Chicago, through her ivy league education, a plum job at a corporate law firm and to the White House. The book like the tour dispenses advice and inspirational self-help.

Obama's stop at the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester was to inspire a future generation of young leaders often not thought of as such.

"We were reading your book as if you wrote these stories about us," a woman told her.

Also, the book, as well as the tour, reintroduces Obama.

Several biographies have been written about her—all by white men and women authors, except for *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America* and *Becoming*. Their depictions of Obama, while not intended to be damaging, are, nonetheless, stereotypes.

Deceased Caribbean-American feminist lesbian Audre Lorde once stated: "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

During the beginning years of Obama's tenure in the White House as well she time on the campaign

trail she was typecast as an "angry Black woman," a racial trope for any sister who speaks truth to power.

For example, during the campaign trail, Obama—candid and excited about the enthusiasm sweeping the country about Barack's run for the presidency—was assailed by Republicans as unpatriotic and angry. In what once seemed inconceivable—a Black president the United States—Obama told a crowd before the Wisconsin primary, "For the first time in my adult lifetime, I'm really proud of my country."

In reflecting on how her image was misconstrued, at best, or, intentionally maligned, at worse, Obama told the Post, "I was female, Black and strong, which to certain people ... translated only to 'angry.' It was another damaging cliché, one that's been forever used to sweep minority women to the perimeter of every room."

The book, as well as the tour, reintroduces Obama to us as a private citizen. She wrote the book to start a conversation with this country about empowerment and healing.

While Obama's tour will not reach everyone, she hopes the message in her book will, resonating with some unlikely people. For example, Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal attorney who stated his boss repeatedly used racist and divisive language, said he hopes her book will help unify the country.

I think it has the potential to do so.

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BRYCE VINE
GROWS INTO
THE BIG TIME

Bryce Vine.
Photo by JUCO

PAGE 17

Singing (and playing) in the new year

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Lyric Opera of Chicago is back with the second half of its season, after a month-long hiatus that will be filled—beginning next December—by the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago's annual production of *The Nutcracker* (moving from the Auditorium Theatre to the Civic Opera House).

In rotating repertory, Lyric offers: Puccini's *La Bohème* (Jan. 10-31), Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Jan. 11-20), Strauss's *Elektra* (Feb. 2-22), Verdi's *La Traviata* (Feb. 16-March 22) and Handel's *Ariodante* (Lyric Opera premiere, March 2-17). Then, once the classical opera season ends, Lyric will present its yearly nod to Broadway, this time *West Side Story* in a month-long run (May 3-June 2) with up to eight performances a week.

Sure, opera is an expensive proposition, but Lyric may be singing your tune through two ticket rush programs that can bring the cost way down, especially (but not only) for students. Unsold tickets and returns are offered to anyone at half off the face price two hours before each performance. Seat locations and prices will vary from one performance to the next. Patrons can sign up for email notifications or simply go to the box office two hours early. Details: lyricopera.org/promo

It gets even better for full-time college undergraduates or grad students. Would you believe \$20 for the best seats in the house? Well, seat locations aren't guaranteed but the price is. Students can register online for Lyric's NEXT (sic) program, through which they can purchase single tickets or a mini-subscription. Details: LyricOpera.org/lyricunlimited/next

One expects a jazz ensemble to have a guitar, sax, bass and drums, and even a jazz violinist ain't new (not since Stephane Grapelli was about three years old, anyway). But I've been around the block more than once and never have encountered a jazz ensemble with both an oud and

MUSIC

a cimbalom ... at least not until encountering **Alfonso Pontecelli and Swing Gitan**, the seven-person unit at the legendary Green Mill in Uptown, every Wednesday night (9 a.m.-1 p.m.). Pontecelli himself is a guitarist.

The oud (some of you may know) is a Middle Eastern string instrument broadly in the guitar/mandolin family. The cimbalom is a large floor-sitting string instrument in which its many strings are struck with hammers, often associated with Eastern European music (especially gypsy music). There's a \$7 cover charge, which is well worth it for this unusual and varied blend of instruments.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and music director Riccardo Muti will desert Chicago for the last two weeks of January for an overseas tour that will take them to Shanghai, Beijing, Taipei, Tokyo and Osaka, where the CSO will knock them in aisles if the CSO's long touring history is any precedent. There will be slim pickings back in Chicago, but there is one event musical cognoscenti know is don't-miss: a Jan. 15 concert by the Civic Orchestra, the CSO's superb and unique advanced-training ensemble for young professional musicians. Players from all over the world seek membership (via auditions) in the **Civic Orchestra**, now in its 99th year (!). The Jan. 15 concert, under conductor Bramwell Tovey, offers works by Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony #4*. General admission for Civic Orchestra concerts is free but reservations are highly recommended: CSO.org/calendar

The Chicago Sinfonietta—one of the nations most diverse professional orchestras—offers its annual MLK Tribute Concert Jan. 20-21 with guest conductors, soloists and chorus performing works by Beethoven, Coleridge-Taylor, Tippett and others in honor of the life, work and spirit

Paris, and was featured in the 10 Best Books of 2018 by New York Times. Her short fiction won a 2017 Pushcart Prize, and was chosen for The Best American Short Stories for four consecutive years (2008-11).

See "Great Believers Book Talk" on Facebook.

Digital lottery, rush tickets for 'Fiddler'

Broadway In Chicago announced that there will be a digital lottery and rush tickets for the Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which will run at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St., through Jan. 6, 2019.

The lottery will happen online only the day before each performance, and 26 tickets will be sold for every performance at \$25 each.

Visit <http://www.broadwayinchicago.com/show/fiddler-on-the-roof/> to enter the lottery.



Alfonso Pontecelli
and Swing Gitan.
Elliot Mandel
Photography



Members of the Civic Orchestra.
Todd Rosenberg Photography

of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This yearly concert was one of the Sinfonietta's founding events, initiated by the late Dr. Paul Freeman, the Sinfonietta's founding musical director (1987 until his death in 2015). The Jan. 20 matinee concert is at Wentz Concert Hall in downtown Naperville, the Jan. 21 evening concert is at Symphony Center in downtown Chicago. Details and tickets: ChicagoSinfonietta.org

One of the liveliest mini-concert series around is the **MIX at SIX** series presented by The Harris

Theater for Music and Dance in Millennium Park (entrance on Randolph Street). These casual one-hour, post-work concerts not only feature excellent and varied musical fare, but also cocktails and gourmet food-truck offerings for purchase. There are five more monthly MIX at SIX programs in the current season (through May), the next one being outstanding young Spanish guitarist **Pablo Sainz Villegas** on Friday, Jan. 26 at 6 p.m. Sainz is a master of the Rioja Spanish musical tradition, but also features contemporary guitar works in his repertory. Details and tickets: harristheater.org/at-the-harris/HTP-series. A five-concert subscription is just \$50.

Ticklin' them ivories: Pianist Angela Hewitt will join music director Jane Glover and Music of the Baroque for an all-Mozart concert, Feb. at the Harris Theater, Saturday, Jan. 26. The next afternoon (Jan. 27) at 3 p.m., pianist Leif Ove Andsnes brings his world-renowned artistry to the Symphony Center Presents piano series for a recital of works by Schumann, Janacek and Bartok.

Gerber/Hart, Howard Brown to host 'Great Believers' discussion

On Wed., Jan. 16, 6-8 p.m., Howard Brown Health Clark and Gerber/Hart Library and Archives will host a discussion on *The Great Believers* with author Rebecca Makkai and Howard Brown Health President/CEO David Ernesto Munar, followed by a Q&A session and book-signing.

