

WINDY CITY TIMES

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ARREST IN STANTON MURDER

Teen allegedly murdered trans woman Dejanay Stanton.

Photo from Stanton's Facebook page

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HERE COMES THE JUDGE

Gay judge swears in new governor.

Photo of Judge James Snyder swearing in Gov. J.B. Pritzker courtesy of J.B. Pritzker Inauguration Committee

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SONG AND DANCE

Gay couple open music store.

Photo of Paul Ruffino and Mike Weaver by Jerry Nunn

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Logan Grimes.
Photo by Erica Demarest

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FIGHTING BACK

Cook County tech says boss outed him as trans



Greg Harris.
Photo by Hal Baim

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HOUSE RULES

Greg Harris named House majority leader

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Jan. 16	May 22	Sep. 18
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April 24	Aug. 21	Dec. 25
May 8	Sep. 4	

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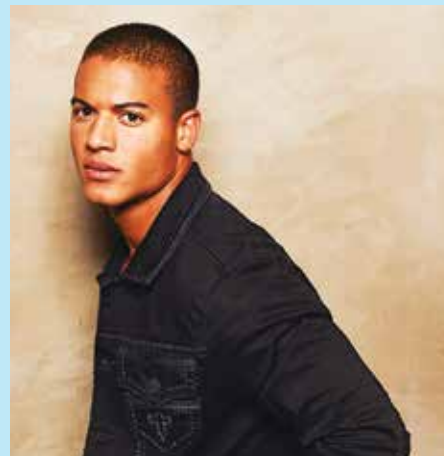
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HAVING A BOWL

Affinity held its annual Burning Bowl ceremony to start the new year (left).

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

DEAR JON



10 Questions with Vic continues with actor Jon Luis Castellanos.

Photo by Luis Giovani Hernandez

GUIDE AND SEEK

WCT covers shows by Midwest Action and Guided by Voices.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Anderson Cooper, Jillian Michaels and writer Alice Walker.

plus
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**1829 W. Evergreen Ave.**
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COMPASS

Cook County tech says boss 'outed' him as transgender

BY ERICA DEMAREST

A medical technician who works at Cook County Jail said his supervisor "outed" him as transgender in a private meeting with three colleagues.

Now, Logan Grimes says he's afraid to go back to work, citing what he sees as a transphobic and homophobic work environment. For the past six years, Grimes has administered medication to inmates across the jail and at Cermak, the jail's in-house medical center.

"With a job like that," Grimes said, "you expect to take a certain amount of risk just by the environment that you work in. What you don't expect is that risk to be increased by someone disclosing your status."

In letters submitted to the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) Equal Employment Opportunity Division, three employees said their supervisor outed Grimes as transgender during a conversation in the boss's office on Sept. 28, 2018.

Windy City Times is not naming the supervisor because charges have not been filed.

All three employees, who are not being named to protect their privacy, said they were in the supervisor's office that day to discuss a possible new hire. It soon came up that the potential hire could be gay. That's when the supervisor said, "kind of like Logan," one employee wrote.

Each letter describes a brief conversation that followed. According to one employee, the supervisor said, "Well, you all know about Logan." At that point, one of the employees responded, "They don't know. Leave it alone," according to the letters. The supervisor then allegedly said, "Logan is transgender."

After an investigation, the Equal Employment Opportunity Division ruled in a letter dated Nov. 8, 2018, that Grimes was not discriminated against "based on his gender-related identity." The division did conclude, however, that "there was a violation of the CCHHS personnel rules."

The letter did not provide any additional details or explanation. Grimes said a later meeting with division staff was abruptly cut short when Grimes insisted on having his attorney present. Grimes said he was told the supervisor was disciplined; no details were available.

In an emailed statement, a CCHHS spokeswoman said, "If any employee presents a credible threat to their safety, CCH takes every possible precaution to provide a safe work environment. Like other employers, it is our practice not to discuss the specifics of any case, including discipline."

"It just shocks me that outing someone does not constitute ... harassment at all," Grimes' attorney, Daniel Hernandez, said. "The harassment policy points out that harassing someone based

on sexual orientation or gender identity is prohibited. It just shocks me that a regulatory body couldn't come to a conclusion that some kind of violation had happened."

Grimes also filed complaints with his union and the Illinois Department of Human Rights. He said the state has asked to interview him on Jan. 16, 2019.

In a statement, John Tillar, the Cook County director for SEIU Local 73, said: "Logan has been working closely with his union to bring this case of discrimination through the grievance process, as prescribed by the contract bargaining agreement with the employer. The case is currently under investigation and we are not at liberty to disclose details."

Tillar added, "The union stands against forces of discrimination and hate" and that "Logan, like any other worker, deserves to work in a safe environment."

'It's really unsafe for me'

Grimes said he first learned about the alleged "outing" on Oct. 1, 2018. He called off work on Oct. 2 and has not returned since. Grimes said he first suspected something was amiss when a colleague referred to him as "girl" and another told him that people can get hurt when they lie about "who they really are."

When he first began working at the jail in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood six years ago, Grimes made a conscious decision not to disclose his gender identity.

"The transgender population has always been the brunt of jokes," Grimes said. "As far as the medical staff goes there, they tend to dismiss [the transgender inmates'] needs or even take them seriously. So I know the environment in which I work."

Grimes fears if he returns to work, he'll be attacked.

"It's really unsafe for me to return there because of the culture in the jail and the phobia of the jail," Grimes said. "That's coming not just from the inmates—it's coming from the staff. ... I don't know how many people know, and I can't trust that."

In a statement, Cara Smith, chief policy officer for the Cook County Sheriff's Office, said, "While this individual is not an employee of the sheriff's office, we strive to ensure that everyone who visits the jail is safe and secure. The sheriff's office has no information to suggest the jail environment is transphobic or otherwise unsafe for anyone, regardless of sexual identity. However, if anyone feels this is not the case, we encourage them to report this to our office for investigation."

When asked about Grimes' safety concerns, a CCHHS spokeswoman said in a statement, "Cook



Logan Grimes.

Photo by Erica Demarest

County Health (CCH) cannot speak to what an individual may or may not believe. ... Cook County Health is committed to providing a safe workplace free from discrimination and harassment that is inclusive and welcoming of all individuals."

Grimes requested a leave of absence pending the resolution of his case; he was denied. He has exhausted his vacation and sick time, he said, and is no longer being paid. The married father of two girls, ages 6 and 12, was hoping to work for the county for the rest of his career and be eligible for a pension.

The HR process is ongoing.

Making history

In the early 2000s, Grimes was among the first transgender men in Chicago to tell his story in public. When he worked at the Lesbian Communi-

ty Cancer (now Care) Project, he and his now-wife spoke at length with Identity magazine, a sister publication of Windy City Times. The couple's story ran on the cover.

But in 2013, Grimes walked back on the publicity when he pursued his current job with CCHHS. Fearing he wouldn't be safe working at the jail as an "out" transgender man, Grimes asked the magazine to change his name in the online version of the article so that he could maintain his privacy. He had also been interviewed for the ChicagoGayhistory.org website, and once he took the county job, asked that it be removed.

Now, Grimes said he is speaking publicly once more in the hopes of creating visibility around transgender employment issues in Cook County.

"I don't have any choice because it's such a big issue," Grimes said. "I know in my heart and my spirit, I just can't let it go."



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Madigan names Harris House majority leader

Illinois House Speaker Michael J. Madigan issued a statement Jan. 10 announcing his appointment of state Rep. Greg Harris as House majority leader:

"At my request, Representative Greg Harris will serve as House majority leader. This is the first in a series of leadership appointments that will be announced in the coming days reflecting the diversity of our state, and reflecting our caucus' approach to the coming legislative session.

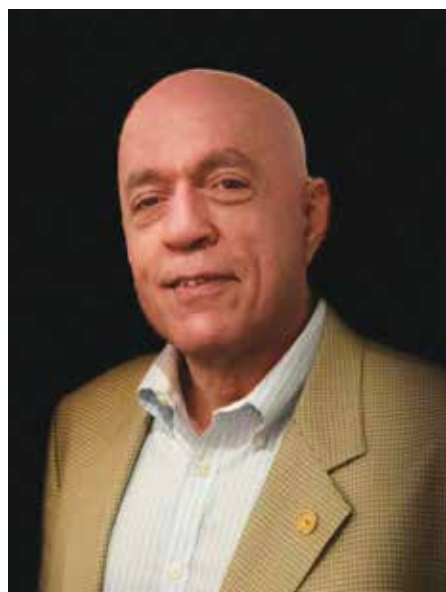
"Throughout his tenure, Representative Harris has shown a dedication to meeting our state's biggest challenges head on. Throughout his career, he has worked to advance progressive ideals, while also building bipartisan consensus.

"He led a historic effort to make Illinois one of the first states to pass legislation ensuring equal rights for same-sex couples; he has spearheaded complicated Medicaid reforms with an eye toward compassion and expanded access to health care; and his leadership was most critical during the budget crisis, when Representative Harris was instrumental in bringing together Democrats and Republicans to enact a bipartisan budget that protects lifesaving services like breast cancer screenings, child care, health care for the elderly and much more.

Harris—who is openly gay and HIV-positive—is replacing Barbara Flynn Currie, who had held the position since 1997.

"Honestly, it's a huge honor—but it's also going to be a lot of work," Harris told Windy City Times. "I hope to be able to work with Gov. Pritzker in turning our state around and stabilizing our fiscal situation.

When asked what he thinks the most difficult aspect of his new post will be, Harris said, "Over



State Rep. Greg Harris.
Photo courtesy of Omar Morales

the last four years, Gov. Rauner plunged us into billions of dollars of debt. There's a structural shortfall in the budget, and that gap's going to have to be closed. We're going to have to make some very difficult decisions."

In a separate statement, Equality Illinois CEO Brian C. Johnson said, "[Madigan's] appointment of Leader Harris further demonstrates the Speaker's commitment to LGBTQ equality and representation."

