

WINDY CITY TIMES

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

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Photo courtesy of Michael Gorski

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Photo courtesy of Guy Guido Entertainment, Inc.



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Photo from Howard Brown Health

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Check out WCT's spring theater, musicals roundups




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Robin DaSilva as Mahalia Jackson in Mahalia Jackson: Moving Through The Light.
Photo by Michael Courier


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REMAINING 2019 WINDY CITY TIMES PRINT DATES:

March 13	June 19	Oct. 2
March 27	June 26	Oct. 16
April 10	July 10	Oct. 30
April 24	July 24	Nov. 13
May 8	Aug. 7	Nov. 27
May 22	Aug. 21	Dec. 11
June 5	Sep. 4	Dec. 25
	Sep. 18	

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



BUSINESS CLASS

The LGBT Chamber of Commerce held a forum on the Black LGBT business experience.

Photo of Vince Williams and Tiffany Hudson by John Stadelman

FLY, ROBYN, FLY



Singer Robyn recently performed in Chicago, and WCT was there every step of the way.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

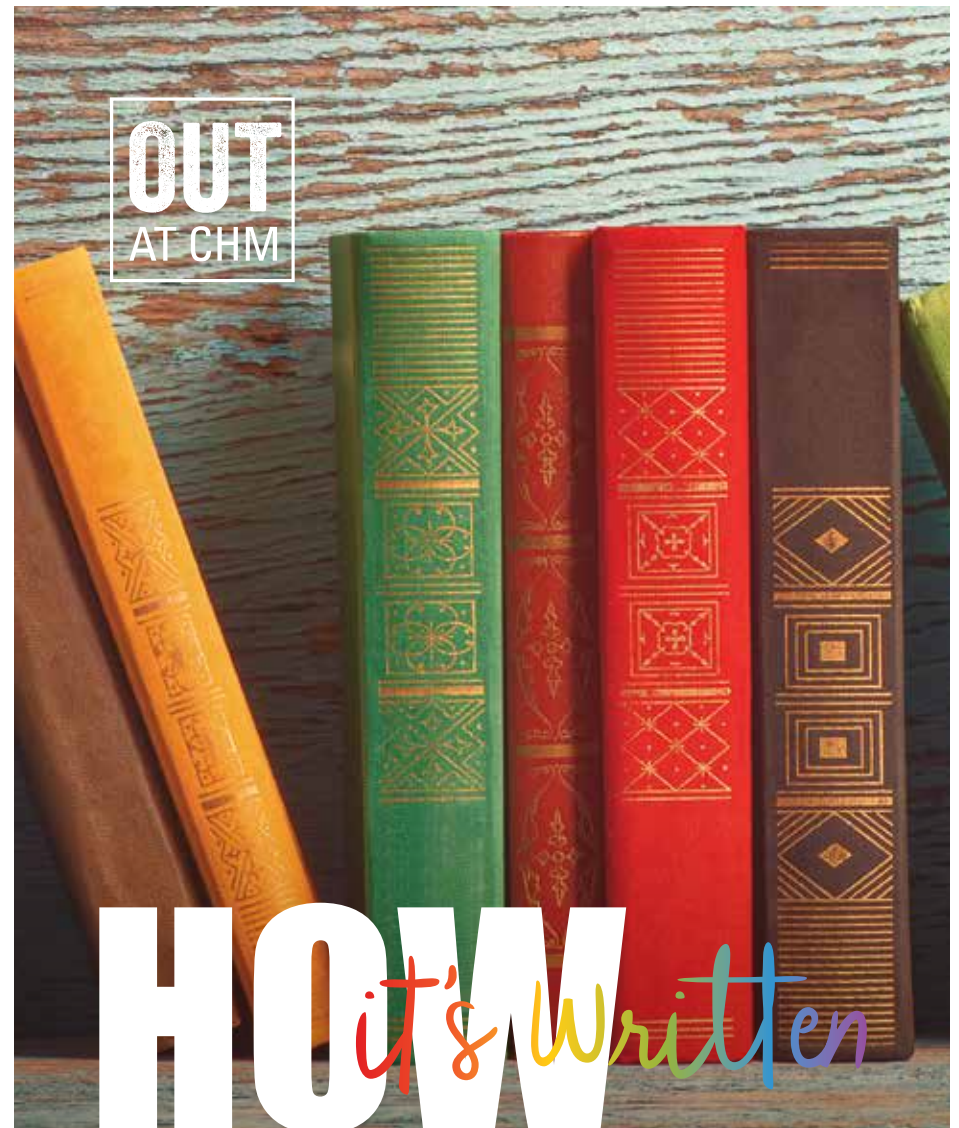
SWISS CONGENIALITY

In the latest in its series on local hotels and staycations, WCT evaluates Swissotel.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Queen Latifah, Angelina Jolie and Ben Platt.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS



March 27 • Chicago History Museum
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Chicagoans contemplate path forward after anti-LGBT UMC vote

BY MATT SIMONETTE

For Rev. Britt Cox, pastor at Church of the Three Crosses, 333 W. Wisconsin St., a Feb. 28 vote at a United Methodist Church (UMC) conference affirming an earlier condemnation of homosexuality as being incompatible with Christian teachings was “heartbreaking but not surprising.”

The controversial vote, rendered at a special conference in St. Louis, both condemned homosexuality and empowered church officials to crack down on clergy who performed same-sex marriages, and shored up rules that had been skirted in order to ordain LGBT clergy.

“This is something that’s looked like it was going to happen, and I have been involved in some grassroots work to kind of change the denomination’s previous but longhand stance,” Cox said. “At the other end of it, the Christian tradition is one that holds hope at the center of our faith,” she said. “Of course, I hoped for inclusion and love to become official church law, but I wasn’t surprised when it didn’t.”

Cox, whose congregation is affiliated with both UMC and United Church of Christ, is openly LGBT and has had her post at the church since last year. Many of her congregants were hurt and disturbed when the votes came down.

She explained, “We have a large population of our church who, in some way, have been hurt by a church tradition in some capacity—maybe they’re LGBTQ and told they were sinful; maybe they were women who were called to ministry and told they couldn’t do; maybe they’re folks living with the realities of a mental health diagnosis. For many of them, this news was really personal and really put them in a position where they were questioning how we, as a local church, could stay connected to a tradition that holds these views.”

Chicagoan Rev. Gregory Gross said that he was flooded “by many different emotions” after the vote.

“I don’t think I was surprised by this,” Gross said, noting that rules and decrees against LGBT persons have been increasingly restrictive since the early ‘70s. “It was one of those things I’ve been saying could be coming. But it still hurts. I think it was very surprising to people who were moderates. There were people in the middle who were pushing a plan that gave space to both sides.”

Cox attributed the vote results to the different regional dynamics at play within the church. While local congregations and parishioners might be welcoming to LGBT persons, that may not be the case in congregations in other nations or even other parts of the United States.

“I grew up in the South,” she said. “The rhetoric from my clergy colleagues down there leading up to the vote was very different than it was from [clergy from] northern Illinois and Chicago. The majority of the folks advocating at the con-



Rev. Britt Cox.
Photo courtesy of Cox

ference were for inclusion and welcoming LGBTQ folks. However, the conservative faction is very well-organized and well-funded.”

Many have said that the February votes go against the constitution of the Church; a church court will rule on that matter in a gathering in Evanston in April.

Church of the Three Crosses quickly put together a letter of dissent proclaiming that their congregation would continue to be welcoming and affirming, despite the vote, Cox said. She added, “There’s already [discussions about] if a lot of us want to leave, or do we want to stay and remain in faithful disobedience. We’ve still been coming up for air and trying to put together the pieces, but I would say that there’s already dialogue about what new and wonderful thing could be birthed from this terrible and traumatic event. We don’t know the answer quite yet.”

Gross said that he feels almost liberated by the situation, since LGBT persons and their allies know where they stand and can be motivated to push ahead for change, but he’s also troubled by church leaders and congregants proudly affirming the vote. He said that he knew of young people who’d engaged in self-harm, and clergy who’d turned in their credentials, upon learning of the vote.

“I hope that church leaders who voted for this traditional plan see that, and understand the consequences of the action they’ve taken, and that other leaders will speak up and say that this is not okay,” he added.



Night Ministry CEO/President Paul Hamann.
Photo courtesy of Hamann

Night Ministry head discusses proposed Crib relocation

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The Night Ministry—the Chicago-based advocacy for persons experiencing homelessness—announced Feb. 22 that officials are proposing a move of The Crib, which mainly serves LGBT young people, from its current West Addison Street location to Bucktown.

Officials cited space concerns as a key reason for the move; clients are presently eating, sleeping and relaxing all within the same room, and have limited access to shower and restroom facilities.

Paul Hamann, The Night Ministry’s CEO and president, said that the organization had been searching for a new location since late 2016, when they revised their mission statement.

He called LakeView Lutheran Church, where the current facility is located “phenomenal landlords,” but added that, “The space does have its limitations. It’s cramped and we have about 21 young people a night, on mats on the floor, in the same room where they just got done having dinner. ... We really have been struggling for years with space constraints. If a young person is in crisis, there is no place to go for privacy.”

Client capacity would not be increased at the new location, which is at 1735 N. Ashland Ave. The new facility would also house Night Ministry administrative offices, and is located about three-quarters of a mile from the CTA Red Line stop at North and Clybourn.

Hamann said that officials searched at length for a new space in Lake View, and received extensive assistance from Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward) in doing so. But such spaces proved to be too expensive for the organization. He also said that Ald. Scott Waguespack (32nd) was helpful in preparing for a potential move.

The matter next goes before the City Council’s Zoning Board of Appeals March 15. After

permits are secured, a buildout would likely take about four or five months; Hamann predicted the new facility would be open by the end of the year.

He added that some neighbors in Bucktown had trepidation about the facility at a community meeting held Feb. 27.

“There has been some opposition,” Hamann said. “We believe that some of that opposition just comes from us being an unknown. We also found some tremendous support. I was really moved by a 14-year-old high school student who got up and addressed the fact that we’re located across the street from a park. They said, ‘Where I go to high school, not too far from here, there’s a park across the street— young people go to that park after school. Why is this any different?’ ... In any situation there are going to be those who are opposed. We’re focusing on community engagement, and believe that we are really good neighbors and are responsive to community needs.”

Hamann added that the move was “an unfortunate decision to make, but we had to do it. ... We are dedicated to serving the LGBTQ population, both youth and adults, across the city, and moving The Crib out of Lakeview won’t change that commitment.”

Smollett indicted on 16 counts

A Cook County grand jury charged embattled Empire actor Jussie Smollett in a 16-count indictment that alleges he lied to Chicago authorities about being the victim of a what is being called a phony attack, The Chicago Tribune reported.