The event will take place at Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark St.

The National Book Award finalist *The Great Believers* traces the events of the early AIDS crisis in Chicago and features details about Howard Brown in its early years. Makkai's novel explores friendship and redemption in the face of tragedy in 1980s Chicago and contemporary

Gary Sinise book event Feb. 18

Steppenwolf Theatre Company has announced a special event as part of co-founder Gary Sinise's book tour promoting his new book *Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service*.

Sinise will reflect on his book in a candid conversation with fellow Steppenwolf co-founder Jeff Perry on Monday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. at Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.

Sinise is an actor/musician known for his roles in films such as *Forrest Gump* and *The Green Mile*, and TV series like *CSI: NY*. Perry is possibly best-known for portraying Cyrus Beene on the TV series *Scandal*.

Single tickets (\$45) are available through Audience Services at 312-335-1650 or Steppenwolf.org.

'Dada Woof' cast announced

About Face Theatre has announced casting for its Chicago premiere of *Dada Woof Papa Hot*, by Peter Parnell (*The Cider House Rules*) and directed by Artistic Associate Keira Fromm.

This comedy about gay parenting and modern families will feature AFT Artistic Associate Benjamin Sprunger with Jos N. Banks, Shane Kenyon, Keith Kupferer, Lily Mojekwu, Bruch Reed and Rachel Sullivan.

The production will run Jan. 10-Feb. 16, 2019 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets (\$15-\$38 each) are available at AboutFaceTheatre.com, 773-975-8150 or at the Theater Wit box office.

THEATER REVIEW

La Ruta

By: Isaac Gomez

At: Steppenwolf Upstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.

Tickets: Steppenwolf.org; \$20-\$89, limited \$15 student tickets online

Runs through: Jan. 27

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

For more than 20 years, women have been vanishing along the border of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The number is reportedly at least 1,500, although there is no official count. Sometimes the victims are found buried. Many times, they simply vanish, often on the unlit roads between their homes and the factories where they work.

The lack of a thorough investigation points to police and politicians who either don't care or don't have anything to gain by looking into the crimes. When the survivors of the missing women demand justice, they are deemed crazy, hysterical women. They march nevertheless, in the names of the "desapercidas," often around a sea of pink crosses memorializing the missing women.

With *La Ruta*, playwright (and El Paso native) Isaac Gomez gives voice to both the missing women and those who survive them. We see them



Sandra Delgado (left) and Laura Crotte in *La Ruta*. Photo by Michael Brosilow

at their 10-hour-day, assembly-line factory jobs. We see them on the bus—dark, deserted roads to the horizon—as they ride to and from work. We see them as human beings with distinct hopes, dreams and personalities. Their tragedy—and all that it says about area politics, misogyny and corruption—becomes impossible to reduce to a statistic from another place.

Gomez's drama is far more documentary than traditional drama. He culled the dialogue from interviews he did with the women whose loved ones vanished. He interviewed bus drivers who described seeing women being abducted as they ran for the bus. He interviewed a man convicted of murdering eight area women. The names have been changed. The veracity is chilling.

Directed by Sandra Marquez, *La Ruta* is two things: It is a geographically specific story about a demographically specific (middle, lower-class) group of women. It is also an irrefutable commentary on the way the world sees women—and has always seen women. The women of Juarez are part of a line of women deemed disposable, a line that reaches back eons. When the macro starts steaming through the micro, *La Ruta*'s impact becomes a gut punch.

The plot follows Ivonne (Karen Rodriguez), a veteran factory worker who starts a friendship with Brenda (Cher Alvarez), a teenager who has dropped out of school to help support her family. We learn early that Brenda disappears, leaving her mother Yolanda (Sandra Delgado) nearly crippled by grief and anger.

By flipping back and forth in time, Gomez makes the scenes before Brenda's disappearance more wrenching since you know what's going to happen to her. Alvarez's portrayal does the same. Her Brenda is eminently recognizable: She's the bubbly teenager who loves and is exasperated by her mother, the girl who blushes when she sees the boy she likes and giggles remembering her quinceanera.

Ivonne's confidence and glamour leave Brenda a bit awestruck. But as Rodriguez makes clear in an eviscerating monologue late in the play, Ivonne has secrets. She's seen evil all but impossible to survive intact. The emotion in Ivonne's recol-

lection of a crime is intense. Rodriguez makes it real.

There is similar intensity to the plight of Delgado's Yolanda and Charin Alvarez' Marisela. Initially, Marisela's default-emotion is optimism, insisting that Brenda will be on the next bus even when there is no next bus. Alvarez makes Marisela's activism the natural evolution of an insistent, determined outlook.

Music plays a large part in *La Ruta*, much of it gorgeously sung by the Laura Crotte, who plays guitar throughout the piece. Backed by the

haunted, hunted women of Juarez (Mari Marroquin, Alice da Cunha and Isabella Gerasole), the sound of *La Ruta* is sonorous and deep.

There's no ending to this story. What Gomez offers instead is a portrait of undaunted resolve: las muertas de Juarez refuse to stand down. Gomez makes that resolve immovable: They are women with nothing left to lose. And with nothing on the line, they will stop at nothing to make themselves heard. *La Ruta* amplifies their calls.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Winter Wolf, Otherworld Theatre, through Jan. 6. A plucky young girl and a predatory harbinger of death both learn the limits of their powers while discovering the extent of their humanity in Joseph Zettelmaier's smart new fable for young sci-fi fans of all ages. MSB



Shariba Rivers in *The Winter Wolf*. Photo by Steven Townshend

The Old Woman Broods, Trap Door Theatre, through Jan. 19. This relic of 20th-century Absurdist Theater shows its age, but Manuela Rentea's infectious charm and a high-stepping ensemble transform it into a vibrant carnival of multisensory spectacle. MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge

Jesus Christ Superstar.
Photo by Todd Rosenberg



The best of Chicago theater (part two)

More Windy City Times theater critics weigh in on what they felt was the best theater Chicago had to offer in 2018.

1. Karen Topham's choices:

It was yet another year of tremendous variety in Chicago theater, another year of difficult in coming up with a list of only five plays worthy of the "best" label. If I wished, I could make a top five list of musicals alone. But Chicago's straight theater scene, from the big houses to the black boxes, presented some amazing fare in 2018. Of course, I didn't see everything; no one could. But here are five that gave me cause to celebrate.

—**Boy (Timeline Theatre):** Playwright Anna Ziegler's fictionalized account of a famous case involving gender identity was a complete gem. From the outstanding performance of lead Theo Germaine to the set design by Arnel Sancianco, Boy was the best play of the year about trans issues—even though it didn't have a trans character. (The titular "boy" was cisgender but raised as a girl after a botched circumcision.) Through the boy's doctor, parents, and his maybe-girlfriend, director Damon Kiley made audiences see the pain and confusion of being brought up in the wrong gender.

—**The Light (The New Colony):** In the wake of #MeToo, Loy Webb's two-hander about the persistence of rape culture and its intrusion into the lives of an African-American couple couldn't have been more timely. Directed by Toma Langston, outstanding performances by Tiffany Oglesby (as Genesis) and Jeffery Owen Freelon Jr. (as Rashad) that made this one of the most moving and powerful dramas of 2018. Webb took us to the de-

fining day in the couple's relationship, revealing secrets and bringing powerful emotions to the confines of the Den Theatre. Almost a year later, The Light (which won a Jeff Award for new work) still moves in my memory.