—Andrew Davis

Openly gay judge swears in Pritzker

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Longtime Cook County Circuit Court Judge James Snyder swore in Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker the early afternoon of Jan. 14.

Snyder is gay, and this was the first time an open member of the state's LGBT community has sworn in an Illinois governor, Pritzker's team noted.

"As a judge, I'm deeply honored," said Snyder, who has long known the new governor, a few days before the ceremony. "As a friend, I'm thrilled. It's always an honor when you get to be a 'face' for the community."

Snyder said that the ceremony required little preparation.

"The oaths of office that are required are literally in the state constitution," he explained, adding that the request from Pritzker a few weeks prior was a "wonderful, exciting call."

Snyder was appointed to the bench by the Illinois Supreme Court in 2007. In June 2018, he was appointed the president of the Illinois Judges Association, which represents some 1,500 active and retired judges across the state.

Lou Lang resigns from state House

Longtime Democratic politician Lou Lang resigned from his House seat Jan. 7, ABC7Chicago.com reported.

Lang, ending a 32-year legislative career, has joined the lobbying firm Advantage Government Strategies LLC. He plans to continue working on bills related to mental health, gambling and the expansion of cannabis, among other issues.

Last May, he resigned as deputy majority leader when a legislative activist accused him of sexual harassment. However, he was cleared of harassment or intimidation of Maryann Loncar.

Lang was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame (formerly the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame) in 2002 for his support of LGBT people and AIDS funding.

The article is at <https://abc7chicago.com/politics/longtime-lawmaker-lou-lang-resigns-house-seat/5031835/>.

44th Ward aldermanic forum Jan. 17

The Lakeview Citizens Council, in collaboration with both the East Lakeview & Lakeview Chamber of Commerce, will host a 44th Ward aldermanic forum on Thursday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m. at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Laura S. Washington—an award winning journalist, columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and political analyst for ABC 7-Chicago—will moderate the event.

There will be a diverse mix of questions from the forum sponsors and the audience.



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Preckwinkle holds LGBT roundtable

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Mayoral candidate and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle heard from LGBT advocates, community leaders and religious personnel, among others, as they addressed a multitude of issues pertinent to the LGBT community at a Jan. 7 roundtable discussion at the downtown offices of the Clark Hill law firm.

Preckwinkle said that she was meeting with a number of constituencies in Chicago as she sought the mayor's office in the 2019 race, and said that she was interested in hearing about concerns related to HIV/AIDS, LGBT youth, LGBT seniors and issues facing the trans community.

AIDS Foundation of Chicago President and CEO John Peller outlined the Getting to Zero campaign, a statewide initiative aiming to virtually eliminate new HIV transmissions in Illinois by 2030 by both increasing access to pre-exposure



Toni Preckwinkle.
Photo by Matt Simonette

prophylaxis (PrEP) interventions and working to ensure that HIV-positive Illinoisans can reach viral suppression. Antonio King of Chicago Department of Public Health noted that advocates need to address social determinants of health, such as housing and job-training, in order for Getting to Zero to work. He also noted that city physicians need to be better educated on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Others noted that focused and intentional concentration on joblessness was especially vital for transgender Chicagoans. Activist Reyna Ortiz emphasized that, "Sex work and unemploy-

ment in our society go hand-in-hand."

Tatyana Moaton of Howard Brown Health noted that work on behalf of the trans community needed to address systemic inequities that lead to challenges for those individuals: "We're not digging to the deeper issues of how those manifest," she said. "I think that the next mayor who comes into place will want to bridge those gaps."

Many participants noted that trans individuals generally do not sit on boards or advisory committees that suggest policy or accountability for the community. Brian Johnson of Equality Illinois noted that no trans people of color sat on the Chicago Police Board or were prominent in the Civilian Office of Police Accountability. Johnson further added that murders of transgender Chicagoans were almost never solved, and contrasted that with the heightened police response to two murders in Rogers Park this past fall.

Pastor Charles Straight also spoke about the need to engage religious personnel in "intentional conversations" about LGBT-related issues,

especially HIV/AIDS: "The mayor and the mayors representatives have to be intentional about how ... we are addressing the issues," he said.

Siloing of information was a key concern for many participants, noting that city departments frequently could not access information that could potentially bridge social-cultural gaps. One individual noted, for example, that service providers charged with finding housing resources for clients could not generally access information kept by Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Ortiz also emphasized the need for providers to access information quickly.

Activist Keith Green and King both spoke about increased use of crystal methamphetamine amongst gay men of color; King said that he would likely reconvene the city's Crystal Meth Task Force in 2019.

At the session's conclusion, Preckwinkle responded positively to a suggestion for a strategic plan for the city's LGBT community: "I always think it's helpful to have a framework for your activities and actions."



Cheryl Cesario, Annie O'Dowd and O'Dowd's partner, Jill Schwartz (from left).
Photo courtesy of Cesario

PASSAGES

Annie O'Dowd

Ann "Annie" O'Dowd, of The Villages, Florida, passed away Dec. 26, 2018. Annie was born on April 26, 1929 in Chicago. She was 89 when she died.

Her mother, Agnes, her father, Henry, and five siblings predeceased her.

Annie is survived by her partner of 44 years, Jill Schwartz, and Jill's family, who loved and cherished Annie: Jill's brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Susan Schwartz; her nieces, Cathy Schwartz and Sarah (Brian) Ayres; her great-nephew, Cory Ayres; and her great-niece, Casey Ayres.

A great joy in Annie's life was playing baseball for three years (1949-1951) for the All American

Girls Professional Baseball League, which is the league depicted in the movie *A League of Their Own*. She was a catcher and she played for several teams, including the Rockford Peaches, the primary team portrayed in the movie. Annie was proud to have been recognized by the National Baseball Hall of Fame for her contributions to women's baseball and to have her pictures and name displayed in the Women in Baseball exhibit at the Hall of Fame.

After leaving baseball, Annie worked as an office manager and buyer. She spent her working career in Chicago, moved to Atlanta upon retirement, and then to Fort Myers and then to the Villages in 2007.

A celebration of her life was held Jan. 5 at the Waterfront Inn in Lake Sumter Landing in The Villages.

CFW names 2019 Impact Award honorees

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) has announced the 2019 Impact Awards honoring local leaders for their efforts to create safe, just and healthy communities for all.

CFW will present the 2019 Impact Awards on Wed., March 27, at Venue SIX10 at Spertus Institute, 610 S. Michigan Ave., 6-8 p.m.

The honorees are:

—Hedy Ratner, co-founder of Women's Business Development Center (2019 Founders Award);

—Hoda Katebi, author of political fashion platform JooJoo Azad and host of radical online reading club #BecauseWeveRead (2019 Pioneer Award);

—Inhe Choi, executive director of the HANA Center and co-founder of Korean American Women in Need (2019 Impact Award);

—Dorri McWhorter, CEO of YWCA Metropolitan Chicago (2019 Impact Award); and

—Reyna Ortiz, an advocate for transgender women at Chicago House and Social Service Agency and Health Educator at Stroger Hospital (2019 Impact Award)

See CFW.org/impact.

Mich., Wis. guvs sign pro-LGBT bills

The governors of Michigan and Wisconsin have both signed pro-LGBT measures.

In Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order ED 2019-9, which bars discrimination against LGBT people in state employment, public services and state contracting, The Washington Blade noted. The directive goes into effect immediately.

Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Michigan State Director Amritha Venkataraman said in a statement sent to Windy City Times, "We were proud to turn out the pro-equality vote on Governor Whitmer's behalf in November and we thank Equality Michigan for their ongoing work to safeguard these protections in cities and communities across the Great Lake State.

Also, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers signed an executive order against anti-LGBT discrimination in state employment and state contracting.

In a separate statement that Windy City Times obtained, HRC Wisconsin State Director Wendy Strout said, "We were proud to turn out LGBTQ voters in November to help elect Evers, and thank Fair Wisconsin for their ongoing work to end anti-LGBTQ discrimination across our state."

The Blade article is at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2019/01/07/new-michigan-wisconsin-guvs-signs-orders-against-anti-lgbt-bias/>.

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Man Up Medical co-founder looks to past to shape present

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Dean Hervochon dispenses words of advice like they are business cards.

He is the guy who knows everything, as his friends tell him, and he's not full of cliché mot-tos, either—they all come from personal experience. His knowledge, business experience and connections have reaped benefits in his past careers, his current work and his future endeavors—because in his 50s, he is not done sharing what he has learned.

Hervochon is the co-founder of Man Up Medical clinic in Lake View, and served as the co-founder and executive vice president of Great Lakes Clinical Trials, a research clinic in Andersonville.

It now stands out as a lab that specializes in Alzheimer's and schizophrenia research, but it was just an idea in Hervochon's mind in 2012. It would never have become a reality if it were not for his experience owning Wood restaurant for two years previously. It was there that, after being tricked into business with his friend, he learned the ropes of owning a company and got his guts.

"[Wood] taught me how to open a business and how to be fearless," Hervochon said. "If had never done Wood, I would have never opened Great Lakes."

Hervochon's determination and connections got Great Lakes off the ground in 2013, which he founded with his ex-partner, Steve Satek, who has 25 years of pharmaceutical and clinical research experience. The day after the two discussed starting a clinic, Hervochon had \$400,000 in investors and two physicians interested.

The two raised the money, found the doctors, got the patients, found a space and brought the pharma. Hervochon said he raised \$1.5 million for the project and Satek around \$400,000; the business model proved to be a strong one and, although Hervochon left the team in 2013, he is still one of the top investors in the company.

Originally from Chaparral, New Mexico, Hervochon grew up in a trailer park with slim opportunities. Big cities are where he found his footing, and has been running ever since, having lived in Chicago for 24 years. With his past experience as a flight attendant and a mortgage broker to building houses to owning Wood, he has acquired expertise most won't taste in their careers.

Owning a restaurant and starting two medical practices also allowed him to tap into his leadership skills as the former vice president of the flight attendant union. He held the position for six years and called it an amazing experience, where he learned about labor laws and employee worth—another lesson he brought to his medical worlds.