Prosecutors initially charged Smollett, 36, last month on one felony count of filing a false report.

At a Feb. 21 press conference that attracted a crowd of media, Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said that Smollett, who is openly gay, faked a threatening letter and then, a week later, staged a racist, anti-gay attack in downtown Chicago because he was “dissatisfied with his salary” on the Fox show Empire.

Johnson said that Smollett paid two brothers he knew (Ola and Abel Osundairo) \$3,500 by check to fake the attack in the Chicago’s Streeterville neighborhood Jan. 29.

Smollett’s next court appearance is slated to take place Thursday, March 14. It was reported he would attend a March 12 motion about letting cameras in the courtroom for future appearances.

The Tribune item is at <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-jussie-smollett-indicted-20190308-story.html>.

Corrections

In the Feb. 27-March 12 issue, it should have been noted that, in the 45th Ward race, Marilyn Morales identifies as part of the LGBT community. Also, 49th Ward victor Maria Hadden identifies as queer, not lesbian.

Windy City Times apologizes for the errors.



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Lighthouse Church provides 'soul care' for queer community

BY ADA CHENG

For gay clergy, the exclusion of their sexuality—as demonstrated by the recent fiasco at the United Methodist Church and its continual prohibition against homosexuality and same-sex marriage—serves as one major impetus for them to create their own church.

Jamie Frazier (also known as Pastor J)—the leader of The Lighthouse Church of Chicago, a predominantly African-American church—said that “the exclusion of his gayness” was one major reason why he needed to have his own space for soul care.

He told Windy City Times, “I am not just a pastor of Lighthouse. I am the first member of Lighthouse. I need this space for myself. I need this space to bring my blackness, my gayness, and my Christianity all into one space. I also want a space where I can do some theological exploration, where I can wrestle with tough issues around gender, race, immigration, and who Jesus is.

“At the traditional Black church, I loved the gospel music and fiery teaching. But I was missing LGBT affirmation and the affirmation of the gifts of women. I was also missing the theological nuances. Sometimes we don't always have the answers. What Lighthouse [does] is to bring all of these together.”

Since The Lighthouse Church of Chicago was established five years ago, Frazier has encountered some difficulties. One major hurdle stems from the internalized homophobia among some LGBTQ



Rev. Jamie Frazier.
Photo courtesy of Frazier

members themselves. “Many African-American LGBTQ folks have been told their entire lives that they are wrong and sinful. When I came along and said God loves you, I was met with a lot of

suspicion, anger and doubt. A lot of what I have had to work with over these past five years is to help people deal with their own internalized homophobia,” said Frazier.

In this sense, soul care must also include the reinvigoration of their critical thinking. Frazier said, “I have had to nurture and teach folks how to read scriptures, how to ask questions of texts and interpretations. For example, who benefits from your type of interpretations? Who gets to decide? I have had to impart some tools for interrogation and critical thinking.”

Another major difficulty Frazier has faced is to convince people the continual importance of church in contemporary society. At a time when church attendance is in decline, he strives to bring new insights as to how church can continue to serve as an important locus for community support.

“People are finding new ways of being in community, new frames of reference, and a new locus of authority,” Frazier said. “The question is: Why church in 2019? People don't see its continual relevance. For me, church gives us some mystery when we talk about sin, grace and redemption. Particularly in our political climate—when everyone is so certain about everything—we need mystery. Second, we need community. Folks meet on Sundays, but they go on to build lifelong friendships with one another and the community support they can draw when in need.”

The Lighthouse Church of Chicago is committed to social justice, which is another reason why Frazier believes church continues to have relevance in today's world. “I think church is really important because it helps mobilize us for social justice activism. Our church members have

helped register people to vote. We have picketed, protested and boycotted. We have enrolled people in Affordable Care Act,” he said.

Frazier has no fear of calling out, challenging the status quo, and demanding justice and equity to affirm Lighthouse's social justice tradition. He draws his inspiration from various sources of social-justice traditions. “I find myself calling upon the best of the church tradition, sometimes the best of the African American tradition, and sometimes from the Black, the queer, and the Black queer prophetic tradition,” he said.

Frazier emphasized that Lighthouse will continue its advocacy and activist tradition. For example, church members will continue to serve at the Crib shelter, located at the basement of Lakeview Lutheran Church. [Editor's note: The Night Ministry, the Chicago-based advocacy organization for persons experiencing homelessness, announced Feb. 22 that officials are proposing a move of The Crib to Bucktown.] The Crib mainly serves LGBTQ youths of color. As Frazier described the significance of church members' presence, “They get to see this predominantly Black queer church, with folks who are lawyers, professor, and doctors. We are not only serving food, but we are also serving hope.”

Frazier said he wants to build intersectional alliance across sections in this complicated world. As he pointed out, while the church is predominantly African-American, it is open to all, regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and citizenship status. He said he hopes to secure a property so The Lighthouse Church of Chicago—a member of United Church of Christ since 2018—can have a permanent home, thus becoming an established institution of its own.



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Urbana ally Bernadine Evans Stake dies

Bernadine Evans Stake—a longtime Urbana, Illinois, resident who was an ally of the LGBTQ+ community—has died at 92, News-Gazette.com reported.

Personal PAC CEO Terry Cosgrove relayed the news to Windy City Times.

Stake was born on a farm near Lindy, Nebraska, on April 29, 1926. She was a graduate of the University of Nebraska and also received a master's and doctorate in education from the University of Illinois.

Among other accomplishments, she served on the Urbana City Council during 1969-1973, 1975-1981 and 1983-1989, and on the Planning Commission during 1995-2014. An active leader in local government, she promoted a progressive agenda which included passage of a human-rights ordinance in 1975—the first in the state and one of the first in the nation to acknowledge LGBTQ rights.

Cosgrove emailed, "She supported everything I did on LGBTQ and abortion rights and always had her door open to me and so many others. She treated me like a son. After she passed what we believe was the 1st human-rights ordinance in the country, she then secured my appointment as chair of the Urbana Human Rights Commission, which might have also been a 1st.

"When I filed the first successful lawsuit in the country banning discrimination against

LGBTQ people in public accommodations in 1980—largely possible because of her helping to pass the sister LGBTQ inclusive Champaign ordinance—she stood with me privately and publicly every step of the way. The LGBTQ community and women's-rights activists have lost an early hero of the fight for equality."

The News-Gazette.com item is at <http://www.news-gazette.com>.

Ammarell resigns from Chicago House CEO post

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Chicago House and Social Services Agency announced the resignation of its CEO, Scott Ammarell, on March 8.

Ammarell, who took over from longtime CEO Rev. Stan Sloan in mid-2016, said in a statement, "I've had the pleasure of holding the position of CEO of Chicago House for nearly three years. While this position has allowed me to pursue my passion for accessible housing, I have made the decision to resign as CEO effective March 15, 2019, in order to pursue more directly my dedication for developing affordable, supportive housing for low-income communities across the nation."

Judy Perloff, Chicago House's program director, will act as interim CEO, while the organization



Scott Ammarell.

Photo by Ed Negron

mounts a search for Ammarell's replacement.

"Judy has been the organization's Chief Program Officer since 2000, and is well-known and respected by the donors, government contacts and the communities that Chicago House serves. Judy is not only a clear choice to serve as Interim CEO, but a natural visionary for guiding the mission at work into the future," added Board of

Trustees Chair Ray Koenig.

"It's an exciting time for Chicago House," added Perloff. "We've started the new year strong, earning over \$2 million in funding in the last month alone. The vast majority, a \$1.4 million gift, [came] from the Chicago Continuum of Care to expand our housing by 60 units for people living with HIV and AIDS."

A native of Naperville, Ammarell worked as legal counsel in the development and construction industry, as well as the Chicago Housing Authority, before moving to Chicago House.

Crossroads Fund ED stepping down

Jeanne Kracher—the openly lesbian head of the local nonprofit organization Crossroads Fund—will step down from her post at the end of June, according to an organizational press release.

Kracher joined as executive director in 2000.

During her tenure, she helped to propel the organization to increase our grantmaking from \$200K in 2000 to more than \$1 million in 2018. She also oversaw the creation of the first endowments for Crossroads Fund with the Synapses Fund Endowment in 2009 and then the Big Change Campaign, which raised more than \$2 million in cash gifts, forming the basis of a general endowment with several focus funds.

Program Director Jane Kimondo will become the executive director in July.



Photo courtesy of Rock Ventures

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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
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Clarence Darrow Symposium in Chicago on March 13

CHICAGO—The annual Chicago tradition marking the anniversary of the death of famed Chicago attorney Clarence Darrow will take place Wed., March 13—and will mark the 95th anniversary of the Leopold-Loeb murder case, which raised profound and disturbing questions about social class, criminal psychology, morality, justice, and mercy that are still relevant and thought-provoking today.

Darrow successfully defended Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb from a possible death sentence after they confessed to the brutal murder of 14-year-old Bobby Franks in the spring of 1924.

This year's Darrow symposium will, for the first time, be celebrated in a two-part format, beginning as usual Wednesday morning at the Clarence Darrow Bridge in Hyde Park at 10 a.m. with a flower-tossing ceremony to commemorate Darrow, including remarks and a dramatic reading. The annual Symposium on topics relevant to Darrow's life and work will be held Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St., where author Nina Barrett will give a talk based on her recently published book *The Leopold and Loeb Files: An Intimate Look at One of America's Most Infamous Crimes*.

Barrett's talk will explore Darrow's role in defending Leopold and Loeb.



Author Nina Barrett.
PR photo

Both events are sponsored by The Clarence Darrow Commemorative Committee, whose mission is to honor and remember the life, work, values, and philosophy of famed Chicago lawyer Clarence Darrow (1857-1938). Particular emphasis is placed upon Darrow's devotion to the American ideal of the universal application of the rule of law for the protection of all persons and causes, no matter how unpopular.

For many decades the Committee has gathered admirers, academicians, judges, lawyers, advocates, and fans on the anniversary of his death to summon his spirit by throwing a wreath into the water at the bridge in his beloved Jackson Park, where he once, as a bet, said his spirit would return if it turned out that communication was possible from the afterworld. To ensure that his spirit does, in fact, return, the Committee then organizes a Symposium to discuss a topic that would have been dear to Darrow's heart.

Here is further information about both events:

—The short commemoration with flower-tossing, brief remarks, and dramatic reading of Darrow begins at 10 a.m. just east of the Clarence Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park. (The bridge is under construction.) The Darrow Bridge is behind the Museum of Science and Industry: Driving south on Lake Shore Drive, pass the light at 57th Drive

and turn right at the next light [Science Drive]. You will come almost immediately to Columbia Drive. If you turn left and follow Columbia Drive there is parking near the bridge. This event is free and welcome to the public and flowers are provided for participation in the tossing ceremony.