—**Ragtime (Marriott Theatre):** Another Jeff-winning production (including best production and director of a musical, large theater) Ragtime was simply perfect. Director Nick Bowling did things with the Marriott's theater-in-the-square stage that I wouldn't have thought possible. The performances he managed to get from his actors—including Katherine Thomas as Sara—kept audiences riveted. I was thoroughly impressed

Jeffery Owen Freelon Jr. and Tiffany Oglesby in The Light.
Photo by Evan Hanover

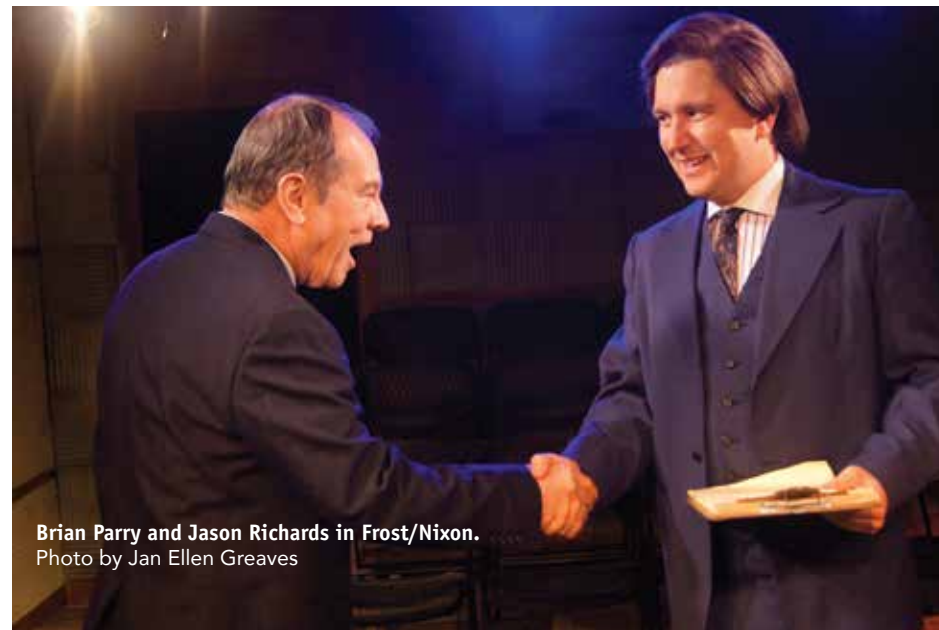


THEATER

from the opening number, when Bowling had the entire cast onstage in several varied and easily recognizable settings, each distinct and clearly visible to the audience.

—**Sweeney Todd (Theo Ubique):** Last year, Paramount Theatre mounted a lavish production of this acclaimed Stephen Sondheim musical. This

right before our eyes, using actors, cut-outs and puppets. You could watch the resulting film on a large screen, or you could focus on any of the equally compelling parts of its stagecraft: the actors rushing through their moments and readying for other scenes or the musicians creating a brilliant and moody live soundtrack. The result was a complex, visual treat that is easily one of the best shows of the year.



Brian Parry and Jason Richards in Frost/Nixon.
Photo by Jan Ellen Greaves

year, Theo Ubique made the show their own with a vastly different take. With Jeff Awards for leads Philip Torre and Jacqueline Jones and for James Kolditz's lighting design, Sweeney has already been considerably honored. But it was director Fred Anzevino's brilliant direction that made this Sweeney Todd fit into the intimate space of the No Exit Cafe, bringing it to the audience, up close and personal.

—**Frankenstein (Manual Cinema at Court Theatre):** We watched as the Manual Cinema company put on a silent movie version of Shelley's novel

2. Mary Shen Barnidge's choices:

Rarely in our history will you detect a shortage of popular indignation finding voice in accusations aimed at bullies, however nebulous the identities of villains and victims. In 2018, though, audiences afflicted with fingers weary of pointing and lungs seared by an atmosphere thick with grievances saw a genesis of plays hinting at possibility of resolution and accord:

—**Familiar (Steppenwolf Theatre):** When was the last time you heard the words "Africa" and "comedy" in the same sentence? Danai Gurira assembled two families—one, Zimbabwean immigrants—spanning three generations, on the occasion of a biracial wedding in Minnesota, who finish with everyone content.

—**The Safe House (City Lit Theater):** After more than a century of playwrights bending the rules of dramatic discourse in ever-more enigmatic directions, Kristine Thatcher's return to the roots of theater in straightforward storytelling was as fresh as it was bold.

—**Support Group for Men (Goodman Theatre):** Reconstructive reparations are seldom easy on those deposed, but Ellen Fahey made a compassionate case for males mired down in testosterone ghettos (both gay AND het) desperately seeking toxic cleansing.

—**Frost/Nixon (Redtwist Theatre):** Our 37th president was once, to some, the most hated man in America, but Brian Parry never flinched in his courageous portrayal of a misguided man acting in good faith to his eternal disgrace.

—**Southern Gothic (Windy City Playhouse):** The fourth wall was never flimsier than in Leslie

Liautaud's Dixie-fried comedy, with David Bell's you-are-there staging taking actor-audience intimacy to a whole new level.

3. Lauren Emily Whalen's choices:

—**The Wolves (Goodman Theatre):** It's rare to see a play with teenage girls who aren't shallow bubbleheads or sexual-assault victims, and Sarah DeLappe's Pulitzer Prize-winning glimpse into the lives of an all-female soccer team was as riveting as it was unique. Director Vanessa Stalling captured the essence of modern young womanhood as the characters bantered about periods, formed alliances and let loose with primal screams, all while performing athletic drills with practiced precision. When the lights went up after a breathless 90 minutes in Goodman's Owen Theatre, my sister and I turned to each other and said, "that was us." Fun fact: We never played soccer.

—**Mies Julie (Victory Gardens Theater):** Yael Farber's provocative adaptation of the Strindberg classic, set in newly post-apartheid South Africa, could make the top five list for several reasons. Dexter Bullard's direction perfectly conveyed the sultry heat of a life-changing summer night. Heather Chrisler and Jalen Gilbert created complex individual characters and generated stirring sexual chemistry. But the real star of Victory Gardens' Mies Julie was Kristina Fluty's intimacy choreography, a relatively new term in the theater world. As the title character and her Afrikaans love interest circled one another, flirting and eventually copulating before the play's shocking climax, both moves and energy burst with primal eroticism.

—**Eclipsed (Pegasus Theatre Chicago):** Before becoming a breakout star of TV's *The Walking Dead* and Marvel's *Avengers* franchise, Danai Gurira was already an accomplished playwright. Last fall, Pegasus Theatre Chicago presented a small but mighty production of *Eclipsed*, Gurira's

searing take on women involved in the Second Liberian Civil War. Artistic director Ilesa Duncan skillfully transformed Chicago Dramatists' small space into a stifling environment where the wives (read: captives) of a rebel army captain fight over stolen Bill Clinton biographies, contemplate the possible "escape" of becoming soldiers themselves and explore the complex bonds of their forced sisterhood. The story was gripping, the acting solid, the production unforgettable.