"People have said I have reinvented myself more than anyone they know," he said.

But he doesn't see it as a reinvention, but a



Dean Hervochon.

Photo courtesy of Hervochon

foundation. Building on what he knows has allowed him to use all of his life skills and start Man Up Medical, where he and his team have been able to provide services to men struggling with erectile dysfunction, testosterone-replacement therapy and hormone growth in women.

The clinic opened in June 2018 and has since built a name in Chicago. Hervochon said they have seen steady patients because the products are hard to get and are U.S.-made, which means they are FDA-approved and pure. Trimix, considered the most powerful and effective erectile dysfunction drug, is one of the clinic's bestsellers. Hervochon said patients have cried because they never thought they could get an erection again and the drug tremendously helped them. This shows there is a need in Chicago for these products, which are sold in few clinics in the city, he said.

"As a gay person going into a clinic downtown, you can feel quite awkward because you are talking to a straight guy about having gay sex," Hervochon said. "We've given [the LGBTQ com-

munity] easy access to drugs that have changed people's lives."

He said the clinic's team—which consists of physician and medical director Tom Klein, clinic director Peter Georgiou and Hervochon as the head of business development—did not expect the products to be so effective but see them as a medicine to help men with ED.

"We have guys who are bottoms that turn into tops," Hervochon said.

The clinic not only stands out for its services but also because each visit is free and anyone can walk in with proper assessment and blood work, also complimentary. The friendly and personal environment contributes to patient comfort, he said.

"This is where your good deeds and life experience comes into play," he said. "I learned from



Dejanay Stanton.

Photo from Stanton's Facebook account

Teen charged with murder of trans woman

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A 17-year-old has been charged with the murder of Dejanay Stanton, a transgender Chicagoan who was killed this past August.

The alleged assailant, Tremon Hill, faces one first-degree murder charge in the Aug. 30 episode. Stanton's body was discovered in the 4000 block of South Calumet Avenue late in the morning that day, after persons nearby said that they had heard gunshots.

According to Chicago Police, Hill was arrested the morning of Jan. 12. He was denied bail at a hearing the following day. Fox 32 reported that Hill will be charged as an adult. Stanton and Hill had allegedly been engaged in a relationship for some time.

Stanton's killing was the first of two murders of transgender women in the city last year that were confirmed by authorities and community members. Rumors circulated in late December of two others, but the circumstances surrounding those deaths have not been confirmed. Should the case be closed on Stanton's murder, it would be the first murder of a transgender Chicagoan that has been solved in about 20 years.

Great Lakes to pick your partners well and get into business with people who esteem you rather than demean you."

His other long-running passion comes from his love of sharing what he knows: his friends call him the "go to gay guy," which is also his blog where he shares his opinion and advice to readers, both gay and straight. It's known in the local gay community as a place for advice on sex, beauty, fashion, etiquette, entertainment and more. This is one of many examples that Hervochon knows how to turn nothing into something that has increased his confidence, almost with a snap of his fingers. It's another life skill in action.

"If you do good things, it builds your self-esteem," he said. "There is no way to do build your self-esteem unless you do good things."

LGBTQ mayoral forum Jan. 19

An LGBTQ mayoral forum will take place Saturday, Jan. 19, 2-4 p.m., at the Second Presbyterian Church, 1936 S. Michigan Ave.

LGBTQ community organizations Affinity Community Services, the Association of Latinos/as Motivating Action, the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, the Equality Illinois Institute, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, Pride Action Tank and Windy City Times are hosting the forum.

The mayoral election is on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

See <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/lgbtq-forum-with-the-chicago-mayor-candidates/> to register and to view more information.

Windy City Times: Change is in the air

Windy City Times is changing its print production schedule for 2019. Effective this January, WCT will be primarily a biweekly print publication. Exceptions will include during Pride Month and for a special wedding guide and other stand-alone publications. The biweekly publication schedule starts with the Jan. 16 issue, followed by an issue Jan. 30.

WCT has been a free newspaper serving the Chicago LGBTQ since 1985. Since the mid-1990s, it has also grown as a daily online platform, and several years ago, the online audience surpassed the print publication readers. As more and more people receive their news daily online, WCT has kept pace on the web, email and social media. More than 125,000 unique visitors visit the WCT website each month, with 21,000 on Twitter, 15,000 on Facebook and 2,000 on Instagram.

Given changes in print advertising nationally in the LGBT press, more and more publications have changed production schedules, closed or gone online only. Windy City Times is going bi-weekly in an effort to streamline its efforts to cover Chicago's LGBTQ community.

For details contact Publisher Terri Klinsky at terri@windycitymediagroup.com.

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viewpoints

LEE
LYNCH

THE AMAZON TRAIL

A poem
and a plant

The day was typical for the Pacific Northwest. The brightening sky had stopped sputtering its fine dew-drops for the moment, the wind had blown itself out, and the development where I live came to life. People took advantage of the disappearing dreariness to walk their dogs, scurry to our centrally located mailboxes, or meet their step goals.

I dropped off a copy of New York Magazine in the common room. The cover quoted Melissa Shusterman, who's running for the Pennsylvania state legislature. "My 16-year-old turned to me after the election and he said, 'America doesn't want a smart, qualified woman in office.' By Friday, I was running..."

A neighbor was bending over the magazine table. "New York!," he said when I lay it down. "Perfect!," He read the quote and turned to me, asking if I'd read a book called The Alphabet vs. The Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image. He explained in a rush that the late author and surgeon Leonard Shlaine demonstrated how brain science discoveries of left- and right-brain functions and studies of the development of images in the form of words, overcame the intuitive Divine Principal in Feminine consciousness and that was how men were able to take power from women.

Of course, I told him about the work of the late Mary Daly in her brilliant book Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism, where she does her

own exploration of the synthesis of theology, mythology, philosophy, history and medicine.

I'd never spoken with this particular neighbor before, a straight man who always wears an Australian bush hat and has a stride like a modified silly walk. Suddenly I'm having a brief discussion of Goddess religions, radical feminist analysis of language, and the inevitable parting words, have a nice day.

As I said, the day was typical for the Pacific Northwest.

The evening before, my author friend, aka the handy dyke, and I had dinner with a local non-gay feminist woman who is an attorney, writer and publisher. The occasion was the visit by two of her friends from London, a lesbian couple of 30 years. Through her work in the field of fighting the aggressors of women and children, she met Julie Bindel, an extremely accomplished British radical lesbian feminist journalist and author of such works as Straight Expectations and Exiting Prostitution. With Julie was her partner Harriet Wistrich, a civil-rights attorney who is such a powerful voice for women she's fought and succeeded in changing British law.

Our time was short but intense. I knew of Julie's work because in 2008 she reviewed The Butch Cookbook for The Guardian newspaper. The cookbook was put together by the handy dyke, her partner the pianist, and me, and was published by the host. It's a wonder the restaurant is still standing after the confluence of conversations our little pack of rabidly feminist lesbians bounced around the table. Outside the window, commercial fishing boats docked or set off for Alaska and tourists explored the bayfront, oblivious to the Divine Principal in Feminine consciousness above them, raging over oysters at the patriarchal world.

Back home, walking the neighborhood, I spied a friend weeding in her front yard. She'd started dialysis treatments the week before, yet there she was, on the ground, digging up little green offenders. I

stopped to say hello and she said, "Oh! Can you wait a minute? I have something for you..."

This was not unusual. She is full of kindness. She helps the sick, the lonely, the needy. She always has something for passing neighbors. This time, it was a poem. She's a lovely poet and she'd rediscovered a short verse that delighted me in its original use of words. We stood in her garage for a bit, out of the misty rain, leaning against her small red car, she perhaps a bit shaky, me with my leg pain.

We spoke about writing and she said of her writing group, plainly and perfectly, "I really enjoy talking with writers no matter what they write. It's about our common need to put thoughts on paper and bring to a story to resolution..."

I was thrilled to hear the magazine-seeking neighbor refer to patriarchal societies. It was invigorating and comradely to share the lesbian feminist anger and eagerness at that restaurant table the evening before. It was peaceful and gentle and familiar to breathe and watch nature from a friend's open garage.

I walked out to a plant lush with bloom, hefted some dangling white and pink blossoms in my hand and asked what it was.

"That's a Columbine..." said my neighbor. She told me about the wildflower and explained that she was forever cutting it back. "Here..." she said, and took her pointed little shovel and stomped on its edge until she loosened the soil. Fearful that she'd exhaust herself, I went behind, felt around for the roots and lifted the pretty offshoot and its ball of soil in my hands.

Amazed at my two days of rich encounters, at the fullness of my life, I hurried the two blocks home, a poem in one hand, a blue bucket with swaying stems in the other.

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letters

Let's walk together

To the editor:

The Chicago mayoral election on Feb. 26 might provide the LGBTQA community with another point of evolution in compassion for our neighbors who live and die in poverty and useless violence. We must never allow ourselves to forget that everyone has a right to dignity.

It is my hope that the mayoral forum on Jan. 19 at the Second Presbyterian Church will not allow this marginalized population to be forgotten. People of

faith must support this forum with their presence and beliefs.

We must not allow this political forum to sink to the level of personal animus and cynical alliances; but rather as a springboard to promote socioeconomic rights for all of God's people in our city. Nor should we allow this forum to be usurped by inappropriate behavior.

People of faith have an opportunity to speak to the primacy of love in this forum, and they should not be intimidated by bullying and fear. All should be respected and listened to whether you agree or disagree with their opinions. We need to rethink the

relationship between prayer and action. Let's walk together in the hope of new beginnings for the City of Chicago.

The organizations pulling this forum together are doing a tremendous service for our community, and the Rainbow Sash Movement encourages the community to support this event, and thanks those who are working tirelessly to bring it into being.

Joe Murray
Executive Director
Rainbow Sash Movement
(LGBTQA Roman Catholics)

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



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THE ART OF DRAG

SALTINE'S
PROFANE ART
LECTURE IN
THIS WEEK'S
SPOTLIGHT

PAGE 13

Cody Sullivan as Saltine.
Photo from Ryan Thiel

THEATER REVIEW

St. Nicholas

By: Conor McPherson

At: The Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.