—6-7:15 p.m.: Symposium at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St.: This event is free and open to the public. Copies of *The Leopold and Loeb Files* will be available for purchase and signing. Register using this online form by 3 pm Wed., March 13. Doors open half an hour before the program begins, with first-come, first-served seating for registered attendees. If space permits, walk-ins will be admitted 10 minutes before the event starts.

People with disabilities and other accessibility concerns can request to be seated first. To reserve an access-friendly space in the room, first register using the link above, then email publicprograms@newberry.org at least 48 hours before the event. Seats arranged in this way will be held until 10 minutes before the event starts.

For more information, see <http://www.facebook.com/DarrowBridge-georg-207085072651434/> or DarrowBridge.org, or call 773-387-2394.



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Nominations sought for 30 Under 30 Awards

Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for its annual 30 Under 30 Awards.

The ceremony will take place Wed., June 26. There will be a 5:30 p.m. reception, with the program being 6-7:30 p.m. Nominees should be 30 years or under as of June 30, and should have made some substantial contributions to the Chicagoland LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas.

The deadline to nominate individuals is Friday, April 26.

Windy City Times Managing Editor Matt Simonette coordinates the awards program for the paper. Hundreds of people have been honored by the paper in the more than 10 years since the awards were established. Most honorees have gone on to great success in their careers and educations, including working for the Obama presidential campaign and administration, plus individual successes in music, legal, professional and academic careers and much more.

Individuals, organizations, co-workers, etc. can nominate a person by emailing matt@windycitytimes.com or faxed to Matt Simonette's attention to 773-871-7609. Self-nominations are welcome.

The nomination should be 100 words or fewer, and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information and the age of the nominee.

Note: Following the policy instituted in 2005, individuals can only win once. Those have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards. This year's sponsors include AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted, and Howard Brown Health. Honorees will be notified in May.

ELECTIONS 2019

Early voting info; election judges needed

Early voting for the April 2 municipal runoff elections will take place March 18 through April 1.

The Loop Super Site, 175 W. Washington St., will open daily starting March 15.

Any ballots that voters cast in early voting are final. After voting early, voters may not return to amend, change or undo a ballot for any reason. It is a felony to vote more than once—or to attempt to vote more than once—in the same election.

Government-issued photo ID is not required but is helpful if there is a question about the registration, address, signature or if there are two voters with the same or similar names at the same address.

To view a list of sites, visit ChicagoElections.com/en/early-voting.html.

Pro-elder LGBT bill passes state committee

Legislation that Illinois State Sen. Ram Villivalam sponsored to advance equality for LGBTQ older adults passed the Illinois Senate's Human Services Committee on March 5.

"It is important to protect our LGBTQ population at all ages. The older members of this community face very specific challenges as they age," Villivalam (D-Chicago) said in a statement. "We need to ensure that the environments in assisted living facilities are welcoming and inclusive, and I'm proud to say this legislation does just that."

Senate Bill 1319 would help cultivate affirming environments in assisted living facilities for LGBTQ older adults—many of whom face unique challenges as they age because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Deal sees charges dropped against Schock

In a twist, federal prosecutors in Chicago have agreed to drop all charges against former Republican U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock—if he reimburses money he owes to the Internal Revenue Service and his campaign fund, The Chicago Tribune reported.

The deal was announced during what was supposed to be a routine status hearing for Schock before U.S. District Judge Matthew Kennelly on March 6. Schock's campaign committee, Schock for Congress, pled guilty to a misdemeanor count of failing to properly report expenses.

Schock, 37, must pay \$42,000 to the IRS and \$68,000 to his congressional campaign fund. If he adheres to those terms, all felony counts against him will be dropped. Schock was initially charged in a 24-count indictment in November 2016, alleging wire fraud and other crimes.

The Tribune article is at <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-ex-congressman-aaron-schock-guilty-20190306-story.html>.

Howard Brown annual meeting March 21

Howard Brown Health is inviting staff, patients and community supporters to its annual meeting, to be held Thursday, March 21, 6-8 p.m., at Macy's on State Street, 111 N. State St., in the Narcissus Room on the seventh floor.

At this free event, Howard Brown will review its accomplishments and discuss how to continue advocating and serving the community. In addition, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago will receive the Friend for Life Award, while Craig Andree will receive the Heart of Howard Brown Award.

RSVP to Events@HowardBrown.org by noon on March 21.

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

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



1213 W. Roscoe St.
\$1,099,000

Fantastic Southport Corridor value! This architectural statement house designed by Marcel Freides centers on a spectacular 3-story atrium with light streaming in from skylights above.



900 N. Lake Shore Dr., #1805
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Longtime nonprofit advocate Vicky DiProva dies

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Victoria "Vicky" DiProva, died Feb. 12 due to multiple health complications. She was 54.

She was born May 18, 1964, in Elgin and lived in Chicago her entire adult life.

DiProva graduated from the University of Chicago with a bachelor of arts in communication. About a decade later, she returned there for a master's degree from the college's School of Social Service Administration.

In the 12 years prior to her death, DiProva was a non-profit consultant, with clients ranging from Consumers Advancing Patient Safety, Season of Change Fitness, McLean County AIDS Taskforce, the Between Friends women's shelter and the National Runaway Switchboard.

She also served as executive director for a number of entities over a 20-year period, including Court Appointed Special Advocates of Cook County, National Association of Women Lawyers, Rape Victim Advocates and the Lesbian Community Cancer Project (LCCP) (now the Women's Health Services at Howard Brown Health).

Additionally, DiProva produced experimental films and ran her own zine during her young

adulthood. She was able to leverage her creativity to connect with a variety of people, further enabling her to be successful professionally and earn money for the causes she cared about.

DiProva is survived by her sisters Cathy Wingo (Denis), Debra Suhweil (Husam) and brother John DiProva, as well as nieces Najia Sobhy (Mohamed) and Amira Suhweil and nephews Yousef Suhweil (Angela) and Adam Suhweil. She was preceded in death by her mother Dolores DiProva (Kessel), father Albert DiProva and beloved dogs Jaoa, Antonio Carlos and Isabella.

"It is impossible to capture in a few words what we lost with Vicky's passing," said longtime friend Tamale Sepp. "Vicky had a passion for traveling and spent a lot of time in New York and abroad, as well as in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the winter, and taking part in practice sled rides with Iditarod musher teams during their off season. One year we went and were on the sled, yelling back and forth with the musher about stuff, and it turned out he was a guy I went to high school with in Arizona. What a small world. She loved to go on adventures.

"Vicky was one of the rare, eclectic people who could break bread with anyone, meeting people



Vicky DiProva.

Photo courtesy of Michael Gorski

where they were to find a common ground for connection. She had a generosity that shone through her actions and fueled much of her success in life. To know Vicky was to love her. Her loss is devastating."

Jessica Halem, who took over the LCCP executive director role from DiProva, said, "Vicky led the LCCP during its huge 10th anniversary celebration and the expansion of the work into cultural competency training—making it one of the first LGBTQ health organizations in the U.S. to provide this service. She also oversaw LCCP's first government grants that allowed for real infrastructure investment and growth. The Chicago LGBTQ community would not be where it is today if not for the leadership of Vicky all those years ago. Thank you friend. You will be missed."

"Vicky was truly a one of a kind, larger than life and complicated yet mesmerizing person," said friend Sjaak Blaauw. "A kind soul who is missed already. Gone, but never forgotten. Get some rest Vicky; it is well deserved."

"I had the pleasure of knowing Vicky for 34 years," said longtime friend Peggy Miller. "Her compassion was boundless and she gave of herself completely to others. She was smart and had a dry sarcastic humor through which she filtered the world, making life's cruelties seem somewhat less so. She loved music [and] art, and was very happy when she put that all together as a perfect hostess, with any event large or small. Vicky was an amazing human being whose life was too short, but whose memory will carry those of us who loved her through. We will miss you so very much as the world becomes smaller without you in it."

"Vicky asked to emcee my 50th-birthday party held at a now defunct club with Redmoon entertainers, catered treats and an open bar," said friend Rick Stoneham. "At the party, Vicky made an announcement that if anyone wanted to know a secret about me she would charge them a fee, and whatever was made would go to three of my favorite charities or arts group. Amazingly, she

raised several thousand dollars that I donated. She was such a powerhouse."

"I met Vicky while she was working with Rape Victims Advocates," said friend Patricia "Cookie" Dominquez. "She was a tireless supporter and great fundraiser for this charity. She contributed to many causes, and should be remembered for her kind and generous heart."

"For nearly 40 years, I have had the honor and privilege of calling Vicky my good friend," said Michael Gorski. "We were introduced by a mutual art teacher in high school, who must have recognized two misfits that needed to join forces to conquer the world. Vicky was a kind, compassionate, creative and generous soul with a fast wit and an absurd sense of humor bordering on the macabre.

"One year for our favorite shared holiday, Halloween, she sent me lilies that she spray-painted black inside a small hand-made coffin with a lovely hand-painted whipping/bondage scene on the lid. People may not know, but Vicky was a very talented artist and that was her first line of study. We became fast friends. She would always be there with laughter, advice or a shoulder to cry on when needed. Vicky wanted to make the world a better place, and it will be a much sadder and lonely place without her in it."

"Vicky was a strong advocate for social justice and brought the compassion and knowledge of her counseling background to her leadership role at Rape Victim Advocates," said friend Joy Airaudi. "She was a mentor to the staff, board and volunteers and built relationships with funders and community stakeholders, always with intelligence, kindness and humor. She never lost sight of the core mission to help victims become survivors and was instrumental in growing RVA into the thriving agency it is today. She had a positive impact on so many lives, and the advocacy community is better for her contributions."

A celebration of her life will be held in May; the specific date and location have yet to be determined.

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South Side trans man discusses life, healthcare journey

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

When Cheno Pulliam, 33, first stepped foot into Howard Brown Health's Hyde Park location three years ago, he knew this was the right place for him to receive his healthcare.

Pulliam—who identifies as a trans masculine male and is the father of twin 6-year old daughters—has lived on Chicago's South Side his entire life. He currently works as a security officer at the Goodman Theater.

"Growing up in Chicago was not easy, especially in a single parent household with five siblings," said Pulliam. "I saw a lot of things and suffered from homelessness with my mother and three of my siblings. I share this with my LGBTQ family to let them know anything is possible—you just have to fight for your dreams and stand up for what you believe in and never forget who you are and stay true to yourself."

Pulliam was first diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at Christian Community Health Center in 2014, and was prescribed Metformin for his diabetes. When the doctor he was working with at Christian Community Health Center was fired for

being trans-inclusive, he decided to find another place for his healthcare needs. This is what led him to Howard Brown Health.