—**Jesus Christ Superstar (Lyric Opera Chicago):** Normally, Judas is the focus of Andrew Lloyd Webber's groundbreaking rock musical, with showy vocals and a compelling character arc involving a deathly betrayal. But in Lyric Opera's bombastic blowout interpretation, Heath Saunders' Jesus emerged as the standout of the two lead characters.

As Judas (Ryan Shaw) blared the "Heaven on Their Minds" opening number, Saunders paced back and forth, wringing his hands and mouthing the words of a sermon, clearly uncomfortable with the adoration bestowed upon him. Thanks to Saunders, Jesus wasn't an infallible superhero, but a vulnerable man overwhelmed by the state of the world yet reluctant to leave it behind.

—**Kingdom (Broken Nose Theatre):** Within spitting distance of Disney World, an elderly gay couple contemplate their adult son's personal issues, their own failing health and the possible next step: now-legal marriage. Broken Nose Theatre isn't afraid to ask the tough questions and explore the lives of those often ignored. Kanomé Jones helmed the premiere of Michael Allen Harris' gorgeous family portrait of an all-black, all-queer family with an unapologetic passion for Mickey Mouse and Star Wars that's only surpassed by their love for one another. Presented by a stunning ensemble cast, the play deftly explored the personal kingdoms we are born into, and the ones we make for ourselves.



Deeply Rooted Executive/Artistic Director Kevin Iega Jeff.

Photo by Ken Carl

Deeply Rooted announces new site, leadership changes

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater (DRDT) has announced significant funding support from the Reva & David Logan Foundation and the Arts Work Fund to support institutional capacity building that will facilitate the first steps of a major initiative: creating a vision for a potential new center for African-American dance education and professional performances on Chicago's South Side.

The Logan Foundation is providing \$75,000 in general operating funds and two matching grants—\$25,000 and \$20,000—to offer incentives for new DRDT funders to support this capacity-building. The Arts Work Fund/Idea Lab program is providing \$25,000 for each of the next two years to support the visioning process with current committed partners, including the Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago, the Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF), and Studio One Dance Theater, and possible new partners in the future.

DRDT is also undergoing leadership changes. Executive/Artistic Director Kevin Iega Jeff is shifting his focus with DRDT to developing the necessary long-term initiatives and community relationships to cultivate the project.

Beginning in the 2019–20 season, Artistic Team member and Dance Education Director Nicole Clarke-Springer and Artistic Team member and Emerging Choreographers Showcase Producing/Artistic Director Joshua Ishmon, also a dancer with the company, will be co-artistic directors. Co-Founder/Associate Artistic Director Gary Abbott will take over artistic leadership for the 2020–21 season.

Visit <https://deeplyrooteddancetheater.org/>.



Southern Gothic.
Photo by Michael Brosilow

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Rebirth Garments runs the spectrum in whom it serves

BY VEE L. HARRISON

Sky Cubacub is the creator of Rebirth Garments—a line of wearables for the full spectrum of gender, size and ability. The fashion line was started

ous shows.

Cubacub is also editor of Radical Visibility Zine, a magazine QueerCrip Teens based off their manifesto, as well as a leader in anti-oppression accessibility workshops.

FASHION

Cubacub refuses to use the word “handicap,” as it’s a label they feel was given by society.

“‘Handicapped’ was never chosen by disabled folks,” they said. “It was a label given by society and was never chosen by disabled folks.”

Cubacub uses visible and invisible disability and apparent and non-apparent disability.

“Everyone can self-identify however they want,” they said.

Cubacub shared how they wrote their manifesto at the same time they were developing their clothing line. “I did a lot of research, interviewed

As for working here, “I love being a Chicago designer. I am a very diehard Chicago fan,” said Cubacub. “I wouldn’t want to work anywhere else.”

Cubacub lives on the North Side, but they told Windy City Times they aren’t a Cubs or White Sox fan.

“I really don’t like sports,” said Cubacub. They know their Chicago food, though: “I eat my hot dog with everything on it.”

Returning to discussing attire, Cubacub said it is important to feel sexy and comfortable in your clothes—and that’s an idea behind Rebirth Garments.

When Cubacub first launched their line in 2013,



Designer Sky Cubacub (left) and some of their designs.

Left: Photo by Andie Meadows. Above center: Model Caleb Luna, photo by Grace DuVal. Above right: Model Ubae, photo by Colectivo Multipolar. Right: Photo by Kiam Marcelo Junio.



in 2014, when Cubacub was 23. Cubacub is now 27, but their young age is certainly no impediment on the road to success.

Cubacub—who recently described themselves to Windy City Times as “a non-binary Filipinx mer-mex”—has taken part in the Chicago’s History Museum Out at CHM event, “Celebrating and Contextualizing Queer Fashion.” They have also been featured in Paris Fashion Week and have been named a Windy City Times 30 under 30 honoree. Also, their designs have been featured at numer-

They are spearheading the QueerCrip dress-reform movement that is based on claiming one’s body using bright colors, exuberant fabrics and innovative design. They refuse to assimilate.

“I’ve been queer my whole life,” said Cubacub. “I want to really get out there and want my message to be spread so that folks think more about disability representation and think more about queer disabled folks. The visibility helps save our lives. All together it shows people that they have a future and they’re not alone.”

a lot of folks with identity issues, and made sure I got their truths,” said Cubacub.

Cubacub has used personal experiences and knowledge to create their designs, but also understands that people have different stories and lives. Rebirth Garments is a line for those who feel as if they don’t fit in. Cubacub said they believe that being different doesn’t mean a person can’t be fashionable: “It is important to make sure that my experience is totally different from others. Everyone has a unique experience. I tried to make clothing based off that.”

they received lots of pushback for the designs focusing on queer individuals.

However, Cubacub said they stood tall and refused to conform.

“Don’t let other people try to tell you what to do or who to make your clothing for,” Cubacub advised. “I want people to feel really comfortable and super sexy. I feel like a lot of people don’t see the power in fashion. I feel like it’s extremely powerful.”

To learn more about Rebirth Garments and to make purchases, visit RebirthGarments.com.

Bryce Vine.

NUNN ON ONE

Bryce Vine grows into the big time

BY JERRY NUNN

Singer/rapper Bryce Vine started early in the music business at the young age of 13. It was under guidance from his mom Tracey Ross—who many know from the soap opera *Passions*—that he auditioned for a reality competition show *The Glee Project*. After landing a part in the cast, Vine was sent home.

The talented artist then recharged his skills by attending the Berklee College of Music and was signed to the label Kiva House Lambroza by fellow student Nolan Lambroza. He gained traction with the song “Drew Barrymore” and is currently working on a debut album.

After opening for singer MAX across the globe, Vine is going on a solo tour, returning him to Chicago in 2019.

Windy City Times: How is the tour going with MAX?

Bryce Vine: He’s the best. We have been friends for over a year now. We have started writing together.

WCT: MAX has played several Pride festivals so maybe you could, too.

BV: I would love to.

WCT: How was it being raised by a famous mother?

BV: It didn’t really start until she was on *Star Search*—way before I was born. When I was 13, we were dirt-poor and I came home to find my mom had bought a car. We had driven around a Honda with no insurance so I knew something had changed. People started coming up to her and talking about the soap opera.

WCT: This made you want to perform early?

BV: Hell, yeah. Music made me happy and was therapy. Me and my mom would sing to Disney movies. Me and my dad would listen to R&B, jazz and Tony! Toni! Tone! in the car.

It didn’t take me long to figure out I could write my own songs and create my own therapy.

WCT: How was *The Glee Project* experience?