Tickets: GoodmanTheatre.org/StNicholas;

\$31-\$85

Runs through: Jan. 27

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

Artists are suspicious of critics. How can a person who does not create pick apart another's creation, they wonder.

They might be especially suspect of Brendan Coyle's cynical critic in *St. Nicholas*, now playing at Goodman Theatre after a run at the Donmar Warehouse in London. Coyle—best known for his roles on *Downton Abbey* and *Lark Rise to Candleford*—plays a man so spiritually bankrupt, he has no objections to procuring flesh for vampires. His command of playwright Conor McPherson's combined imagery and seediness make this production one to ponder for a good long while.

When we are first introduced to the theatre critic, he emerges from the darkness, sheltered by papered over windows and protected by a ring of rice he pours on the floor. We instantly question his motives. He tells us he was at the top of his game professionally in Dublin, but he cared little for anyone or anything around him—not his family, not the actors whose careers he influenced, and not the work he thoughtlessly typed out for his reviews. It is not until he becomes emotionally entangled with an actress, and then falls into

Brendan Coyle in *St. Nicholas*.

Photo by Helen Maybanks

the company of mesmerizing young creatures of the night, that he begins to see what his life lacks, and questions whether or not he can put it right.

If you wonder why I have written so little about actual vampires being a part of this world, then I assume you have never seen a Conor McPherson play. His inspiration for *St. Nicholas* came to him in a dream, in which he was bitten by a vampire, and then handed pain pills to deal with the supernatural event. His plays always place the fantastical squarely in our reality, so a play about a critic rediscovering his passion for story while encountering vampirism should not seem so off-kilter. For McPherson, it's that tension between us and the unknown that creates good theatre.

And McPherson has the sharp eye of director Simon Evans and the precise physicality of Coyle to keep the audience on edge throughout this existential crisis. Evans has Coyle command the stage as he might any pub, moving indiscriminately but claiming any space he takes, every gulp of water he drains. Coyle mesmerizes the audience in his own way, painting his character's drunken strolls and unfulfilled desires with merely the wave of his hands. His critic may be washed up and isolated, but you cannot look away as he weaves a story worth telling.

Peter McKintosh's earthbound office set pays against Matt Daw's lights, which slowly dim over the course of the evening, only to paint the newspapered windows passionate hues of pink and red, showing us what's possible beyond what we can see. If critics cannot be trusted, then at least we learn in *St. Nicholas* that they can put on a show.

THEATER REVIEW

I Call My Brothers

Author: Jonas Hassen Khemiri

At: Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

Tickets: 312-219-4140 or

InterrobangTheatre.org; \$16-\$32

Runs through: Feb. 2

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

The Chicago premiere of Jonas Hassen Khemiri's (and translator Rachel Willson-Broyles') *I Call My Brothers* feels like it's offering up a shared history of injustice dished out to communities of color when unexplained violence rocks European cities.

But this exploration of recent bombings in Sweden, and the Arab residents who are ready to be assumed guilty by authorities, does something different. It teases us with a bit of didactic direct address, then settles quickly on one man's journey to to unearth himself from the societal mantle of 'dangerous', and his unspoken worry that he will become a victim of his own anxiety.

Director Abhi Shrestha and Interrobang Theatre let viewers in on a characters' internal world, which seems grounded at first, but who among us can stay happy in the face of loneliness and failure for long? Instead we're pulled into the sand draining from under the feet of a man who needs someone to assure him he is not a burdensome lost cause.

When explosions rock Stockholm, and Arab

Tina El Gamal and Salar Ardebili in *I Call My Brothers*.

Photo by Emily Schwartz

communities brace for even more bigotry and scrutiny than usual, we meet Amor (Salar Ardebili); a man who'd rather not let on just how close he's been to the brink of meltdown, even before police and heightened surveillance came into the picture. He's stuck reaching out to his family (Tina El Gamal), Valeria (Gloria Imseih Petrelli), who keeps her distance from his obsessive tendencies, and Shavi (Chris Khoshaba) who is so available and selfless, Amor would rather be

alone. Amor imagines himself to be so reviled among his circle, that the idea of a radicalized Arabic outsider starts to manifest in his brain, as he wonders aloud, into his cell phone if he'd be capable of the same violence that rocked his city the day before.

Director Abhi Shrestha embraces a lo-fi staging, with actors keeping each other awash in the glow of neon light sticks, recording their own reverb, or combing through a forest of glittering

mylar headscarves. As Shavi, Chris Khoshaba is a non-stop beam of sunshine and energy that is a perfect counter to Amor's propensity to shrink to nothing. Gloria Imseih Petrelli brings that same brightness to Valeria, with equal parts sardonic disdain. And Tina El Gamal bounds all over the playing field as no-nonsense cousins, ominous surveillance operatives, and Amor's feisty grandmother. They are all made more poignant by Salar Ardebili, who can't help but suffocate from the power of his own thoughts, as Amor.

Anyone who suffers from anxiety or panic attacks will recognize the impossibility of Amor's simple exchanges, and his chest-constricting breaths. Anyone who who supports a loved one with anxiety will feel the powerlessness that comes from trying to help battle that panic.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Full Monty, Theo Ubiq Cabaret Theatre, through Jan 26. Though still adjusting to their new quarters, Theo Ubiq's trademark close-up-and-intimate approach to its musical genre generates the effusive charm that makes this Rogers Park company one of the city's biggest attractions. MSB

Chicago Magic Lounge, open run. The tricks begin the minute you step off the sidewalk and never let up at this sleek and shiny club pioneering the revival of the Uptown-Edgewater entertainment district. MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge

'Hedwig' tour in Chicago in 2019

John Cameron Mitchell—the Tony-winning, Golden Globe-nominated co-creator of Hedwig & the Angry Inch—will bring his rock spectacle to the United States for the first time, a press release noted.

For four exclusive engagements, Mitchell and his four-piece band will perform songs from his rock musical and share stories from 20 years of Hedwig.

The tour will stop at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport Ave., on Feb. 22. Other stops will include Washington, D.C.; Boston; and New York City.



John Cameron Mitchell.

Mitchell will also preview songs from his upcoming 'musical podcast' Anthem: Homunculus, a 10-episode series with more than 30 new songs starring himself, Glenn Close, Patti Lupone, Cynthia Erivo, Denis O'Hare, Laurie Anderson and Marion Cotillard.

For more on the Athenaeum stop, visit <https://athenaeumtheater.org/john-cameron-mitchell/>.

New CSO recording with Muti available

The new CSO (Chicago Symphony Orchestra) Resound recording Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks is now available in international retail outlets including the Symphony



Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks. Image from Eileen Chambers

Store and SymphonyStore.com, as well as for digital download and streaming.

The recording is the Orchestra's ninth with Music Director Riccardo Muti on its own label.

Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks features a selection of works by 19th-century Italian composers Verdi, Puccini, Mascagni and Boito, whose works epitomize one of the most important periods of Italian opera. The works were recorded live in Orchestra Hall in June 2017 during the final concert of the CSO's 126th season.

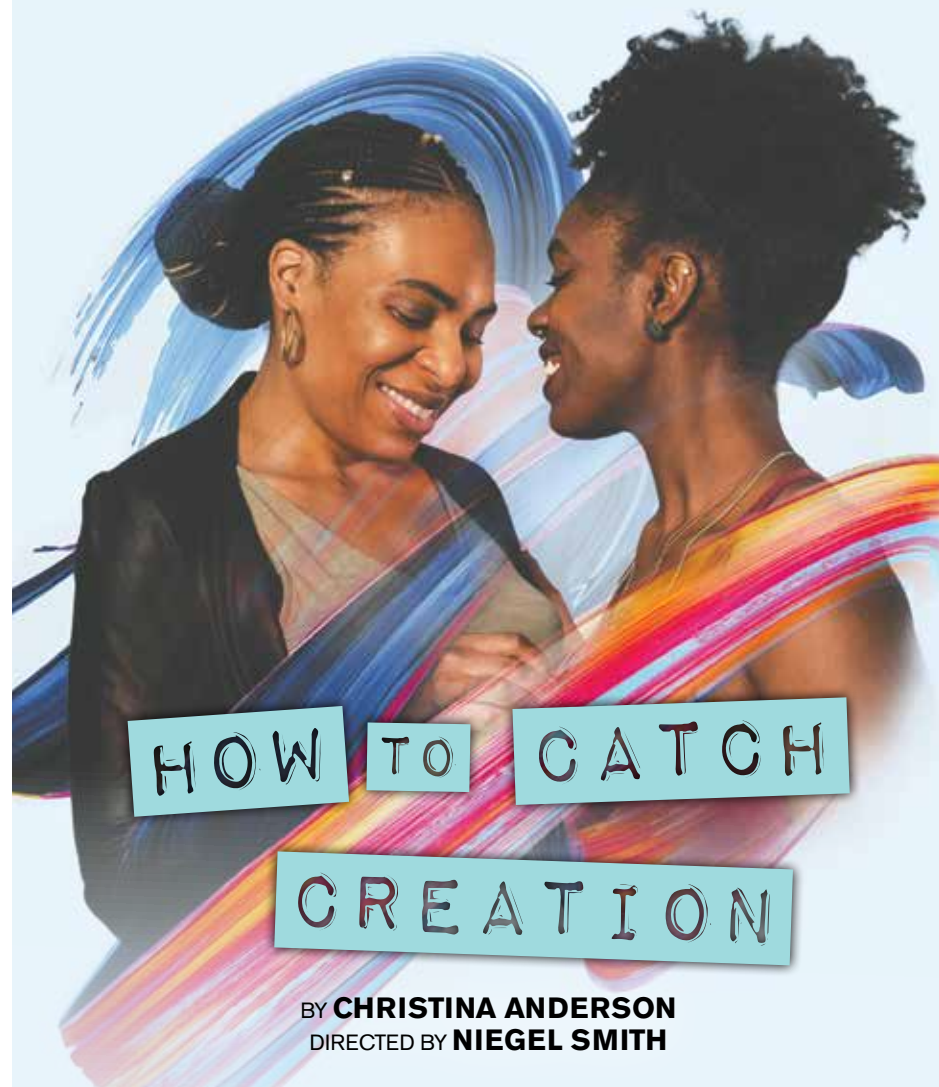
Yanis Marshall dance class Feb. 1

Choreographer/dancer Yanis Marshall will teach an exclusive street jazz and heels dance workshop to a limited amount of dancers.