In addition to being treated for diabetes, Pulliam receives his hormone-replacement therapy and mental healthcare needs from Howard Brown Health. "Howard Brown Health has changed my life for the better," said Pulliam.

"Patients can expect culturally affirming services provided by professional staff who reflect the communities they serve, in a safe and welcoming environment," said Howard Brown Health COO and Certified Physician Assistant Kristin Keglovitz Baker. "People of all identities are encouraged to use Howard Brown Health's culturally competent and inclusive programs and health services."

One of the ways Pulliam takes care of his mental health is through his two pet turtles, Mickey and Minnie, whom he has had since 2005.

"They are my emotional support animals," said Pulliam. "When I first got them, I was going through a rough time. At first I had three of them, but one died and that was a very traumatic time. I was depressed for awhile, after that but having Mickey and Minnie helped."



Cheno Pulliam.

Photo courtesy of Howard Brown Health

Due to the care he has received at Howard Brown Health, Pulliam has been motivated to run and jog regularly, and that has resulted in healthy weight loss as well as keeping his diabetes in check.

"With World Diabetes Alert Day coming up on March 26 and National LGBT Health Awareness Week on March 25-29, I want to make people aware of the importance of taking care of oneself both physically and mentally. My aunt recently died of complications from diabetes. Part of the

reason why she died was due instances of interrupted healthcare. I want to make sure people do not suffer her fate."

Giving back to the community is also an essential part of Pulliam's life.

One of the ways Pulliam has done this is through the OSHA bloodborne pathogen training and HIPAA awareness for healthcare providers at Howard Brown Health. He also volunteers with Howard Brown Health's testing program for HIV and other STI's and donates clothes and shoes he does not need to the LGBTQ youth who are experiencing homelessness and receive services at Broadway Youth Center.

"I participated in the teddy-bear drive for La Rabida Children's Hospital twice," said Pulliam. "I have helped give away free hot dogs and snowballs for kids at a neighborhood fair, as well as donated and barbecued food for my social club's back to school event. For the past three years, I donated food, water and supplies to the Dancing Star Elite Majorette and Hip-Hop Dance team during the Bud Billiken Day Parade and for their practices prior to the parade.

"Additionally, I have provided supplies for a Thanksgiving food basket giveaway and blanket giveaway for the homeless. I also have participated in my dance fraternity's mental health workshop series and life information sessions."

When Pulliam is not working, spending time with his family or doing volunteer work, he can be found modeling for FashionBar Chicago during Chicago Fashion Week, writing poetry, dancing, playing sports, bowling, roller skating, reading, going to see plays and listening to music.

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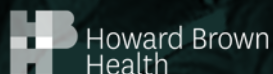
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For sponsorship and donation information, contact Mindy Neveaux at mindyn@howardbrown.org or 773.572.5117.

viewpoints



**Joan
JONES**

Uplifting Black LGBTQ workers all year round

Black History Month may have ended, but at the National LGBTQ Workers Center, we center Black queer and transgender (trans) people 24/7/365.

Why? Because we enthusiastically believe that in order to be an effective social justice organization, we have to center the most marginalized people among us. And we want other social-justice leaders to take our lead. So, we have put together a list of three ways that movement leaders and activists can uplift Black LGBTQ workers all year round.

1. Support the Raise The Wage Act

The Raise the Wage Act was proposed in Congress on Jan. 16 to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour within five years. It would also make it illegal to pay tipped workers and disabled workers less than the federal minimum wage. If enacted, this bill would benefit LGBTQ people across the country.

But we are here to talk specifically about Black LGBTQ people. Why?

Well, when talking about the economy, oftentimes Black queer and trans workers get left out of the conversation. The truth is, according to the Williams Institute, there are over one million LGBTQ African Americans in the US, including myself, and the Raise the Wage Act could dramatically affect our livelihoods for the better.

Here is the problem: Despite growing poverty rates among Black LGBTQ people, organizations have largely failed to prioritize our economic justice issues, and when they have, it has not been done through a racial justice lens.

What has been the result? A large number of Black queer and trans workers are being relegated to the brinks of our economy. According to the Williams Institute, Black LGBTQ folks face higher rates of discrimination, poverty and incarceration than both Black heterosexuals and LGBTQ white people. Stories like those of Tee—an AfroLatinx trans person who ended up homeless as a teenager and struggling with housing discrimination when they transitioned—paints a realistic story of what it is like for many young Black trans folks trying to survive. Their

story was featured in the Transgender Law Center's stories of discrimination and is ongoing.

If you are not already doing it, advocate for policies that make change for queer and trans Black workers. It can make a real difference for people like me and Tee! Call your Congressional representatives, show up at their offices, attend a rally, get out on the streets, make your voice heard on social media—all of these things help create change in their own way.

2. Treat Black LGBTQ workers like more than a statistic

"We have to be more reflective of our demographics!" is a rallying cry that I have heard often when working at labor and social justice organizations. It's true. The leadership of organizations that explicitly work to support marginalized groups are often themselves not run by marginalized people. It would almost be funny in an ironic sort of way if it didn't cause huge real-life issues for the populations they seek to engage.

In the case of one of the Workers Center's board members who is Black, queer and non-binary, they were demoted after speaking out about the lack of people-of-color leadership at their nonprofit workplace. Their experience, unfortunately, is not unique. Marginalized folks too are often punished when holding organizations accountable to their alleged social justice values.

On the other end, many times organizations spend months and sometimes years to collect statistics, facts, and demographics just to prove Black workers' voices matter. Why does there need to be so much evidence or push back simply to prove that we are humans worth fighting for?

In 2019, let us celebrate Black folks just for being Black folks. Skip the stats, the headache of arguments that leave both parties bitter, and invite us to your board anyway. Employ us. Bring us into high-level visioning conversations. Give us leadership positions. Do these things not just to fulfill some level of representation or dorum but because Black people are magic ... PERIOD!

3. Unapologetically prioritize Black queer and trans people in your organizing efforts

I'll never forget the time I walked into a Black-led labor event, and one of the leaders declared, "LGBTQ people will be welcome here over my dead body."

At that moment, time stopped, and my heart dropped all the way to the floor. I was heartbroken as I saw half of the room mumble in agreement, the other half stay quiet, and one person voice dissent who was eventually dismissed. Needless to say, it

was the last time I ever stepped into that space.

Juxtapose that to my experience only a few weeks ago, when my fiance and I went to see Ivy Queen, a prolific rap and reggaeton artist. In a room full of Black and Brown working-class individuals, Ivy Queen shouted, "Where are my LGBTQ people in the room? I love and support you." The statement changed the room. My partner and I held hands and embraced with greater ease. People looked at us and smiled. They clapped and cheered. We felt seen.

If LGBTQ people can be centered at a rap and reggaeton concert in 2019, the organizations that are supposed to represent us should have no excuse. Folks are ready for decisive inclusion.

When social-justice and labor organizations support Black queer and trans folks, everyone wins. People feel accepted. Folks on the fence feel challenged. Bigots leave, and leaders are forced to practice being strong enough to say out loud, "Hate doesn't belong here."

Finally, prioritizing Black queer and trans folks does not mean deprioritizing other people. On the contrary, when Black LGBTQ folks are prioritized in organizing, all LGBTQ people, people of color, and even cisgender heterosexual white people are lifted up. We have seen this happen all over the country as Black Lives Matter activists created police reform efforts that spurred change for people of all races, backgrounds, and abilities who were brutalized by the police.

The same can be said about the trans Black women who started the Stonewall Riots that launched the movement for LGBTQ rights as we know it. Black queer and trans folks leading organizations and movements have and will continue to transform this country.

Y'all, it is March 2019. Things are in full swing. Programs are being planned. The pedal is to the metal. In the rush to fill up your 2019 calendar, don't let February be the only month your organization mentions Black LGBTQ people.

If you're looking for an opportunity to organize at the intersection of LGBTQ rights, workers' rights, and racial justice, consider joining the National LGBTQ Workers Center Advisory Board. We're a group of majority queer and trans people of color who are serious about winning grassroots economic justice for all LGBTQ people and having fun while doing it. Visit <https://www.lgbtqworkerscenter.org/get-involved> or become involved in other ways!

Joan Jones is the founder and president of the National LGBTQ Workers Center. They reside in Chicago with their fiance. Joan is also a lover of #BlackGirlMagic, QTPOC liberation and micro-brews.

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Jess Glynne.
Photo from Atlantic Records



'ALWAYS' IN THE MIX

BRITISH SINGING SENSATION
JESS GLYNNE

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THEATER REVIEW

Southern Comfort

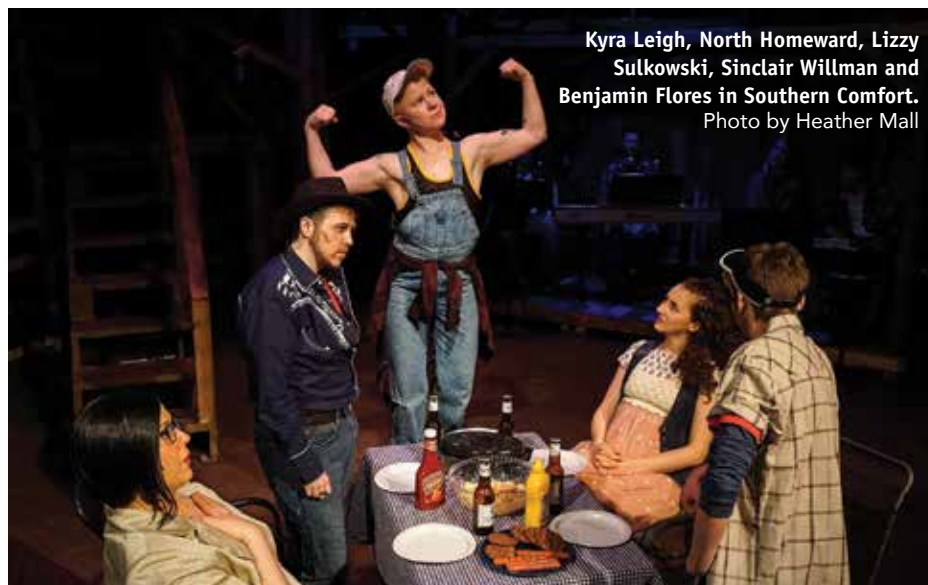
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 Tickets: 866-811-4111;
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 Runs through: March 31

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This musical is deeply heartfelt but not entirely successful as a vehicle or as a groundbreaking production.

It's based on an award-winning 2001 documentary film about Robert Eads (1945-1999), although it alters characters and story. Robert is a fiftysomething trans man dying of ovarian cancer, never having completed full gender-reassignment surgery. It's bad timing as Robert's just found the love of his life, Lola, who's beginning a male-to-female transition starting with her own public presentation.