BV: I went to college in Boston, and *Glee* was



the biggest show on television. I had no interest because I didn’t watch it. My mom called and encouraged me to sign up. I made an audition tape of me singing “Gold Digger” by Kanye West. I got flown to LA where there were hundreds of kids. I had to decide to either stay in school or take that opportunity. I took it and was the first one cut off!

I was always very insecure about my talent and thought I had climbed two steps to only get

knocked down. I just started putting out songs. Some of them got attention and now we are here.

WCT: What inspired your song “Drew Barrymore?”

BV: I just started making this beat one day. I wanted to avoid writing a love song talking about someone’s looks. Anyone can write a song talking about physical beauty.

Julia Michaels sent me an idea three years ago about Drew Barrymore and used her name in a

MUSIC

line. Drew is not a Victoria’s Secret model, but has something else special about her. She is sincere and funny. That was the girl I wanted to talk about.

WCT: Do you have a favorite Drew Barrymore movie?

BV: I grew up on *The Wedding Singer*.

WCT: There’s a musical version of it.

BV: No way!

WCT: Do you have a favorite musical?

BV: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is my favorite.

My mom took me to see *Ragtime* as a child and I just didn’t get it. So that is one I didn’t like.

WCT: You have a debut album coming out?

BV: Yes; it’s called *Carnival*. It has all the right elements. It has a song called “You” that is one of my favorite songs ever. It is a love song about appreciating someone. That could be your child, significant other, husband or mom.

WCT: What do you want people to know about you?

BV: I have always liked connecting people. My birthday parties were my best friends from everywhere. I met a lesbian in my high school and she became the drummer of our school band. I was just invited to her wedding and the whole band was there. That is some of the best environments to be in.

There are so many divides between people that I want to be a bridge.

WCT: Sounds like you have a diverse life.

BV: Look at how I started. I was born with a lesbian midwife. My parents were open to all kinds of people. That was how I was raised. I never felt like people were different than me. I try to put that into music and make people feel good in a room.

Vine winds back into town on Friday, Feb. 15, at Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln Ave.

NUNN ON ONE

Dominique Jackson celebrates 'Pose'

BY JERRY NUNN

FX's television drama *Pose* broke ground again when it was nominated for two major Golden Globes—Billy Porter, who plays Pray Tell, could possibly win a Best Actor in a drama TV series award, while the series itself might be named best dramatic series. Co-creators Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Steven Canals are returning to *Pose* for its sophomore run in 2019.

Dominique Jackson plays Elektra Abundance on the television series. In the past, she modeled for *Vogue Espana* and wrote a biography titled *The Transexual* from Tobago.

Before landing *Pose*, she appeared on the reality television show *Strut* and earned a GLAAD Media Award nomination for it.

Jackson sat down at Hydrate Nightclub before judging a ballroom contest to discuss her life.

Windy City Times: What are your thoughts on *Pose*'s depiction of the ballroom scene?

Dominique Jackson: I lived in that era. I was a little girl during those times. I saw these women and I thought to myself, "I don't want to be like them." I thought they were elitists, but it was not elitism—it was their way of surviving. They believed no matter where you came from or level of education, you could still conduct yourself with class, dignity and decency.

Sometimes they would read us to filth and say our hair was not right. At that time, walking through the streets and not being recognized as a woman could lead to your death, so there was a lot of tough love back then. When I got the part on the show, I realized that I had been trained and I was being shown the reality of my life. I was able to return and tell the story. We never know how the universe works.

WCT: Tell our readers about your backstory.

DJ: I am from Trinidad and Tobago. I was born on the smaller island of Tobago called Scarborough. As you know, in the Caribbean, there are sodomy laws so it was very difficult for someone like myself to exist. I worked on my education because grandma had a plan. It was to finish my exams and come away to America.

I knew from the time I was five that I was different. It wasn't until 12 that confusion set in, because there was molestation and rape. It is all in my book. It is called *The Transexual from Tobago Revised*; it's on Amazon. I used that as my therapy. It helped me realize how far I have come. To come from a small island to Maryland and graduate high school, then become homeless after coming out was a long journey.

I came out as gay because I didn't know "trans" existed. I didn't know what that was. I thought I would feel happy when I told my family I was gay, but I didn't. It wasn't until I saw other women in downtown [Baltimore], outside of the Hippo, that I saw myself. People in the community were calling them men, but I didn't see that. What I saw were beautiful women who had the

courage to be themselves. I linked up and started my hormones. It was the happiest time in my life.

WCT: How is the relationship with your family now?

DJ: We are still working on it. There's tension, honey. They are Christians. The amazing thing is I was speaking to my mother the other day and she referred to me as a her. I didn't want to cry on the phone immediately, but I felt the love for my biological family. I have many people that are my chosen and proven family, but these are the people that raised me, so it meant a lot.

WCT: Where you based out of now?

DJ: I have been in New York for 20 years. I went to L.A. for *Strut*, and was going to move there. I spent two months there and went to one of the executive producers and said, "Please tell Whoopi Goldberg I am not moving here." They knew it.

I am a New Yorker. I love getting on the subway and seeing the different people or ordering a turkey and cheese at the bodega at 2 a.m.

WCT: I spoke with Mj Rodriguez from *Pose* about the struggle of trans people in the work force depicted on the show. What are your thoughts on that?

DJ: We have had issues. I never wanted to do

sex work. I am not knocking it, because I call it survival sex work, because it is used to survive.

I would go out and try telemarketing. Before the day was through, someone in the group realized I was trans and outed me. I tried working in restaurants, but didn't have a green card. I got my green card in 2015. It was a 25-year fight to get it.

WCT: How has your life change since the first season of *Pose* aired?

DJ: It has changed in the sense that I can now meet my bills. It was a struggle to stay in the same apartment for 20 years. I feel more secure now. I am now validated by Ryan Murphy. He really matters and someone people look up to.

Whoopi Goldberg invited me to her house and had us over for dinner like normal people. My husband and I were just with her a few weeks ago and met her daughter and grandkids. She gives me advice. I feel like she is a big sister and a mother to me. She is phenomenal and that skin of hers is amazing.

WCT: What are you doing for the rest of the year?

DJ: I am going to continue to make club appearances like this one. People should know I am from ballroom. People from ballroom can do great things if they are given the opportunity. Ballroom raised me and taught me to be a woman, then I decided on the type of woman I wanted to be.

The 76th Annual Golden Globe Awards will air Sunday, Jan. 6, at 7 p.m. on NBC.



Dominique Jackson.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

Parv and Pudi.
Photo by
Elisabeth Caren



Sketch Comedy Festival line-up named

SketchFest Executive Producer Jill Valentine announced the official line-up for the 18th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, taking place Jan. 10-20, 2019, at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

The eclectic 2019 line-up will feature 120 shows in eight days. Headliners include the two-man show Parv and Pudi, composed of Danny Pudi, best known for his role in the TV sitcom *Community*, alongside Parvesh Cheena; and *The Fail Yours*, featuring Derek Mize and Eric Eikey from the NYC comedy group FUCT.

Sketchfest longtime favorites The Cupid Players, Rehner and Nixon, Off Off Broadway, GayCo and WGN Radio's Patty Vazquez will return. Featured international participants are slated to include HUNKS, Hot Raw Fire and Sketchersons. Other acts include Briane Goodrum (with the comedic/horror solo show *House Lafayette*), This Funeral Sucks, The Stuntmen and the trio Barbara Bush, to name a few.