The class will take place Friday, Feb. 1, at Lou Conte Dance Studio at Hubbard Street Dance, 1147 W. Jackson Blvd. Registration will start at 6:45 p.m. for street jazz, and 8:45 p.m. for heels. Space is very limited.

Admission is \$40-\$65 each; visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yanis-marshall-street-jazz-heels-workshop-chicago-il-friday-20119-registration-54013269142>.

Change can happen in a heartbeat.



BY **CHRISTINA ANDERSON**
DIRECTED BY **NIEGEL SMITH**

A young writer's life turns upside down when her girlfriend drops some unexpected news. Fifty years later, four artists feel the reverberations of that moment—and its unexpected consequences—as their lives intersect in pursuit of creative passion and legacy.

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SPOTLIGHT

Cody Sullivan delivers the kind of history lessons you'll never hear at the Art Institute or any other reputable institution. Actually, scratch that: It's Sullivan's drag persona Saltine who holds forth on the genesis of iconic works including DaVinci's Mona Lisa, Rodin's The Thinker and Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway. If you like your art history profane and infused with more alt-reality than a Dali clock, this show's for you. It runs at 10:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Feb. 5 at The Frontier Theater, 1106 W. Thorndale Ave. Tickets are \$10 each; visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/impressions-tickets>. Photo courtesy of Guys and Queens



Aaron Alexander on being part of the 'Hamilton' ensemble

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Two years and three months into its Chicago run, *Hamilton* remains one of the costliest and most coveted tickets in town.

While the show has gone through multiple leads—half a dozen Burrs, Elizas, Angelicas and Jefferson/Lafayettes have passed through—one cast member has been with the production since it opened in October 2016. Ensemble member Aaron Alexander is onstage for roughly 90 percent of the show, and is prepared to go on at a second's notice for any of the six small character roles.

This week, Alexander, an out native of Seattle, is embarking on his first prolonged vacation since the show opened—heading for Israel for a birthright trip. We caught up with him shortly before he left. Here's what he had to say about being in the room where *Hamilton* happens for eight shows a week.

Windy City Times: So you're a "swing" in the cast, and you cover a bunch of different "tracks." Explain.

Aaron Alexander: I'm in the ensemble, so I'm on stage for almost the entire show. I cover several different roles plus all the dance tracks—I go in and out where I'm needed. If someone calls out sick or gets injured, I step in.

Sometimes you have a week notice before you swing in to in a role, sometimes—like if somebody gets sick or injured—it happens mid-show. You rally your body and your spirits and you suit up and go.

I cover [disgraced Battle of Monmouth] General [Charles] Lee, [King George shill] Samuel Seabury, [Philip Hamilton dueler] George Eacker and [extortionist] James Reynolds. It's a lot to learn and a lot of upkeep.

I was never a swing before *Hamilton*, never understudied anything. It's been a lesson in letting go of ego. As a swing, you learn really fast that the show is much, much bigger than any one person. It's taught me about humility and how to embrace change.

One of the coolest things about *Hamilton*—the reason we all have a single bow at the curtain call—is because of that, because it's bigger than one person. It's dependent on every single person on stage.

WCT: By my count, *Hamilton* Chicago has gone through about six Burrs, at least three Angelicas and two Elizas. Is it difficult to learn to say goodbye?

AA: You learn to adapt quickly. You learn to keep heart open to change, because it happens so frequently.

When somebody new comes on, it can be reinvigorating. You're experiencing the show a little differently than you have been because every performer that takes on a lead has their own nu-

THEATER

ances and energy and mannerisms, even though obviously they music and the lyrics and the show itself doesn't change. It's fun.

WCT: You've got a job that hundreds—arguably thousands—of people wanted and auditioned for. How brutal was the audition process?

AA: I wasn't that familiar with the show when I auditioned. You can't be really familiar with a show until you've seen it, and I was in L.A., so I hadn't seen it. I'd heard some of the music, but other than that, I didn't know much. I was going through a dry patch. No work for about six months, just a lot of being on hold for jobs I wouldn't get. A friend told me 'Hamilton' had really quirky choreography style that I would take to, so when I heard they were having auditions in Los Angeles, I went. Quirky has always been my strong suit.

WCT: You trained as a dancer?

AA: I didn't consistently train with any formal institution as a kid—I did a lot of drop-in classes in Seattle, always kind of a drifter. I performed a lot at malls in this hip-hop crew with a bunch of 20-year-olds when I was 12 –

WCT: Wait: You were a 12-year-old hip-hop performer? In malls?

AA: I was the little kid in the group Street Level. We'd do combos from pop songs at street fairs and things. That was the music and dance style I loved. So when I heard about *Hamilton*, I wanted to give it a shot.

WCT: Back to the audition...

AA: The first audition in L.A. was three hours. We learned two combos, there were two cuts. Af-



Aaron Alexander.
Photo from
Amanda Meyer

ter that I did what I do with all my auditions—I let it go. Didn't think about it. Two months later, I got invited to a final call back in New York. They had us learn five combos. Then we did singing. It was a long day.

WCT: So, years later, you're doing eight shows a week. And not like *Les Miz* shows where you get an hour break after you die and can go take a nap. How do you take care of yourself?

AA: I don't drink much anymore. It messes with my energy. I don't eat a lot of pizza. I do stay up late—I'm off work at 11, and then I have to have dinner and wind down. It's mostly just general awareness: Don't eat a lot of junk. If you're tired, schedule a nap. The show is an exercise in listening to your body.

WCT: I've heard that all dancers dance injured—it's just a question of how much. Is that true for you?

AA: Before *Hamilton*, I was having recurring

lower-back issues that I'd never gotten answers about. Now with the health insurance and the physical therapy the show provides, I've finally gotten those taken care of. Right now I'm dealing with a tweaked neck thing—I went on for George Eacker last week and I think I did something during then.

WCT: OK: *Hamilton* audiences—I've been in four. Sometimes they go berserk at lines like "Immigrants! We get the job done!" And sometimes they just sit there like stones. Does what the audience does impact your mindset?

AA: That's something else swinging has taught me: Sometimes you have really loud audiences and sometimes you don't. Either way, your job is the same: to deliver a great performance.

I know a lot of people notice how engaged the audience is, they feed off it. Me, I have to focus strictly on my track. I have a lot of compartmentalized information in my brain. I have to keep my awareness on precisely what I'm doing and what is happening around me. That makes me less aware of the ins and outs off the audience everyday.

WCT: I see you're a fan of [the FX series] *Pose*. Any other pop culture recommendations?

AA: [The FX miniseries] *The Assassination of Gianni Versace* is fantastic. So beautifully art-directed and obviously deals with a lot of LGBTQ+ issues. I think any new type of LGBTQ+ representation and exploration of that community is worthwhile. I mean, it's a creepy show. But it's fascinating.

I loved *Head Over Heels* [on Broadway]. That was wonderfully queer in many, many many ways. If it ever tours to Chicago see it. Everyone should see it. Oh. And [the TV series] *Schitt's Creek*—that is pretty great too.

WCT: Have you had a vacation since you started in *Hamilton*?

AA: I'm about to take one. Doing a birthright trip to the Holy Land. After that, time will tell. But I'll be back.

***Hamilton* continues at the CIBC Theatre, 18 W. Monroe St. Tickets range from about \$72 to approximately \$500, plus "convenience" fees; visit BroadwayinChicago.com.**



Hamilton in 2016.
Photo by Joan Marcus

GALECA names Dorian winners

GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics—composed of more than 200 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and ally entertainment journalists in the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom—has announced its 10th Dorian Award winners across 26 TV and film categories.

Some of the winners in the film categories include *The Favourite* (Film of the Year), Roma's Alfonso Cuarón (Director of the Year), Olivia Colman (Film Performance of the Year: Actress, for *The Favourite*), Ethan Hawke (Film Performance of the Year: Actor, for *First Reformed*), *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (LGBTQ Film of the Year), *A Simple Favor* (Campy Flick of the Year) and *McQueen*

(LGBTQ Documentary of the Year).

In the television sector, winners include *Schitt's Creek* (TV Comedy of the Year), *Pose* (TV Drama of the Year and LGBTQ TV Show of the Year), RuPaul's *Drag Race* (Campy TV Show of the Year), *Pose*'s Billy Porter (TV Performance of the Year: Actor) and *Killing Eve*'s Sandra Oh (TV Performance of the Year: Actress), among others.

The Dorian Awards also has categories such as The "We're Wilde About You!" Rising Star Award (won by Crazy Rich Asians' Awkwafina), Wilde Wit of the Year (Hannah Gadsby), Wilde Artist of the Year (Ryan Murphy) and Timeless Star (Harvey Fierstein).

GALECA held its Winners Toast Jan. 12 with a party at the Paley restaurant in Hollywood's Columbia Square. Frank DeCaro—of *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart and SiriusXM's *The Frank DeCaro Show* fame—was the master of ceremonies.

This photo: Emma Stone and Olivia Colman in *The Favourite*.

Photo by Yorgos Lanthimos

Right: Billy Porter in *Pose*.

Photo courtesy of Pari Dukovic/FX



Gaga, 'Versace' among Critics' Choice winners

Lady Gaga and *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* were among those who prevailed at the 24th Critics' Choice Awards that honor achievements in film and television.

The event—which the Broadcast Film Critics Association and Broadcast Television Journalists Association host—took place Jan. 13 at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California.