Additionally, Robert (North Homeward) presides over a rural Georgia community of other trans women and men, among them his young adult adoptive son, Jackson (Lizzy Sulkowski). Each year the "chosen family," as Robert calls them, attends the Southern Comfort Transgender Con-



Kyra Leigh, North Homeward, Lizzy Sulkowski, Sinclair Willman and Benjamin Flores in *Southern Comfort*.
 Photo by Heather Mall

ference (SoCo) in Atlanta—a life-affirming and inclusive real event—and Robert's goal is to live long enough to go one last time and dance with Lola at the SoCo ball.

Rather a tear-jerker, the thin story is the problem with *Southern Comfort* as a vehicle. It references many issues—family rejection, work-place discrimination, self-acceptance, fear, sexuality

(apart from gender), medical discrimination (a dozen doctors/hospitals refused to treat Eads)—but addresses none deeply. Apart from Robert's obvious illness, nothing happens in Act I until the close, when Robert and Jackson fall out over Jackson's decision to complete reassignment surgery (using his own money) with a phalloplasty. Robert's opposition isn't explained and comes from nowhere, so it feels forced. Jackson has

been critical of Lola—also forced and unmotivated—but that's not an apparent factor in his argument with Robert. The issues involving gender reassignment—surgical and otherwise—barely are discussed, leaving cis viewers uninformed ... but perhaps that needs to be another show.

The lovely, ample score is played on traditional acoustic instruments—fiddle, string bass, banjo, guitar and mandolin—but only occasionally channels traditional music. Indeed, jazz influences and Broadway ballads are as frequent as bluegrass tunes. Veteran musical director Robert Ollis makes the band sound great and the voices as good as possible.

And there's the rub with the production: the best voices are very good and fully up to the score's demands while the worst are barely adequate. And the acting, under JD Caudhill's direction, is not a reason to see the show. Viewed at the final preview, pacing and energy lagged as the show ran a long two-and-a-half hours.

Still, the six lead characters all are trans individuals who are played by trans actors (unlike the 2016 off-Broadway production)—a groundbreaking casting commitment that was impossible in Chicago (and elsewhere) several years ago. The trans-actor talent pool will hopefully grow if opportunities such as *Southern Comfort* are provided. Others in the cast include Kyra Leigh (Lola), Ricki Pettinato (Carly), Benjamin Flores (Sam) and Sinclair Willman (Melanie).

THEATER REVIEW

Dutch Masters

Playwright: Greg Keller
 At: Jackalope Theatre at the Armory, 5917 N. Broadway
 Tickets: JackalopeTheatre.org; \$5-\$30
 Runs through: April 6

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

A playwright struggling to assemble one or more dissimilar personalities and keep them in contentious proximity can incarcerate his personae in a prison, a sanitarium or a bunker under siege by hostile outsiders, but East Coast writers since the mid-20th century have displayed a fondness for



Dutch Masters.
 Photo by Joel Maisonet

the New York City subway system as the preferred metaphor for demographic diversity trapped within Stygian mystery.

This explains how we find ourselves in 1992, riding the northbound D train from mid-town Manhattan to affluent Riverdale via a route

traversing several poor neighborhoods in the Bronx. Our fellow passengers are Eric, a Black youth resplendent in the latest street fashions and snappy repartee, and Steve, a White youth whose slackerly appearance bespeaks sleeplessness, homelessness or preppy scruff. The former strikes up a conversation with the latter, and after some preliminary banter name-checking race/class/gender, the two disembark to smoke weed in the park, where Steve passes out and wakes to find himself in Eric's cozy family-style home.

Well, you didn't expect mere cultural chiaroscuro to spark tension sufficient to sustain our interest over a whole 80 minutes, did you? Author Greg Keller didn't, and proceeds to introduce a plethora of distractions—among them, a gun manhandled so recklessly that we are sure it's not loaded and a Dutch Masters cigar employed as the wrapper for a joint the size of an exhaust vent.

Since the circumstantial history contributing to the bond, brief and unresolved as it is, between the two strangers is intriguing enough in itself to earn our emotional investment, these ill-advised embellishments only encumber our gradual comprehension of the discoveries that will lead both of them to a heartbreaking retribution.

A paint-by-numbers script may have its shortcomings as literary exercise, but its very ambiguity renders it a virtuoso acting showcase. Under the direction of Wardell Julius Clark, the tag-team chemistry generated by Patrick Agada and Sam Boeck for this Jackalope Theatre production strives mightily—and ultimately successfully—to convince us that the growing dread and agonizing realization suffered by our two protagonists arises from a dynamic constructed on revelations manifesting themselves with the inevitability of tragedy.

THEATER REVIEW

The Ruse of Medusa

Author: Erik Satie
 At: Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St.
 Tickets: FacilityTheatre.org; \$25
 Runs through: April 7

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Camped out like a settlement of snobby hobos in the hoarded wreckage of an eccentric great aunt's estate sale, Facility Theatre's production of *The Ruse of Medusa* is an exercise in (cue a bicycle bell that plays "La Cucaracha"). Let me try that again: *The Ruse of Medusa* is (cue the sound of the slap of a wet squid into fresh newspaper).

It is very hard to pin an assessment onto a performance that embraces absurdism to the extent that director Dado, music director Sam Clapp and the entire artistic team have here. Why have an orchestra of men decked out in jade monkey masks? Why are some male roles played by women and not others? The link to mythology's favorite snake haired seductress is tenuous at best, so why evoke Medusa in the first place? This production answers every question with a resounding "Why not?"

It's best not to look for cohesive structure, or gravitate toward story, but if you must, I can help. The Baron Medusa (David Cerda) must entertain a suitor, Astolpho (Laurie Roberts) who has either come to court his adopted daughter Frisette (Taylor Galloway), or is just too overwhelmed to say otherwise. Making matters worse, the Baron's socialist manservant Polycarpe (Jenni M. Hadley) has begun to defect. Also, Jonas the Monkey (Brian Shaw) is there along with an orchestra/instrumental foley team. The whole endeavor doesn't take much more than an hour, including dance

breaks, an audience costume change, free snacks and more non-sensical surprises.

What exactly makes a good performance in an absurdist landscape? Someone who can abandon all reason, sense and stakes just to get basic impulses across, I expect, and the whole cast rose to the occasion. As Baron Medusa, David Cerda goes so mad that it takes us to another innermost plane of existence. Taylor Galloway, as Frisette, and Laurie Roberts, as Astolpho, perform their mismatched genders as timidly as graceless newborn foals. Jenni M. Hadley plays Polycarpe with the closest thing to good sense and boundaries that this world can offer.

Director Dado gives us weird asymmetrical patterns and off-putting detachment, and inserts every tactic you could employ to annoy an audience; our unwilling participation, a distinct lack of rules and walls, and an ending that comes so abruptly, it feels like a trick. When the lights came up, I expected ushers to shout "surprise" and call us back for another disorienting act.

THEATER REVIEW

The Man Who Was Thursday

Playwright: adapted by Bilal Dardai
from the story by G.K. Chesterton
At: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: LifelineTheatre.com and
773-761-4477; \$40
Runs through: April 7

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's a lesson to be learned from G. K. Chesterton's Edwardian-era thriller, but if you spend too much time looking for it, you will likely bypass it completely and miss out on a lot of fun as well.

The year is 1908 and the London parks are teeming with self-styled social radicals proclaiming the virtues of shaking up the status quo. A sympathetic spectator, after persuading one such advocate to orchestrate an entry into the outer fringes of the anarchist movement, succeeds in gaining membership in an elite terrorist cell composed of seven representatives from diverse nations, each operating under a code name echoing the days of the week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.—with “Sunday” serving as their de facto leader. The exposure of infiltrators among the conspirators, however, render the purpose behind their mission increasingly perplexing.

Exacerbating the perplex in Lifeline's delightfully absurd production is a dramatic universe whose period garb reflects the stylistic flourishes



Linsey Falls and Eduardo Xavier Curley-Carillo in *The Man Who Was Thursday*.
Photo by Suzanne Plunkett

of Steampunk fashion, augmented by patently phony disguises—many involving cross-gender drag—and dialects (“poet” pronounced “pah-ow-et,” for example, or “bull” as “byool” and “Marquis” as “Maaar-kweez”). Incidental music featuring plucked strings suggestive of walking on tip-toe, entire scenes lit solely by hand-held flashlights and an extended full-company chase taking full advantage of the myriad locales facilitated by Lifeline's vertical stage and multiple entrances likewise combine to leave us almost as giddy as the characters by the time Chesterton makes his point—not in the smug Sunday's anticlimactic confession, but heralded by a cataclysm resonating with us a century later.

Director Jess Hutchinson has assembled a cast adept at scaling staircases and scrambling

through corridors without inflicting the slightest disturbance to wigs, false beards, prosthetic noses or narrative focus, so that while we may be mystified by the progress of our covert agents, at no time are we ever confused. Bilal Dardai's adaptation may acknowledge Chesterton's theological and political views for the benefit of playgoers obsessed with scholarly labels, but those choosing to ignore the latter will find it easy to relax and enjoy an espionage yarn as it might appear if staged by Mel Brooks.

CRITICS' PICKS

On Clover Road, American Blues Theater at Stage 773, through March 16. The unplanned Steven Dietz festival continues with this twisted desert-cult psychological thriller featuring Philip E. Johnson in one of his rare creepy-villain roles (Shakespeare doesn't count) and you have one more weekend to catch it. MSB

Doubt: A Parable, Gift Theatre at the Steppenwolf 1700, through March 31. John Gawlik's direction ramps up the urgency in this examination of moral compasses led astray by moral certainty buttressed by casuistic power. MSB

Requiem for a Heavyweight, The Artistic Home, through March 31. Not a single punch actually lands in Rod Serling's tough-tender tragedy, but never has boxing been more brutal than in this production featuring Mark Pracht in a star-making performance as a down-on-his-luck prizefighter. MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge

Symphony musicians on strike for first time since 2012

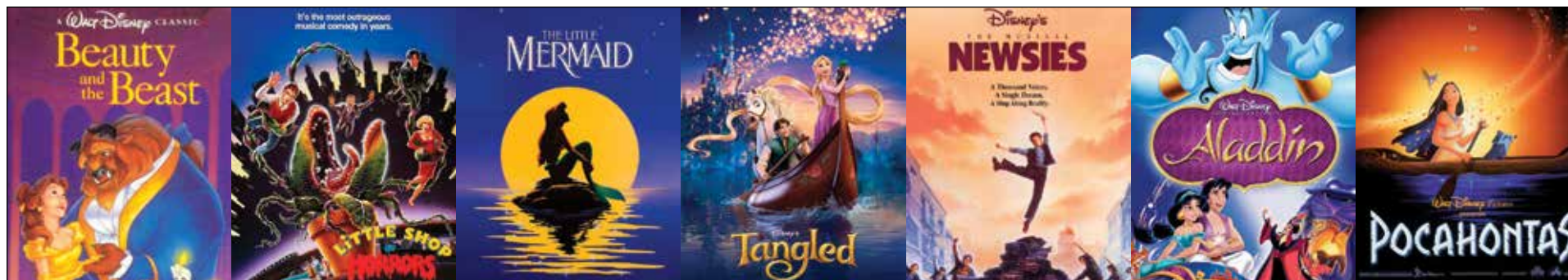
Despite 11 months of negotiations, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) musicians—represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians (CFM)—and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) did not reach agreement on a new contract, a CSO press release stated. The musicians are now on strike—for the first time since 2012.