Tickets and the entire schedule are available at ChicagoSketchfest.com.

Sinfonietta's MLK concerts Jan. 20-21

Chicago Sinfonietta will present its signature annual MLK Tribute Concert—featuring the conducting talents of Chicago Sinfonietta Assistant Conductor Kedrick Armstrong and Charleston Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor Kellen Gray, both graduates of the Chicago Sinfonietta's industry-leading Project Inclusion professional development program.

The group will perform Sunday, Jan. 20, 2019 at 3 p.m. at Wentz Concert Hall at North Central College, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville; and Monday, Jan. 21, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Each piece programmed in this season's MLK tribute concerts was specially selected by Kedrick Armstrong and Gray in collaboration with Music Director Mei-Ann Chen, for whom Armstrong and Gray will be substituting.

Tickets to the MLK Tribute Concert are \$10-\$62 each when purchased in advance online; visit ChicagoSinfonietta.org.



BILLY Masters

"That we're Eskimo brothers!"—**Andy Cohen's** answer to what the public may not know about him and his good friend, **Anderson Cooper**. For those of you who don't know, the term "Eskimo brothers" refers to men who have slept with the same person. In the case of women, I believe the term is simply lesbians.

This is a strange column—one might even call it queer. If you're reading it in print, it will surely be 2019. But if you're reading it online—perhaps at BillyMasters.com—2018 is likely drawing to a close. And to be honest (which, of course, I always am), I am writing this on New Year's Eve. And yet, my 2018 wrap-up has already been published. So, in a way, this column falls between the cracks. One might even say it's straddling years. Oh, I've been straddling things for years. Why, I could write a book. But for now, you'll have to make do with this column.

Given the timing, I can't tell you all about my New Year's Eve, nor can I in good faith review Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen's sophomore effort in hosting the festivities. Mind you, not seeing it is no excuse—why, many of my colleagues regularly review things they haven't seen. But, no, not your beloved Billy. Instead, I will extrapolate on last week's news—that Andy Cohen will soon be a daddy. Oh sure, the cheap joke is, "Yeah, like scads of undergrads haven't been calling him daddy for years." But, no, I won't go for the cheap joke—not in 2019. But, since it's still technically 2018, I'll allow it. Andy announced that his child of undisclosed gender will be born sometime in January and that he hired a surrogate. It's certainly not the first time his semen has been inside someone he paid—and that's the last cheap joke of the year.

The marriage of **Colton Haynes** and **Jeff Leatham** is the gift that keeps on giving. They truly are the Liz and Dick of our generation—perhaps, more appropriately, the Dick and Dick. (Which of them is the bigger Dick will have to be determined by a court of law.) The last time they split up, I believe Colton did the leaving and Jeff did the pleading for reconciliation. This time around, we're told that the divorce was filed by Leatham. (Why is it I continue to want to type "leatherman"?) He served Colton with what is known as "preliminary declaration of disclosure." Apparently, this is routine for all divorcing parties in the state of California. I'm no lawyer, but here's my advice to Colton: Don't ask, don't tell. I picked up that little tip from the documentary about the Clinton affair on A&E.

While **Kevin Spacey** is probably grateful to have 2018 behind him, he's still got some daunting situations a-brewin'. First and foremost are charges for allegedly sexually assaulting a teenage boy at a Nantucket bar in 2016. As you may recall, Spacey allegedly flirted with the 18-year-old busboy in a restaurant, bought him a drink (after the boy said he was of age) and began putting his hands down the lad's pants ... as one



Andy Cohen (above) said that he and **Anderson Cooper** are (kind of) related, **Billy** says.

Photo courtesy of Bravo

does when one flirts with a busboy. Unfortunately for Spacey, the boy is the son of a former Boston-area television news anchor. Unfortunately for the boy, he reported the incident to the police over a year after the incident. Something smells fishy to me, but that could just be Nantucket! I don't question the boy's account of the night, but I do question the motive. Spacey will be formally arraigned Jan. 7. If Spacey is found guilty, he could be facing 15-20 years in jail. On the positive side, by the time he gets out, he'll be able to hit on Andy Cohen's kid!

In one of those situations that you'd swear was made up, the same day the formal charges against him were announced, Spacey broke his online silence by posting an odd video in which he plays his character from *House of Cards*. In it, he condemns how the show ended, and how things are not as they appear in politics ... and in life. Amazingly, this three-minute clip is one, single, perfect take, and it reminds us of two things: 1) what an extraordinary actor Kevin Spacey is, and 2) that he's batshit crazy.

Darren Criss says he is done taking advantage of the gay community: "There are certain roles that I'll see that are just wonderful. But I want to make sure I won't be another straight boy taking a gay man's role." Am I the only one who finds it amusing that he refers to himself as a boy ... taking a role from a gay man? I mean, he's 31—I think the boy days are long gone, bucko. And riddle me this: If Criss stops playing gay parts, what exactly will he do for work?

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from **Freddie** in Hawaii, who writes, "I just saw **Ellen's** new comedy special. Was she really the first female comedian Johnny invited to the couch? Not someone

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like Joan Rivers or Phyllis Diller?"

It's true. The first time Ellen DeGeneres did stand-up on *The Tonight Show*, Johnny Carson waved her over to the sofa. But she wasn't necessarily the first woman he invited over. According to reports, when Roseanne made her first appearance on *The Tonight Show* a year before Ellen, Johnny also waved her over ... but she was so scared, she just ran off the stage. As to Joan and Phyllis, they were always on the show as guests—not to do stand-up. So, they didn't have to be invited over to the couch, they were booked on the couch.

When our couch stories have nothing to do with casting, it's definitely a new year and time to end yet another column. I'd love to chat more, but it's New Year's Eve and, frankly, I've got better things to do. But, the celebrations will continue all year long at BillyMasters.com—the site that straddles more than years. If you've got a question, send it to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Criss gets cast in a straight role! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Best restaurants of 2018

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Chicago has thousands of restaurants—and Windy City Times checked out a few of the spots last year. Below are some of the best that this writer witnessed (in no particular order):

—**Twain** (2445 N. Milwaukee Ave.; www.twainchicago.com/): This Logan Square restaurant deserves all the business it can get. The Grahams (chef Tim and sommelier wife Rebekah) evoke Midwestern nostalgia with dishes like creamy chicken and dumplings (inside pots similar to what your grandmother used) and drinks like The Scennie (with Korbel and Sprite)—and now it offers brunch.

—**Marchesa** ((535 N. Wells St.; marchesachicago.com/): This River North spot manages to be simultaneously majestic and intimate. The eatery features upscale Italian, Spanish and French dishes, and Executive Chef Mark Sabbe definitely knows what he's doing. Offerings like the orecchiette pomodoro e rapini must be tasted to be believed—even if the prices make this spot a special-occasion restaurant rather than an everyday haunt.

—**Prosecco** (710 N. Wells St.; prosecco.com/):



Marchesa's foie gras.

Photo by Andrew Davis

us.com/wordpress/): Marchesa partners partners Jason Clark and Kathryn Sullivan Alvera actually worked together at nearby spot Prosecco—but this restaurant will treat you like royalty, from the exuberant waitstaff to the Italian dishes that will have you returning for more.