In a rare development, Gaga was a co-winner in the Best Actress in a Film category. She won for *A Star Is Born* while tying with Glenn Close (*The Wife*), who beat the singer/actress at the Golden Globes recently; they both edged another Golden Globes winner, Olivia Colman (*The Favourite*), and Melissa McCarthy (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*), making the Oscar race even tighter. *A Star Is Born* also won for best song ("Shallow"); however, actor/director Bradley Cooper lost to Christian Bale (*Vice*) in the Best Actor category.

Roma took best film in a 10-movie category, edging such works as the lesbian-centric *The Favourite*, *Green Book*, *A Star Is Born*, *Black Panther* and *Mary Poppins Returns*. However, *The Favourite* won for best acting ensemble and Colman won for best actress in a comedy. (The awards ceremony had this and Best Actor in a Comedy as categories separate from Best Actress and Best Actor.)

On the television side, "Versace" won for best limited series as well as best actor in a limited series or movie made for television (Darren Criss); co-stars Finn Wittrock, Penelope Cruz and Judith Light lost in their categories.

Golden Globes co-host Sandra Oh won in the Best Actress in a Drama Series category for *Killing Eve*, while *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* won for best comedy series, best actress in a comedy series (Rachel Brosnahan) and best supporting actress in a comedy series (Alex Borstein). *Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert* won in the Best Movie Made for Television category.

Taye Diggs hosted the Critics' Choice Awards.



Photo by Michael Brosilow

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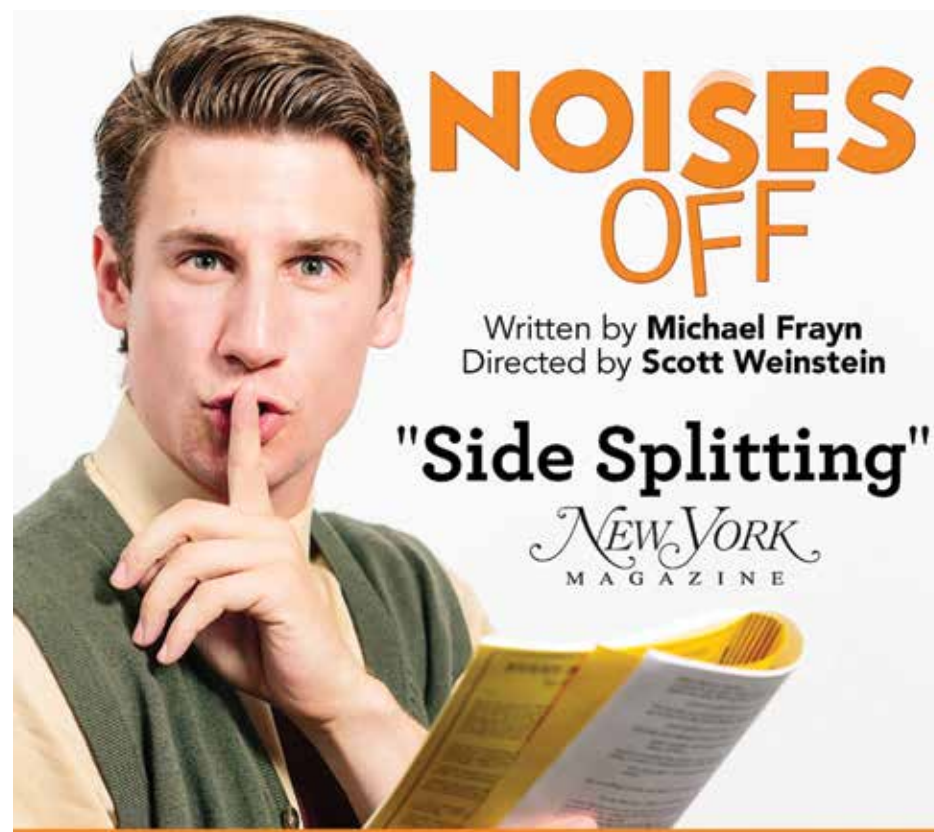
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Sketch Comedy Festival line-up named

SketchFest Executive Producer Jill Valentine announced the official line-up for the 18th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, taking place through Jan. 20 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* are back. Featured international participants 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.

CULTURE CLUB



Same-sex couple rocks records at Rattleback

BY JERRY NUNN

There's a new retailer in town, called Rattlebake Records, located in Andersonville at 5405 N. Clark St. Husband-and-husband team Paul Ruffino and Mike Weaver opened the place recently and it features vinyl, CDs, cassettes, movies and retro novelties for the home.

Windy City Times talked with half of the couple, Paul Ruffino, about the new business.

Windy City Times: Where are you from, originally?

Paul Ruffino: From Chicago. I went to Taft High School, on the Northwest Side. By the way, that is where Allan Carr—who wrote the screenplay for *Grease*—graduated from.

WCT: Was it like a musical there?

PR: It did have a big musical-theater program.

WCT: Were you the Sandra Dee in school?

PR: I would say so. Wouldn't you? Maybe, more like Rizzo...

WCT: When did you first start selling music?

PR: I first got a job at Musicland. That was my first foray into retail music. I worked there as a manager for a number of years.

I was recruited by Second Hand Tunes. The owner had a habit of sending letters to Musicland stores, addressed to the manager, asking if they wanted to work for him. I called him and ended up working there for seven years.

While I was there, I got a degree in teaching. I moved to California and taught for five years. I eventually became a principal in Skokie.

WCT: Why did you quit teaching?

PR: I was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease after being sick often. I could no longer be around kids with the medication I was taking that gave me a suppressed immune system. I had to step away from education in June of 2017.

I told Mike I always wanted to have my own store so we did it.

WCT: Where did the name Rattleback Records come from?

PR: Rattleback is an ancient top that spins in one direction—but if spun from the other direction, it actually rattles and will start spinning in the other direction again. It defies the laws of physics and is a scientific curiosity. I wanted the name to have a different kind of spin to it.

WCT: How long was the process of creating a record store?

PR: We started looking at places in July of this year. I love records, garage sales and music. I wanted to marry it all together.

WCT: Do you have trouble letting go of any items?

PR: I still have my personal collection at home. I thought I would have a tougher time, but eventually just let stuff go. We need the money!

Mike is very happy to have his office back and not have piles of records everywhere.

WCT: With the younger culture embracing vinyl again, is this good timing for the store?

MUSIC



Paul Ruffino and Mike Weaver.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

PR: Yes, it is. We have records, DVDs, CDs, 45s and cassette tapes. New releases are now released on vinyl and cassette. I don't even know what people are playing these things on. It's crazy!

Since we have been open, vinyl is the lion's share of what is selling.

WCT: What about selling clothing?

PR: I have some vintage concert T-shirts that I will put out. If I had the space for more clothing I would go for it.

I have a lot of posters and prints, so we will do a wire across the ceiling to hang them on.

WCT: Are there other employees?

PR: No, it is just me and Mike running it. There has been some help from family and friends that have been really supportive. Sometimes after a full day of work my friends will come in and stock the shelves or price.

WCT: Where do you live these days?

PR: We live in Edgewater. It is five minutes from here so we love that. We have always been connected to this community, but now that we have this store we feel connected even more.

WCT: What are you plans for the future?

PR: Giving back to the LGBT community is really important to me. I would love to get local musicians together to make cover songs that are gender ambiguous themed. I want to start a Rattleback Records label to release it on. I would love the proceeds to go to the trans community.

Visit RattlebackRecords.com for store hours and information.

Kristina Valada-Viars.

Photo by Misty Winter Photography

Kristina Valada-Viars:

Out actress discusses lengthy career



BY JERRY NUNN

Out actress Kristina Valada-Viars continues to expand her life in theater.

A big part of this is thanks to the Steppenwolf and the Princess Grace Foundation. The foundation was started 36 years ago by Prince Rainier III of Monaco to honor the legacy of his wife, Princess Grace.

The goal of the foundation is to find emerging talent in theater, dance and film. Valada-Viars fellowship is with acting and directing through the organization. With this she worked as an assistant director on BLKS and Doppelganger. She also played the lead in the Steppenwolf Young Adults production of The Crucible.

She has a long list of theater credits, but has also appeared on Showtime's Shameless and Fox's

Empire. She is also part an all-female creative team with a new Chicago made web series called The Force.

Windy City Times: You are from Iowa?

Kristina Valada-Viars: I wasn't born there, but that is where I grew up. It was good enough to me, much like New York, to land me where I am. I was lucky to grow up in a community theater run by my parents. I came out at 15 years old, in 1995. I had a natural gay adolescence. I am grateful for that.

When I was growing up, it was not a national conversation, since it was two years before Ellen Degeneres came out. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was very present and "if you have sex, you will die" was a big thing.

WCT: Condoms in school was [a controversial topic]...

KV-V: My high school made national news about that! We protested for condoms in schools.

WCT: What was the first show you ever did?

KV-V: I was in a show at 5 years old called Twas the Night Before Christmas. I missed an entrance because I was sitting on a toilet! Now I am ridiculous about going to the bathroom before shows.

One of the first shows that I was excited about was Tina Howe's Coastal Disturbances at age seven.

WCT: You also did A Christmas Carol at Goodman Theatre.

KV-V: Yes. I played a nephew named Fred who was changed to a niece named Frida. The director Henry Wishcamper was someone I knew before. We moved to Chicago at the same time. He was the assistant director on August: Osage County where I understudied and when I first worked for Steppenwolf. I played Belle and Fred's wife for two years. I asked if I could read for Fred and I auditioned that way.

WCT: Had you ever auditioned like that before?

KV-V: No—that was the first time. There was something so meaningful to me about that scene with me asking why Scrooge had never met Fred's wife. Fred has the best speeches in the play,

which I knew really well. My hope was that Fred would still have a wife, but baby steps...

WCT: Talk about how August: Osage County changed your life.

KV-V: I understudied three roles on Broadway. I went on close to 20 times. That was my first Steppenwolf affiliated thing. The people in that play felt I had a Chicago vibe. August was a huge moment for me with what I had been working towards. Having a couple of final bows on Broadway is something I am deeply grateful for.