The previous contract expired at 11:59 p.m. on March 10.

The release also stated, “The musicians are now engaging in a strike for terms that the Association and Board of Trustees believe are unreasonable and detrimental to a sustainable future for the CSO.”

In 2017-18, the minimum annual salary for a CSO musician was \$159,000, the average annual salary was \$187,000 and the average total compensation, e.g. including media payments, was \$209,000. Sticking points include salary, insurance coverage and benefits.

“We have been clear from the beginning that we will not accept a contract that diminishes the well-being of members or imperils the future of the orchestra,” said Stephen Lester, CSO bassist and chair of the musicians' negotiating committee, in a statement that The Chicago Tribune reported.



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SPRING THEATER REVIEW

Hot-button plays for a cold spring

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The groundhog lied to us! Winter in Chicago is not yet over, boots and parkas still litter the foyers and the New Year has been delayed until the equinox—so start your countdowns now in anticipation of these spring plays:

—**Not For Sale:** UrbanTheatre remounts *Guadalupe del Carmen's* commentary on the gentrification of Humboldt Park and the possibility of peaceful solutions to conflicts engendered thereby. Currently playing in English to April 7 at the Batey Urbano, 2620 W. Division St. Info/tickets: UrbanTheatreChicago.org and in Spanish TBA mid-April at Teatro Aguijon, 2707 N. Laramie Ave. Info/tickets: AguijonTheater.org

—**Herland:** A former rehearsal studio for a Bruce Springsteen cover band fuels the determination of three elderly ladies and a young intern (two of them lesbians) to construct their own retirement facility in Grace McLeod's *Rolling World* Premiere play. March 16-April 14 at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. Info/tickets: Redtwist.org and 773-728-7529

—**Admissions:** Privileged white parents claiming the high moral ground has their moral com-

pass tested by Joshua Harmon, the playwright whose candor spawned the controversial (and immensely popular) *Bad Jews* in 2015. March 21-May 21 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Info/tickets: TheaterWit.org and 773-975-8150

—**Cambodian Rock Band:** Lauren Yee's chronicle of historical detection, genocide, reprisal and reconciliation is NOT a musical, although songs by Cambodian-American indie rockers *Dengue Fever* are performed live by the actors in this *Victory Gardens* production. April 13-May 5 at the Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Info/tickets: VictoryGardens.org and 773-871-3000.

—**Mad Beat Hip and Gone:** Two Nebraska teens encounter the King of the Beatniks in 1951 and the rest is the highway in Steven Dietz's nostalgic adventure yarn, staged by Promethean Theatre Ensemble to inaugurate Edge Theater's new annex to its Broadway space. May 4-June 1 at The Edge Off-Broadway, 1133 W. Catalpa Ave. Info/tickets: PrometheanTheatre.org

—**Bloomsday:** The prolific multi-genre Steven Dietz is all over the Windy map this spring, with Remy Bumppo departing its season of grim subject matter to present a romantic tale of love, regrets and time-travel. May 21-June 16 at The-



Top row (left to right): Valerie Gorman, Simran Bal, Kathleen Ruhl. Bottom row (left to right): Danalis Resto, marssie Mencotti in *Herland*. Photo by Gracie Meier

ater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave. Info/tickets: RemyBumppo.org 773-975-8150

—**Othello:** Brianna Buckley and Kathrynne Wolf lead the non-traditional female-identifying cast of the Shakespeare classic for the *Babes With Blades* Theatre Company under the direction of Mignon McPherson Stewart. April 20-May 25 at the Factory, 1623 W. Howard St. Info/tickets: BabesWithBlades.org and 773-904-0391

—**Lottery Day:** The final chapter in Ike Holter's seven-play series set in Chicago's (fictional) 51st Ward brings the saga home. March 29-April 28 at the Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St. Info/tickets: Goodmantheatre.org and 312-443-3800

—**Mary Shelley's Frankenstein:** In David Cat-

lin's adaptation of Mary Shelley's greatest-hit horror classic, closing out the year-long anniversary festival celebrating its centennial, the author herself recounts how she came to write it. May 8-Aug. 4 at the Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. Info/tickets: LookingglassTheatre.org and 312-337-0665

—**The Doctor's Dilemma:** George Bernard Shaw's exploration of knotty medical practices in 1906 also marks the *Swan Song* of ShawChicago, whose touring chamber readings brought dramatic literature to the neighborhoods for over three decades. March 23-April 15 at the Ruth Page Arts Center, 1016 N. Dearborn Pkwy. Info/tickets: ShawChicago.org and 312-587-7390

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Jonathan Zeng.
Photo by Mikki Schaffner

'Songs That Speak' concert March 23

Jonathan Zeng is presenting "Songs That Speak"—a cabaret featuring favorite tunes from the worlds of musical theater and popular music—on Saturday, March 23, at 7 p.m. at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St.

Zeng will be accompanied by Michael R. Oldham (pianist/composer), Daniel Eastwood (percussionist) and Jackson Jay Kidder (bassist).

Tickets are \$15; visit JonathanZeng.com.

Alan Menken to perform March 30

Legendary songwriter Alan Menken comes to Chicago for "A Whole New World of Alan Menken"—a one-night-only performance at the historic Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Ida B. Wells Dr. (50 E. Congress Pkwy.), on Saturday, March 30, at 7:30 p.m.

During the show, the man behind songs like "Under the Sea" (The Little Mermaid), "Somewhere That's Green" (Little Shop of Horrors), "A Whole New World" (Aladdin) and "Be Our Guest" (Beauty and the Beast) performs some of these songs and tells stories from throughout his career.

Menken has won more Academy Awards than any other living individual with eight Oscars (four for Best Score and four for Best Song). He has also won 11 Grammy Awards (including Song of the Year for "A Whole New World"), seven Golden Globes, London's Evening Standard Award, the Olivier Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award and the Drama Desk Award.

Tickets start at \$30 each; visit AuditoriumTheatre.org, call 312-341-2300 or stop at the Auditorium Theatre box office.

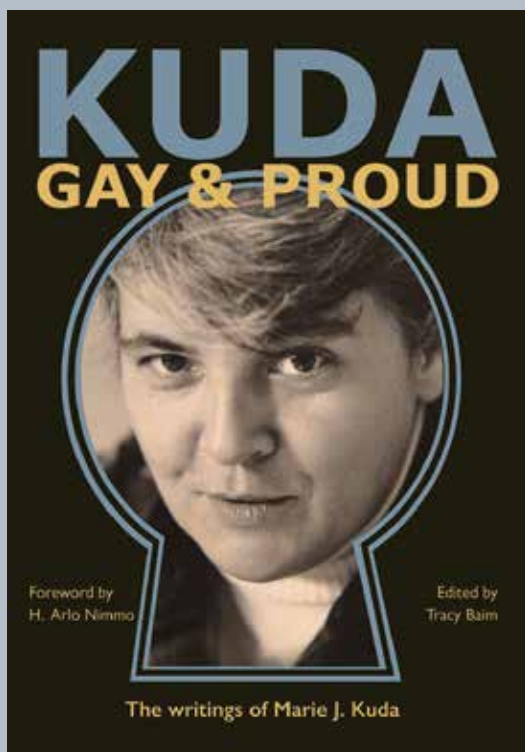
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SPRING MUSICAL REVIEW

Singing and swinging through spring

Robin DaSilva as Mahalia Jackson in *Mahalia Jackson: Moving Through The Light*. Photo by Michael Courier



BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Chicago will see and hear 20 musicals between now and late May.

Some are touring hits calling again, such as *Jersey Boys* (Nederlander Theatre, April 2-7) and *Falsettos* (Nederlander, May 28-June 9); and others are new productions of old favorites, such as *The Little Shop of Horrors* (Mercury Theater, open run) and *Poseidon! An Upside Down Musical* (Hell in a Handbag Productions at The Edge, through April 28). Many, however, will be new to Chicago audiences and they are the focus of our attention, listed by production dates.

—**Southern Comfort, Pride Films & Plays**, through March 31: Chicago premiere of a 2016 musical about a transgender circle of friends in contemporary rural Georgia, centering on Robert and his new love, Lola. As unlikely as it may

sound, it's based on a 2001 documentary film. The authors are the team who created *Trevor*, a huge hit about a gay teen at the Writers Theatre in 2017 (that *Windy City Times* enthusiastically reviewed). All six roles in *Southern Comfort* are played by trans actors, supported by a five-piece acoustic band. Info: PrideFilmsAndPlays.com

—**Mahalia Jackson, Moving Through the Light**, Black Ensemble Theater, through April 14: Born in New Orleans, the world's greatest gospel singer called Chicago home from age 16 until her death in 1972 at age 60. In Chicago, the father of gospel, Thomas A. Dorsey, helped shape the profound artist and person she became. Mahalia Jackson recorded 30 albums, sang at Carnegie Hall and the March on Washington, won four Grammy Awards and earned a Hollywood Boulevard star. This is her life and music, as interpreted by writer/director Jackie Taylor and staged in

the Black Ensemble's customary bravura style. Info: BlackEnsembletheater.org

—**Bright Star**, BoHo Theatre at the Greenhouse, March 16-May 5: Comedian Steve Martin and Edie Brickell are co-authors and co-composers of *Bright Star*, which was nominated for four 2017 Tony Awards. It's another musical with Southern roots—Martin is a traditional music enthusiast—set in North Carolina and cutting between the 1920s and post-WWII 1940s. The quite serious story follows a young writer and an older editor with a dark personal history, and the odd ways their lives intersect. You can bank on a strong production from BoHo. Info: BoHoTheatre.com

—**Hands on a Hardbody**, Refuge Theatre Project at Preston Bradley Center, March 18-April 14: This 2012 Broadway flop (28 performances) has had a robust regional theater life, including a 2014 production in Crystal Lake, Illinois. It's a new show, however, for most Chicago theater-