—**LiqrBox** (873 N. Orleans St.; liqrboxchicago.com/): And things become even more complicated, as Prosecco Executive Chef Mark Sparacino also spearheads this innovative clubstaurant that will take you back to your childhood. Sparacino serves items such as (large) pizza rolls, shrimp corn dogs, creamy mac 'n' cheese served in a parmesan bowl and a loaf of cheesy bread—with part of it cut out to hold tomato soup. It's perfect comfort food.

—**FRIO Gelato** (FRIOGelato.com): Serving genuine Argentinian gelato, FRIO (which now has three locations, in Andersonville, Lake View and Evanston) has several exciting flavors—and styles. There are gelato shops in Argentina that revolve solely around the dulce de leche



FRIO Gelato's Alfa-lato.

PR photo

(understandable), but FRIO (in which everything is made in-house) has flavors such as frutilla (strawberry), malbec con frutos rojos (malbec wine with berries), queso y miel (cheese and honey), menta granizala (mint chocolate chip), banana and many others. For me, it's never too cold to have gelato, especially when it's this good.

—**Tied House** (3157 N. Southport Ave.; www.tiedhousechicago.com/): Next door to the popular spot Schubas Tavern, Tied House occupies the spot where Harmony Grill used to be—but it certainly isn't the same as its predecessor. The exciting and complex dishes include beeswax-aged mackerel, which comes with leek, yellow beet, horseradish and duck sauce; and milk-braised pork, with cabbage, salsify and apple. Even the bread service is a step above that of most restaurants.

—**Mott St.** (1401 N. Ashland Ave.; www.mottstreetchicago.com/) is an Asian-themed restaurant for the adventurous. For example, the

menu takes appetizers like grilled cauliflower and adds sahmjang butter, fennel seed and almonds. However, the centerpiece (if you're lucky enough to get there on time) is the Mott Burger—a wondrous concoction consisting of double chuck patties, sweet-potato shoestrings, hoisin aioli, pickled jalapenos, dill pickles, miso butter and American cheese.

—**Dog Haus Biergarten Lincoln Park** (2464 N. Lincoln Ave.; lincolnpark.doghaus.com/): This spot surprised me. Just when you think you've seen everything regarding hot dogs (and burgers), Dog Haus ups the game with gourmet items like the pun-worthy Scott Baioli (smoked bacon-wrapped dog, cheddar cheese sauce and caramelized onions, garlic aioli)—all served on those sweet King's Hawaiian rolls.

—**Streeterville Social** (455 N. Park Dr.; LoewsHotels.com/Chicago/Downtown): This spot is elusive only because it's seasonal. On the rooftop of The Loews Hotel, I was lucky enough to partake of a brunch that include the tasty (and huge) avocado toast, gluten-free wild-rice pancakes and more. During the summer, this place is a must-try.

—**Ronero** (738 W. Randolph St.; www.ronerochicago.com/): "Ronero" refers to someone who has mastered the art of distilling rum—and, this West Loop spot has approximately 200 different bottles of the drink. However, it offers so much more, like empanadas and pollo al vino rojo (a half-chicken with pate and roasted raisins)—as well as music and an atmosphere that epitomize Latin America.

Honorable mentions: Aurelio's Pizza Wrigleyville, The Florentine, The Dearborn, The Purple Pig, Mercat a la Planxa, The Bakery at Fat Rice, Bounce Sporting Club, Lark, Homestead on the Roof, Travelle and Conrad's Grill.



THE CALL

Six queens, one holiday show.
Joseph Stevens Photography



SIDETRACK

Jingle those bells!

Photos by Jerry Nunn



THE SPORTING LIFE: Doug King

BY ROSS FORMAN

Sports is certainly a family affair for Doug King—well, except with his partner of 39 years, Bob, who is not sports-minded at all.

However, over the past 26 years, they have raised four foster sons: Juan, Pedro, Miguel and Jose. Three of their kids have played basketball and/or softball in Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) leagues.

Juan, Jose and Miguel have played basketball and Miguel has played softball. Pedro also was the original referee in the local gay soccer league.

Both Pedro and Jose played Division I NCAA soccer.

Soccer players don't always make amazing softball players too, King learned the hard way.

"I tried to stack my fall softball team with his [son's] soccer teammates, many of whom hailed from Eastern Europe and South America," King said. "The theory was, I could teach anyone to play, especially an athlete. It didn't work too well—great guys, great college-level athletes, definitely [just] recreational softball players."

King, 61, who lives in Chicago's Ravenswood neighborhood, is the principal architect in the healthcare practice group Stantec Architecture Inc., an international architecture/engineering firm. He is originally from Midland, Michigan, attended the University of Detroit and has called Chicago home since 1983.

He has played in Chicago gay sports leagues every year but one since 1995.

"I started out playing basketball at Margate Park in 1995, then added softball in 2004 and table tennis about 2012," King said. "There are still a couple of us who played [basketball] in the mid-1990s [who are] still playing, [and we] have a pact that we won't quit until the other does."

In 1992, the first of King's four foster sons (Pedro) came to the U.S. King didn't speak much Spanish, and Pedro didn't speak much English when he arrived, "so we played sports to bridge this gap," King said. "From the last time I played basketball in 1976 to 1992 they had invented the three-point line. I found that I had a talent to shoot threes while playing in the playground at Lakeview High School in 1992-93. I started playing at the local YMCA with Pedro and being a youthful 34 years old, I was lighting it up ... so I joined the CMSA basketball league in 1995 at age 38 years.

"I was the 50th best player of 50 players in the basketball league in 1995. I was impressed how good the players were, so was my son, Juan, who came and watched us play. The next year my foster son Juan played with us. He was the No. 1 pick in the draft—and I came along as an extra. Juan was 5-foot-6, but could nearly dunk and was lightning fast. He and I played together as the starting point guards for our CMSA basketball team for several years. This was when the league had one division, basically an intermediate or

competitive level."

King said Chicago gay sports leagues have proliferated since the mid-1990s. "It seemed to start with softball and basketball, and then segue into other sports such as tennis, soccer and [floor] hockey, etc. The number of leagues, diversity and options for competitive [or] social have expanded making the sports leagues an excellent way to meet like-minded people."

And CMSA certainly welcomes everyone. CMSA is a social outlet as much as a competitive arena. Take, for instance, Van, a friend of King's who is a refugee from Burma and now a successful hair stylist for a major salon in downtown Chicago. Van is transgender and King encouraged him to try the volleyball league. "His experience in volleyball has mirrored my experience with basketball—he has enjoyed it a lot," King said. "Sports can be great for one's social life and a motivation to get and stay healthy."

King's sports resume has also included table tennis and golf.

And he often has introduced gay allies to the gay sports scene.

"It has allowed me to transcend the partitioning of my life that I have witnessed in others in the gay community," he said. "One anecdote warmed my heart [was] when several of my fellow gay players expressed it was the first time they had really gotten to know [straight] men of a similar age on a personal level and were treated as being equal."

King's softball career has been anchored around The Lucky Charmers, a team whose core has been together for about a decade.

"I attend the Detroit Tigers' fantasy camps every few years, [which] has helped my softball skills immensely," he said. "I believe in getting the best mentorship and coaching you can get in any endeavor in life. I have attended camps for several sports: basketball, softball and table tennis and golf.

"At the Tigers camps, I re-learned how to hit, spending several weeks at the Detroit Tiger fantasy camps and having ex-pro players to teach skills. One of the [former] Tigers, Ike Blessett, [once] came to Chicago and ran drills for my CMSA D2 softball team for a weekend.