Thanks to that really high-paying gig, I was able to take a leave of absence and do something else.

WCT: What are you working on now?

KV-V: I just finished a show called Cry It Out at Northlight.

My fellowship concludes at the Steppenwolf, but I am working on my self generated piece that was a part of it. I am hoping to build an artist led cultural exchange between Chicago and New Orleans. It was part of the Princess Grace proposal. It is getting communication going with artists that are off the commercial pipeline of Chicago, New York and LA, like New Orleans or Detroit.

It is a huge benefit that there are theaters in those communities.

I will be directing a show at 16th Street Theater called Small Jokes About Monsters. It will be the first show of their season.

I will be in a show at Lookingglass called Acts of God Feb. 13 through April 7. It is by Kareem Bandealy, who is a company member there [and] who I know from Christmas Carol. I still have circles of people that I have worked with that I get to work with again.

WCT: Are you worried that, with Lookingglass Theatre Company, that you will have to be acrobatic?

KV-V: With every show I am worried a bit about what it will do to my body. I did Diary of Anne Frank and got gray hair very early.

I am not worried about Lookingglass because it is their specialty. I am playing an anarchist, socialist, hobo lesbian so it is really perfect!

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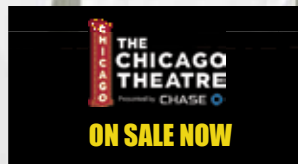
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2019 is the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The Lakeside Pride Chamber Ensembles present an afternoon of music in honor of Marsha P. "Pay It No Mind" Johnson, the trans woman who threw the first brick at the riots in 1969. This concert celebrates her contributions to the community. Lakeside Pride will be joined by ResonaTe, Chicago's transgender choir. Join us for music by people of color and transgender/genderqueer individuals.

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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.

Johnson/Nash book release party Jan. 31

A joint book release celebrating E. Patrick Johnson's *Black. Queer. Southern. Women: An Oral History* and Jennifer Nash's *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality* will take place Thursday, Jan. 31, at Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., at 7 p.m.

Johnson's *Black. Queer. Southern. Women.* is drawn from the life narratives of more than 70 African-American queer Southern women. Nash's *Black Feminism Reimagined* outlines how women's studies has elevated intersectionality to the discipline's primary program-building initiative and casts intersectionality as a threat to feminism's coherence.

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



E. Patrick Johnson.

Photo courtesy of Johnson



Ani DiFranco.

Photo by Shervin Lainez

DiFranco book out May 7

On May 7, Viking will publish *No Walls and the Recurring Dream*, a memoir from longtime singer/songwriter/poet/activist Ani DiFranco.

According to a press release, "DiFranco is one of the most prolific indie artists of the last three decades—selling over 5.5 million albums and winning numerous awards, including a Grammy, all while rebelling against the mainstream music industry by publishing on her own record label."

In the book, DiFranco tackles many topics, including being an emancipated minor sleeping in a Buffalo bus station; releasing her first album at 18; and creating her own label, Righteous Babe Records, which she continues to publish with to this day.

Groundbreaking 'I AM... Fest' April 27-29

Black Lives, Black Words International Project will launch the I AM... Fest, in partnership with Goodman Theatre.

This first-of-its-kind international festival will take place April 27-29, and will shine a spotlight on the female voices from across the globe by placing them in the heart of Chicago's downtown Theatre District.

It will culminate with a 10-minute play showcase, including the U.S. premiere of *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland*—a transcript of the Sandra Bland arrest by Black British playwright Mojisola Adebayo, directed by Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway and performed by 100 Women of Color.

This new festival will introduce audiences to lesser-known plays from international Black female playwrights; offer a series of leadership development workshops; host panel discussions; and present an exclusive opportunity for young playwrights to enter the Black Lives, Black Words New Play Competition, whereby select high school students can win the chance to have their works presented on the Goodman's Owen Theatre stage, directed by professional theater directors and actors.

For more information about the festival or to find out how to get involved, contact Reginald Edmund at artistic@blacklivesblackwords.org or visit <https://www.blacklivesblackwords.org/events>.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Roanoke brunch; Chicago Restaurant Week

BY ANDREW DAVIS

During the week, **Roanoke Restaurant and Club** (135 W. Madison St.; <https://www.theroanokerestaurant.com/>) is as busy as a beehive, thanks to its Loop location that accommodates businesspeople, theatergoers, tourists and more. In fact, every part of the spot (including the second-floor lounge) is bursting at the seams.

However, weekends are seemingly a quite different story, as a friend and I witnessed recently while at Roanoke for Sunday brunch. However, this development is almost criminal, as Roanoke has a brunch as appealing and sophisticated as its decor.

First, there is the list of drink selections—one of the most expansive I've seen recently. There are wines (roses, whites, reds, reserves and ports), Champagne, cocktails and mocktails. I had the Grace Martini and it's a bittersweet concoction of Kelel One Peach (with me pointing out to the manager that "Ketel" was misspelled on the menu, because I couldn't help myself) and Orange Blossom, Luxardo maraschino liqueur and, well, orange bitters. It was actually appealing—but The Workshop mocktail was much more to my liking, as it was a refreshing mix of blackberries, Madagascar vanilla and lemon soda. (Note: The



Roanoke's eggs Benedict.

Photo by Andrew Davis

menu was recently revised, so these drinks—and probably some others—were not on the online menu as of Jan. 14.)

And as for the food, it's absolutely wonderful. The chilaquiles contained a sumptuous slow-roasted pork shoulder along with the requisite cotija cheese, avocado and lime. Traditional eggs Benedicts can be tricky for some to pull off, but not in this case—and they were accompanied by crispy, tasty potatoes. And for those who crave something more healthful, there's the power bowl—a winning combination of spiced quinoa, Greek yogurt, walnuts, berries and chia seed that might make you feel less guilty over ordering some of the other dishes. (Other plates range from crab Louie salad to ribeye hash to the smoked-salmon bagel.)

On the sweet side, the French toast was an appealing exercise in restraint. In contrast to some restaurants that can make this item too sweet, the lemon curd on the toast was

light, with the blueberries, hazelnut crust and powdered sugar providing a great balance. We also tried the cinnamon roll (with cream-cheese frosting), which was a solid performer, as they say.

So I definitely recommend checking out Roanoke. You'll certainly enjoy delightful items and—at least, for the time being—will have easy access to seats on the weekends.

Chicago Restaurant Week

Chicago Restaurant Week will be here before you know it.

Chicago's world-class culinary scene will once again be in the spotlight during the 12th annual Chicago Restaurant Week, Jan. 25- Feb. 7. (Yes, it's technically two weeks, but "Chicago Restaurant Fortnight" doesn't have quite the same ring.)

Produced by Choose Chicago, reservations for the annual culinary celebration are now open at eatitupchicago.com, featuring menus for participating Chicago-area eateries. A record number of Chicago restaurants—395!—will take part in 2019's Chicago Restaurant Week. (More than 600,000 diners took part in 2018.)

Chicago Restaurant Week will launch with First Bites Bash, featuring Joe Flamm, executive chef of Spiaggia and Cafe Spiaggia, and Chicago mixologist Jarmel Doss, assistant bar director of The Aviary, as First Bites Bash hosts, on Thursday, Jan. 24, 6-9 p.m., at the Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr. More than 70 of Chicago's most famous chefs and restaurants will be represented at the event, which allows participants to preview tasting portions from their respective Chicago RestaurantWeek menus. For a complete list of participating restaurants and to purchase tickets to First Bites Bash, visit firstbitesbash.com.

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



NAME

"JerFay simply comes from my boy name being 'Jeffrey' and I just mixed it up for a new persona!"

FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

"I started doing drag Oct. 26, 2015, and I started by jumping into the competition at Berlin: Crash Landing Cycle 2. I performed a mix centered around Amy Winehouse's 'Back To Black.' I used puppets, fell out of my heels onstage and I didn't win, but somehow still decided this is something I wanted to pursue."

DRAG INSPIRATION

"Lucy Stoolie is my drag mama and one of my biggest inspirations. She's talented, beautiful and works her butt off all around the city and, lately, the country. Lucille Ball, Bea Arthur, and Carol Burnett are also three iconic women I look up to for their very different/distinct comedy styles."

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY THE CROWD

"My Pinocchio number: I love a good cosplay number and this one has a fun twist."

FUN FACT

"Before people know me that well, I can appear standoffish. But truly, I am a deeply empathetic person who just takes a minute to warm up to people. I'm working on it because with more exposure to people via drag, I'm learning to really enjoy mingling and interacting."

FUTURE PROJECTS

"I'm trying to make JerFay-ce Swap a regular thing starting in 2019. It's a drag community-building event I started where interested performers randomly get paired or grouped up to paint and style each other for a night out."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

Every Wednesday at Now and Then Drag Bingo at Carbon Arc Bar and Board in Lincoln Square with Sutton Fister and every last Friday at Berlin with GeekHaus

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: [jerfaywtf](https://www.facebook.com/jerfaywtf)
IG: [@jeffreyjerfay](https://www.instagram.com/jeffreyjerfay)



SIDETRACK

All abuzz in the Beyhive for All Things Beyonce.

Photos by Jed Dulanias

Photo by
Sam Doyle Photography

BOOK REVIEW

Growing Up Queer

by Mary Robertson

\$26; NYU Press; 224 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Growing up is hard.

Most sentient adults would agree, and decline a chance to 'teen again; between changing bodies, mean girls, bullies and facing adulthood, it's enough to have endured it once. But for kids who are "different" on top of all that, there's hope, as Mary Robertson says in *Growing Up Queer*.

In the early years of the Obama administration, after the repeal of DADT and after three states made same-sex marriage legal, Robertson began volunteering at her local LGBT Resource Center, specifically, in the basement teen hang-out called Spectrum. She was working on research and she hoped, over time, to interview Spectrum's teen clientele but she was nervous: As a cisgender straight woman, what would the kids tell her?