McNally and music/lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Steve Flaherty is well worth seeing. This one, which closes on Broadway March 31 after 800-plus performances, is based on the famous movie of the same name. No, not the 1956 drama starring Ingrid Bergman (who won an Oscar) and Yul Brynner, but the 1997 Disney animated musical. The grand, lush, romantic show bears absolutely no resemblance to history. Six songs from the film are in the show, plus a number of new ones. Info: BroadwayInChicago.com

—**A Chorus Line**, Porchlight Music Theatre @ Ruth Page Center, April 10-May 26: Who better than Porchlight in its roomy new digs to stage this legendary musical about dance, dance and more dance? *A Chorus Line* has a specific context—the world of Broadway musicals—but a universal message of what we all do for love, conveyed through an evocative and memorable pastiche score (composed by Marvin Hamlisch with



North Homeward, Kyra Leigh in *Southern Comfort*. Photo by Heather Mall

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goers. Such overlooked musicals are *Refuge Theatre's* specialty and they do good work, although some musicals deserve to be overlooked. Christopher Pazdernik directs, Jon Schneidman is choreographer and Ariel Triunfo is musical director. FYI: "*Hands on a Hardbody*" is not a gay man's dream; it refers to a hardbody pick-up truck. Info: refugetheatre.com

—**Djembe**, Apollo Theater Center, March 19-June 9: A djembe is a West African drum played with the hands, not sticks. *Djembe*, the show, is the U.S. premiere of an audience-interactive storytelling, drumming and singing performance that's been touring Europe. It features African and Western musicians playing African, Caribbean and American music, and everyone in the audience joins the drumming. *Djembe* is billed as family-friendly (ages 6 and older). A portion of proceeds will benefit Lighting Up Lives, a philanthropy to improve healthcare, education, cultural exchange, energy and employment for the people of West Africa. Info: ApolloChicago.com

—**Anastasia**, Nederlander Theatre, March 26-April 7: Any musical with book by Terrence

lyrics by Edward Kleban). Award-winning veteran Brenda Didier directs, with choreography by Chris Carter and musical direction by Linda Medonia. This is spring's don't-miss revival. Info: PorchlightMusicTheatre.org

—**Matilda**, the Musical, Drury Lane Theatre (Oakbrook Terrace), April 25-June 23: This is the Tony-winning version of Roald Dahl's scary tale of a schoolgirl confronting a dystopian family and a truly monstrous head mistress, with the promise of a better world held out by a teacher and a librarian. It's an unusual story (although not more unusual than, say, *Harry Potter*) with a driving, fascinating score (music and lyrics by Tim Minchin) perfect for the show although not filled with hummable tunes. This is the regional premiere of *Matilda*, seen here previously only in its national tour. Info: drurylanetheatre.com

—**La Havana Madrid**, Teatro Vista & Collaboration at The Den, May 11-June 22: This Teatro Vista smash hit sold out at the Goodman Theatre and *Steppenwolf* in 2017 and now returns for a too-brief re-staging. Despite the title, it largely

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Jess Glynne.
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NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Jess Glynne 'Always' in the mix

BY JERRY NUNN

English singer Jess Glynne came to widespread attention with the hit single "Rather Be," by Clean Bandit.

Her debut album, *I Cry When I Laugh*, debuted at number one on the UK albums chart and her second studio record, *Always In Between*, helped make her the first British female solo artist to have seven number-one singles on the UK *s*ingles Chart.

Windy City Times: Hi, Jess. I saw you perform at Subterranean last time you were in Chicago. It was too small of a venue for you.

JG: It was really small and tight.

WCT: You blew the roof off of it.

JG: It was amazing. Did you know that was one of my favorite gigs I have ever done? It was a long room, right?

WCT: Yes.

JG: It was wicked and so memorable. Chicago and Washington on that tour were my two favorite shows.

WCT: When did you realize that you could sing?

JG: Growing up I was introduced to a lot of music. My parents love music. They always have been. They always introduced me to music as a kid and it was quite important to them. I became obsessed with it from a young age. I would listen to it around the house and sing.

I developed such a passion about it that I would imitate Aretha Franklin a lot. She was my idol at the time. I wanted to sing exactly how she could sing.

I liked big voices, like Mariah Carey, as well. My best friend in primary school used to sing with me. When we were about 7 years old we sang "Hero," by Mariah Carey. I think in that moment I realized I could sing songs that other people couldn't do. I was a little girl, but felt cool.

WCT: There is something about how you hit the notes that captivate people.

JG: Oh, the execution, well I really appreciate that.

WCT: You have a big gay fan base.

JG: I know. I really do. A lot of gay people really relate to me.

WCT: Do you have a song that speaks directly to the gay community?

JG: I haven't written a song specifically for that. I do have songs that people that are gay can relate to thought.

For me, I have been in relationships with guys and girls. I have never hidden from it. I guess that is something that people can relate to, but I don't specifically write in that way. It is definitely something that I allow everyone to connect with.

I think the LGBT community has the biggest struggle. It is good to know you are not alone and express your emotions. Music is something that can help with that.

WCT: Should people not wear makeup after the lyrics about it on the new song "Thursday?"

JG: I have a bit of makeup on right now. It makes you feel good sometimes to wear it. The industry I work in is hard on your appearance and puts a lot of pressure on you. When I wrote "Thursday" I was going through my own insecurities. I was questioning myself. It is not about what other people think. It is about how you feel and your happiness at the same time.

Of course I want to give to the masses, but at the same time I want to sit in my own skin and feel comfortable. Writing that song was a bit of therapy for me. It taught me a lesson to not always care about what other people think. "Thursday" is a song that helped me and I hope can help a lot of people.

I wrote it with Ed Sheeran in the studio. I usually only like writing with Jin Jin because she is my best mate and she draws the best out of me. I spent a lot of time with Ed so we could talk about the highs and lows of everything we go through as artists. He's on a much bigger scale than me so he gets it and understands. It made the process a little easier.

WCT: How is it breaking through to [U.S.] audiences, as opposed to the UK?

JG: It's hard in America as a British girl. It's one thing I don't want to give up on. I love coming to America because everyone is so enthusiastic and supportive. I have had little bits of success here. I am on my third tour here. That is because you guys are so loyal. Everyone sticks by you. Every tour I have done has gotten bigger.

Coming here is so refreshing. Everyone appreciates music differently and every show is different. I love coming here because you don't mind saying how it is. The audience shouts it from the crowd and sings along. There's no shame and I love that.

Glynne hits the notes at Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield Ave., on Saturday, March 30. She returns to Chicago on Saturday, April 20, with Leon Bridges at House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn St.

Visit JessGlynne.co.uk to keep up with news and the tour.

LGBTQ Motherhood Tales' in March-April

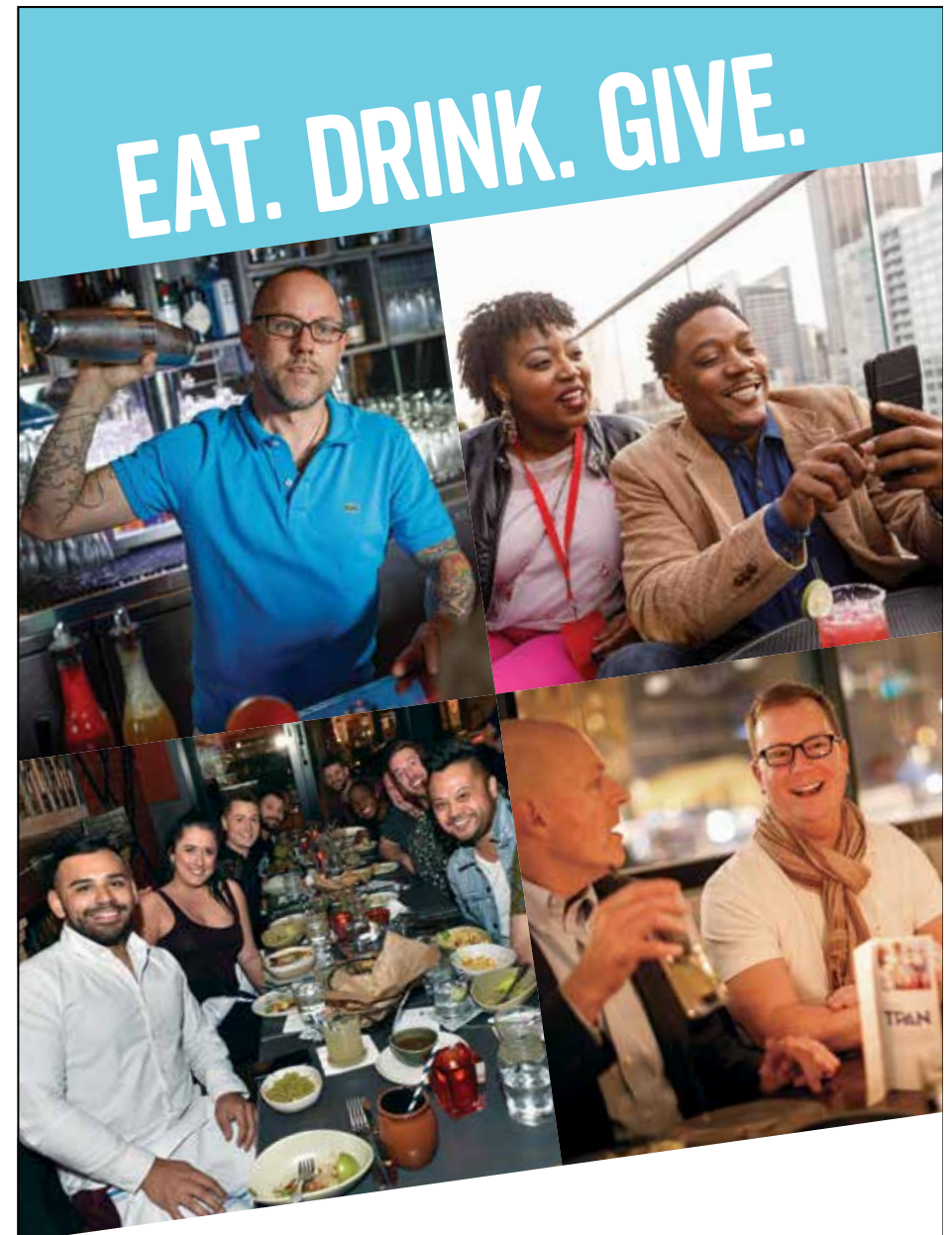
"Stories in the Spotlight: LGBTQ Motherhood Tales"—a free workshop/performance series at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., room 204—will take place on Mondays at 7-8:30 p.m. through April 8. The performances (five-to-10-minute stories) will take place Monday, April 29, 7-8:30 p.m. inside the Center's third-floor theater space.