Extra innings with ... Doug King

—Favorite pro sports team: Detroit Tigers

—Favorite pro athlete: Phil Niekro

—Favorite pro sports stadium: The Original Tiger Stadium

—One pro athlete who you'd like to meet: Paul George of the Oklahoma City Thunder

—If you could attend any pro sports event/game, what would it be?: "An international professional baseball game, [such as a] Japanese Baseball League game."

Doug King.
Photos courtesy of King



"I love the softball season, [which] starts in January with Sunday batting practice. We get [together as] a group every Sunday in January, February, March and April, so that when the season begins we are theoretically in mid-season form."

King said his table tennis experience dates back to when he was 6 years-old. "My hometown was where the table tennis team that went to China for Ping Pong Diplomacy [in 1972] practiced. I got to spar with some of them," he said. "I



Doug King.
Photo by Triquetra Productions

SPORTS

played the only U.S. player who beat his opponent in China. I played him twice, once in an exhibition and once for real in a tournament about 40 years later."

So what is the appeal of gay sports?

Very simple, King said—it's the ability to form lifelong friendships initially based on sports and then expanding into other common areas of interest.

"I've socialized with my teammates in a variety of settings outside of sports, and they are among my closest friends," he said. "The gay sports leagues have also allowed me to open my entire life to everyone I know. I am the 'same me' all the time because of this experience."

Sporting highlights

King, in 2011, coached and played on the Chicago Sidetrack Classic team that captured the title in the Master's Division of the annual Gay Softball World Series, played that summer in Chicago.

"We got hammered in our first game, then ended up winning the next four games decisively and the championship," King said. "It was a team that could have easily given up after losing badly our first game, but adjusted and won. It was a team of players who knew how to behave as a team. We assessed and adjusted as a team."

King also was on the winning Recreational Division team in the Coady Roundball Classic about 10 years ago. "My highlight was having a 'Reggie Miller moment,' where I scored 12 points in about two minutes to make a close game a rout. My teammates said I was levitating down the court after the last three-point shot."

King's sporting memories are endless, anchored by many involving his sons and their friends. In fact, King jokes that his son Miguel probably has more friends within CMSA than King himself.

King has been a pitcher, catcher and every infield position, and he has teamed with Gary Vien to annually conduct the CMSA pre-season pitching clinic.

King is active in the community at-large, serving on the development board of Heartland Health Centers, a healthcare facility that serves immigrants and refugees. Plus, he is active in professional organizations, such as the High Rise Committee of the City of Chicago.

"I have had a long-standing involvement in the Addictions Recovery Community, particularly the New Town Alano Center of Chicago," he said. "I have been in recovery for 40 years. And in the mid-1980s to 1990s, I was active in conducting outreach and education to the LGBT community in the Midwest – helping start organizations to promote recovery."

What's left in your sporting career?

"I would like to field an LGBT basketball team for a national over-60 tournament," he said. "These are sprouting up and becoming popular. I would like to do a similar thing for softball. For the softball team of over-60 players, I would love to go somewhere that is crazy about baseball, like Cuba, and play overseas in a tournament against other over-60 players."



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 2

Chicago 00: The 1968 DNC Protests exhibit ongoing Exploring a watershed moment in U.S. politics—the 50th anniversary of the convention protests—with the new virtual-reality experience. From photographs and documents from the Chicago History Museum's archives to the site of the demonstrations. David Farber, Ph.D., narrates the 14-minute VR tour that can be viewed through YouTube; the Chrome browser; or with Google Cardboard VR glasses. 12:00pm Chicago History Museum 1601 N Clark Chicago <http://chicago00.org/experiences.html#dnc>.

Thursday, Jan. 3

American Veterans for Equal Rights monthly meeting AVER is a non-profit, chapter-based association of active, reserve and veteran servicemembers dedicated to full and equal rights and equitable treatment. This monthly meeting supports the chapters work in outreach and visibility for LGBTQ veterans year round. On Facebook, see AVER Chicago Chapter. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago



ELF RESPECT Running through Jan. 6

Barney the Elf will soon
end its run
at Pride Arts Center.
Photo by Paul Goyette

Friday, Jan. 4

Katie Batza, author Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s Book Launch Party. Focuses on gay health institutions in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, placing them in a larger political context and following them into the first five years of the AIDS crisis. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago American Blues Theater presents It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago! from Frank Capra's film with Foley sound effects, an original score and holiday carols through Jan. 5. 7:30pm Stage 773 1225 W Belmont Chicago <http://AmericanBluesTheater.com>

Barney the Elf Queerfully delicious holiday show with musical satire, which incorporates Renaud and Schmidt's parody lyrics to popular songs. Through Jan. 6. 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Saturday, Jan. 5

Families of Chicago Banquet, Save Our Scene F.O.C. Banquet 3.0 The family scene is a kinship and cultural formation entity supporting queer youth, similar to house and ball communities. FOC is affiliated with the University of Chicago Medicine and consists of over 10 Houses and Families from across the city's South

and West Side neighborhoods. Dinner, silent auction, tribute to community members who have passed. Questions to lkeene@uchicago.edu. 6-9 p.m. University of Chicago's Cloister Club, 1212 E. 59th St.

Boy Gets Girl An examination of the paranoia, frustration, crippling fear of the victim of stalking. \$19 for adults and \$14 for students, seniors. Through Jan. 27 7:30pm Edge off Broadway, 1133 West Catalpa Ave. Tickets: <http://www.saltboxtheatre.org>

Sunday, Jan. 6

Fiddler on the Roof Heartwarming story of fathers and daughters, husbands and wives, and life, love and laughter. Classic musical is rich with Broadway hits. Through Jan. 6. 7:30pm Cadillac Palace Theatre 151 W Randolph Chicago <http://www.fiddlermusical.com> Tickets: <http://www.BroadwayInChicago.com>

Wed., Jan. 9

SketchFest 18th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival Starring each hour local favorites, award-winning international ensembles, veterans, and fresh talent. Through Jan. 20. Single tickets \$15. 6:00pm - 10:00pm Stage 773 1225 W Belmont Chicago Tickets: <http://www.Stage773.com>

ROMA on 70mm Alfonso Cuarón's masterpiece exclusive 70mm on wall-to-wall 36-foot screen through Jan. 13. \$15

(\$12 for Music Box Members). First show 7 p.m. 10:00pm Music Box Theatre 3733 N Southport Chicago <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com>

Thursday, Jan. 10

Community Cave Peer-led Community Group every Thursday for individuals that were Assigned/Designated Female at Birth (A/DFAB) AND ALSO who identify as trans, i.e., as anything other than cisgender. Free. Questions to communitycavechicago@gmail.com 6:30pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://www.CommunityCaveChicago.org>

Friday, Jan. 11

Queer Genre Fiction Book Group Each second Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Saturday, Jan. 12

Burning Bowl: Resisting with Purpose to Thrive in the New Year Community "burn" as a symbolic way of leaving things that are no longer serving us so that we can move confidently into the future. Honoring Kim Hunt with the Robbie Smith Award of Excellence. Hosted by Affinity Community Services. 1:00pm - 4:00pm Morgan Park United Methodist Church 11030 S. Longwood Dr., Chicago <http://www.eventbrite.com>

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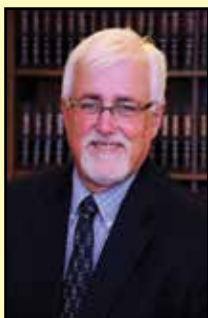
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