Plenty, as it turned out.

While there were gay, lesbian and transgender teens at Spectrum, the majority of the youth Robertson studied called themselves "queer," a wider sexuality- and gender-encompassing identity specifically separate from "gay" or "lesbian." As one young man indicated, identifying as queer was easier than repeatedly resetting his self-identity as he learned more about himself and the people he might be attracted to.

Many of her interviewees told Robertson that they knew early in their lives that they were not heteronormal. Many teens told stories of recognizing their own interest in same-sex actors and performers when they were young, and of precocious self-acknowledgment of same-sex leanings. One claimed innocence that compelled him to ask for clarification on slurs, thus learning negativity about his feelings long before he knew his feelings "had a name."

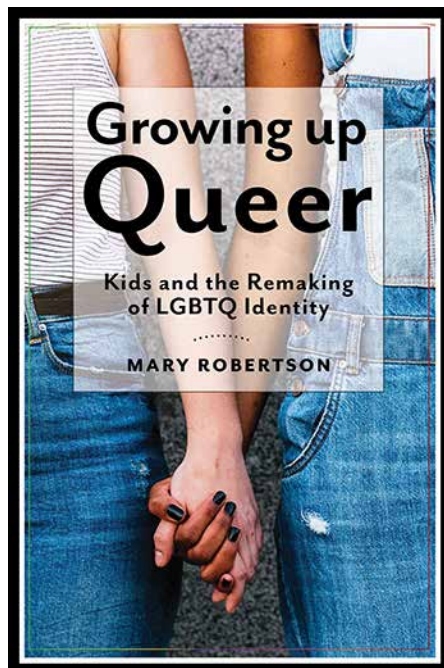
Robertson says that suicide rates for LGBTQ students are inflated, but she also notes that today's queer teens have access to an abundance of support: her subjects often noted family attitudes that have shifted with the times, and there seems to be more acceptance from peers. Gay-Straight Alliances weren't widely known in high schools until the 1990s but today, most larger schools have a GSA and nearly every state in the United States has at least one LGBT center. For her queer subjects, this is good news, says Robertson.

On the future, she says, "This is what gives it so much promise."

As eye-opening and reassuring as it is, this book may be a challenge.

Growing Up Queer can sometimes read like a thesis paper made of cardboard, perhaps due to its original intent for research. When the narrative dips like that, it feels a lot like when your newly-PhD'd brother expounds on his favorite subject: it grows complicated, often unnecessary, and sometimes redundant.

Thankfully, author Robertson gets out of the way enough to make a reader want to forgive such transgressions and just enjoy the teens she meets. There's life in them, deep introspection and philosophical thought, as well as acceptance



covered slightly with the scabs of perseverance. Their voices are real and need no explaining.

Indeed, they do offer hope.

That makes this book accessible, but academics may get more from it than will casual readers. Tackle *Growing Up Queer* if you wish, but understanding may come hard.

Want more? Then look for *LGBTQ: The Survival Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens*, by Kelly Huegel Madrone; or *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*, by Susan Kuklin.

OUT on Stage' Jan. 17 on Dekkoo

OUT on Stage: The Series will debut Thursday, Jan. 17, on LGBT subscription-based streaming network Dekkoo.

Zach Noe Towers hosts the show, which features a line-up of renowned LGBTQ stand-up comedians.

"I don't think comedy is an easy field for anyone, but it can sometimes be especially difficult for those of us with unique, diverse voices," Towers said in a press release. "We're a much smaller percentage of the population, stage time can be harder to come by, and often times audiences aren't as willing to give us a chance. Even our peers can present a challenge. Open mics are often peppered with the voices of less progressive people, some of which find humor in homo/transphobic material."

"I would even be willing to bet that every queer comic out there has had to sit and listen to someone turn their life into a punchline. And this is why projects like OUT on Stage are so important. It not only provides a platform for new queer voices on the rise, but it brings us together. It creates a space for diverse voices to flourish and it's so important to have this kind of representation available."

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PUBLISHED PRAYER

St. Jude's Novena: St. Jude's Novena: May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world, now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer nine times a day for nine days. By the ninth day your prayers will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you, Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, my prayer has been answered. G.L.K. (1/16/19-1)

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 16

Great Believers discussion Gerber/Hart, Howard Brown host 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. Book traces the events of the early AIDS crisis in Chicago and features details about Howard Brown in its early years. See "Great Believers Book Talk" on Facebook. 6:00pm - 8:00pm Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark St.

Thursday, Jan. 17

Paris Combo—Swing Francais Live and Remixed Paris combo comes back to the U.S. for a tour and with a red-hot remix album 6:00pm City Winery Chicago 1200 W. Randolph St., Chicago <http://CityWinery.com>

44th Ward Aldermanic Forum Presented by Lakeview Citizens Council, in collaboration with both the East Lakeview & Lakeview Chamber of Commerce. Moderated by journalist Laura S. Washington. Pre-forum cash bar Reception: 6-7pm 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Author Conversation: Amy Gentry & Layne Fargo Authors of Last Woman Standing, wherein a aspiring stand-up comedian meets a tough computer programmer and they plan to go after each other's assailants 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>



THE WRIGHT STUFF Sunday, Jan. 27

Lesbian country singer
Chely Wright will perform
at Evanston's SPACE.
Photo by Jan Eric Volz

drenfirst.com

The WOMB Open Mic Nite Speak the words you have wanted to speak 7:00pm Affinity Community Services, 2850 S Wabash Ave Ste 108 <http://affinity95.org>

Friday, Jan. 18

I Know My Own Heart Inspired by the secret coded diaries of Yorkshire gentlewoman Anne Lister, "Gentleman Jack".

Through Feb. 10 7:30pm Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway Tickets: <http://web.ovationtix.com>

Saturday, Jan. 19

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago Weekly run/walk. Followed by brunch. 9:00am Kwagulth Totem Pole Addison & Lakeshore Dr. <http://frontrunnerschicago.com>

Young Women's March Rally 2019 Young women, femmes, non-binary folks, and allies of all ages are coming together for a rally in Chicago to stand in solidarity with the 3rd annual Women's March on Washington 9:00am Federal Plaza 50 W. Adams St. Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/events/2275953855808706>

Cecil McDonald Jr.: In the Company of Black Artist and educator Cecil McDonald, Jr. has photographed people he describes as "extraordinarily ordinary" rather than the extreme poles of violence, poverty, sports, fame America is fascinated with. Through April 14. 10:00am - 7:00pm Chicago Cultural Center 78 E. Washington St.; http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/cecil_mcdonald.html

Asians & Friends visit Japanese Art Exhibit Meet by the lions out front. 10:30am The Art Institute of Chicago 111 South Michigan Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.artic.edu/exhibitions/2823/painting-the-floating-world-ukiyo-e-masterpieces-from-the-weston-collection>

LGBTQ community organizations' LGBTQ Forum with the Mayoral Candidates To educate LGBTQ Chicagoans about the positions and platforms of the candidates. More information to come. 2:00pm Second Presbyterian Church 1936 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/LGBTQ->

community-organizations-plan-forum-with-mayoral-candidates-Jan-19/64770.html

Chicago Gay Drink and Draw Happy Hour Sketchy Saturday in the back room. Order a drink and draw one of the beautiful models/dancers. Model poses can range from 2 minutes to 20 minutes. 5:45pm - 7:45pm Lucky Horseshoe 3169 N Halsted St Chicago <http://www.meetup.com/Chicago-Gay-Drink-and-Draw/events/257042933/>

Sunday, Jan. 20

PFLAG DuPage Monthly chapter meeting 2:00pm St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Avenue, Wheaton

Chicago Sinfonietta MLK Tribute Concert Assistant Conductor Kedrick Armstrong and Charleston Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor Kellen Gray. \$10-\$62 3:00pm Wentz Concert Hall 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville, IL 6040 Tickets: <http://ChicagoSinfonietta.org>

Monday, Jan. 21

Chicago Sinfonietta MLK Tribute Concert Assistant Conductor Kedrick Armstrong and Charleston Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor Kellen Gray. \$10-\$62 7:30pm Chicago Symphony Center (Orchestra Hall) 220 S Michigan Ave., Chicago Tickets: <http://ChicagoSinfonietta.org>

Wed., Jan. 23

Anthology Reading, Shout Your Abortion SYA Cofounder Amelia Bonow and local abortion storytellers to share stories and discuss the power of personal experience as a tool for activism. 7:00pm - 8:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Thursday, Jan. 24

Nina Simone: Four Women In the aftermath of 1963's 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, Nina Simone rocked the nation with "Four Women," her tribute in song to the four little girls lost in the tragedy. Powerful anthems. \$30-\$88 7:30pm Northlight Theatre 9501 Skokie Blvd Skokie, IL 60077 847-673-6300 <http://northlight.org>

Saturday, Jan. 26

Lakeside Pride Chamber Ensembles' "Pay It No Mind" with ResonaTe 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots so an afternoon of music in honor of Marsha P. "Pay It No Mind" Johnson, the trans woman who threw the first brick. joined by ResonaTe, Chicago's transgender choir. Music written or arranged by people of color and transgender/genderqueer individuals. \$10 3:00pm - 5:00pm May Chapel at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago <http://lakesidepride.org> Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/pay-it-no-mind-with-resonate-tickets-49321738648>

Sunday, Jan. 27

Chely Wright Out lesbian, award-winning country singer and songwriter, who recently released her eighth studio album, I Am The Rain. Doors 6 p.m. 6:00pm Evanston SPACE 1245 Chicago Ave Evanston, IL 60202 Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/chely-wright-tickets-51090804973>

Susan Werner Singer and songwriter. Folk, pop-rock, and classic jazz styles 7:00pm City Winery Chicago 1200 W Randolph St Chicago <http://CityWinery.com>

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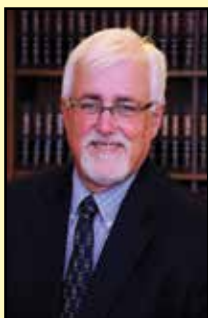
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