During the series, playwright Susan Lieberman will teach techniques for writing effective autobiographical anecdotes.



Robyn performs at Aragon Ballroom; party continues at Berlin

Polar pop princess Robyn blew through Chicago on Wednesday, March 6, at the Aragon Ballroom. After the concert, fans kept the groove going at afterparty at Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave., with DJ Greg Haus. Photos by Jerry Nunn



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MUSIC

Lakeside Pride unveils new agenda at inaugural gala

BY VERNON HESTER

On March 9, the Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles unveiled a bold new agenda at its inaugural gala.

The event, titled "Take the Stage," was held on the stage of the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park and featured musical interludes by the Ensembles' Brass Quintet, Strayhorns Jazz Combo and Latin Band, as well as guest speakers, a raffle, dancing, a giving wall, hors d'oeuvres and a full buffet dinner. The event also featured the introduction of the incoming chair of the board of directors and the presentation of the first Lakeside Pride Spotlight Award. Modesto Tico Valle, CEO of Center on Halsted, was the recipient of the award.

After an opening cocktail reception and performance by the Brass Quintet, outgoing Board Chair Bradley Fritz welcomed the throng and introduced high school freshman Molly Pinta. Pinta, after attending Aurora's Inaugural Pride Parade, was inspired to come out to her family and take the initiative to spearhead the first gay pride parade and festival in her hometown of Buf-

falo Grove. Pinta—who attended the gala with her family—energetically spoke about initiating fundraisers and hosting events toward the parade. The Lakeside Pride Marching Band is slated to perform at the event June 12.

Next up was Brandon Strawn, the resources officer for the Ensemble, who spoke about the joy of discovering Lakeside Pride via Google and joining as a musician (he has been a member of the Symphonic Band, Jazz Orchestra, the Marching Band, the Brass Quintet, the Wilde Cabaret, the Strayhorns Jazz Combo, the Trombone Choir and the Queer as Polka group) before serving on the board of directors. Strawn related how, when he was hit with several devastating personal setbacks, he was able to overcome them through his involvement and support of the ensembles.

Fritz later returned to the stage to present Valle with his award. Valle spoke about his love for music of every kind and his recognition of Lakeside Pride's mission to inspire and influence not only the LGBTQ community, but other communities at large. Fritz then introduced Vice Chair Melissa Terrell as the incoming board chair after

Lakeside Pride board of directors.
Photos by Vernon Hester



unveiling Lakeside Pride's new initiatives, which include expanding its youth outreach program with performances by the Chamber Ensembles in schools across Chicago.

Along with plans for the next season—which include performing in new neighborhoods and bringing programming to a wider and more diversified audience—Lakeside Pride will continue to pursue joint initiatives with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, the Artemis Singers, ResonaTe transgender choir and Windy City Performing Arts. Chief among upcoming plans is a new partnership with the London Gay Symphony Winds, who Lakeside Pride will host this summer and reciprocate by performing in London in 2020.

The night ended with the announcement of winners for the raffle and a rousing performance by the Latin Band that filled the dance floor for a rowdy finish.

Event sponsors included Alto Realty, Sidetrack Chicago, Center on Halsted, Shimmy Braun with Guaranteed Rate, Lagunitas Brewing Company, Aloft Hotel Chicago Magnificent Mile, Studio TK, and KOVAL Distillery. Upcoming events for Lakeside Pride's 50th anniversary honoring the Stonewall Riots include "New York, New York," on April 6 (Symphonic Band performance); "Fiesta da Baile," on May 5 (Latin Band performance); and "Stonewall: Love and Liberation," (Jazz Orchestra performance) on June 1.

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Left to right:
Melissa Terrell,
Modesto Tico Valle
and Bradley Fritz.



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Jamie Auld as Madonna.
Photo courtesy of Guy Guido
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MOVIES

New Madonna docudrama gets into the groove

BY TONY PEREGRIN

Who's that girl? Meet Madonna's doppelgänger—Jamie Auld, a 23-year-old actress taking on the role of pre-fame Madonna in a new film chronicling the pop icon's early life in Queens, NY.

Written and directed by Guy Guido, *Madonna and the Breakfast Club* explores the singer's days as a drummer and keyboard player in the Breakfast Club, a synth-pop band she formed in the late '70s with her then-boyfriend, Dan Gilroy.

The film, a documentary-drama hybrid, features Auld's reenactment of key scenes from Madonna's time with the band, and interviews with Gilroy and brother Ed, who provided Guido with rare source material, including previously unreleased music, audio recordings, photographs and letters, which the director used to develop the biopic.

Guido—who is openly gay and a lifelong Madonna fan—dialed up the film's verisimilitude even further by filming in some of the same buildings once inhabited by the future record-breaking, line-crossing megastar, mother and role model.

"We filmed in the actual synagogue where she lived with the Gilroys, in the same rooms, using the same instruments that she and the band used

while playing together. ... This is music history, the start of a musical career that would change the world of music and change our entire entertainment culture at large," said Guido.

Windy City Times: *Jamie, your resemblance to Madonna is uncanny—speak about how Guy Guido discovered you.*

Jamie Auld: He discovered me behind the counter at Doughnut Plant. I know it sounds phony, because Madonna apparently also worked at a donut shop when she first came to NYC, but it's the truth. When Guy first noticed me and inquired if anyone had ever asked me if I looked like Madonna, I just laughed it off.

Guy Guido: What struck me first was the structure of her face, the jawline, the profile, the cheekbones and especially her nose. She was busy working and looking down, but I remember thinking, "Please have blue eyes, please have blue eyes." Then she looked up, and—lo and behold—I knew I had found my girl.

I didn't tell her about the movie right away, as I was still auditioning and meeting with actresses through the agencies. Then finally one day, when I knew I wasn't going to find what I was looking for by going the traditional route, I told my husband to bring my card to "the donut girl," tell

her about the film, and ask her if she would meet with me about this.

WCT: *Describe your process for portraying one of the most famous women in the world.*

JA: A lot of prep went into studying Madonna. I watched *Desperately Seeking Susan* and *Who's That Girl*. I also watched her interviews from the '80s over and over, until I could replicate her facial gestures and voice inflections. Guy and I would sit down for hours rehearsing before we filmed. I even rehearsed speaking like her while walking down the street—I'm sure people thought I was crazy, but it was worth it.

GG: She hadn't done very much acting and I knew that this was going to take some training and patience on my part, but her look was so perfect, that whatever it was going to take to get her there, I was in—and so was she. I submerged her in acting lessons, drumming lessons, guitar lessons and even dialect and body movement coaching.

I had her watch old Madonna interviews in order to grasp her body language and over all demeanor. However, I didn't want a caricature of "Madonna" either. I knew that Madonna didn't spend her pre-fame days always "on" or moving and acting the way she does in a music video—she was a normal person with insecurities, vulnerabilities and uncertainties about where her life was headed.

We also had a lot of audio recordings of Madonna talking with Dan Gilroy, which was extremely helpful, as her accent and way of speaking was very different, as she was a recent transplant to New York City from Michigan. And although she was intelligent, she was also silly and fun. She was very expressive, inquisitive, and not at all afraid to let her vulnerable side show—which might not be what people think she would have been like.

WCT: *Is it true that a copy of the film has been sent to Madonna?*

GG: That's a rumor, among other rumors, that aren't true. People want gossip and tabloid information and there's nothing like that happening here. Madonna is clearly aware of the film, as it has been in the press all over the world, and the fans are constantly tagging her with posts from our social media pages.

I hope that she sees that what we are doing is being done with love and admiration, and that she sees the film and enjoys reminiscing about those days. According to Dan and the other band mates, it was a wonderful magical time, and if you listen to Madonna's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction speech, it is clear that she still has a fondness and appreciation for Dan and Ed Gilroy and those formative and supportive years at synagogue.

WCT: *What are some misconceptions about Madonna that the film brings to light?*

JA: Well, I don't want to spoil too much, but I will say people don't give Madonna the artistic credit she deserves. There seems to be this misconception that fame found her. As viewers will see, this is the furthest from the truth. She experienced many setbacks and heartaches, but she refused to let anything stand in her way.

GG: I think the biggest misconception is that Madonna's entrance into the music industry was somehow based on her using people and using

her sexuality to somehow gain access. In my opinion, after having done extensive interviews, beyond what is even shown in the film, Madonna didn't use anyone. She had goals, she had a path and she worked with people as they all learned and grew together as artists. She had a level of ambition for achieving success in the entertainment industry that superseded most of the people she was working with at that time.

Madonna wasn't as cold as people like to paint her. ... She had a very sensitive heart and, as I saw in some of the letters she wrote to Dan, she wore that heart on her sleeve. However, she was serious about where she wanted to go, and business success was a very separate thing from personal relationships. This quality in a man would be admired, but in a woman in our culture at the time—and maybe still today—that quality is seen as "bitch."

WCT: *What do you hope true-blue Madonna fans take from the movie?*

JA: I hope fans see I portrayed Madonna with nothing but the utmost respect. It wasn't a role I took lightly, and my intention wasn't to stir the pot with any skeptical fans. I hope her fans can learn to love her even more once they get a glimpse into the struggles she had. ... Madonna is quirky, compassionate and a true nonconformist, in the best way.

GG: I know that the true blue fans already feel a deep love and attachment to Madonna, but I hope that this will add another layer for them in that they can see and hear—through firsthand accounts—what those early days were really like and how hard she worked to become the performer and presence that she is today.

As I said, we filmed this in the actual synagogue, through the same streets of Corona, at her real home and surroundings in Michigan, and at the Music Building in NYC where she lived and rehearsed, with an actress that arguably looks more like Madonna than any other person on earth. I think all of this combined will give the audience as close to an impression of reality that I think one could ever get in regard to this story Madonna and the Breakfast Club.

Madonna and the Breakfast Club is now out across digital and on-demand platforms.



Guy Guido (right) and Jamie Auld.



BILLY Masters

"He is circumcised. I have a gorgeous, circumcised penis and I want him to have the same."—Andy Cohen is not talking about what he looks for in a prospective paramour's equipment. He's talking about his son.

One of the statistics I have cited to these two-plus decades is that most men have their first sexual experience with other men. I realize this is not particularly scandalous to the men reading this column. But we are talking all men—straight and gay alike. Before you go all Corey Feldman on me, the term "sexual experience" often refers to a "circle jerk," which figures into so many art films in my collection. This came back to me when I read about the proliferation of jerk-off clubs targeting straight men. Before you rush off to buy a membership, it should be noted that these clubs have strict policies against any oral or anal interaction, and one must keep one's hands to oneself. Kinda takes all the fun out of it.

Despite all of the evidence pointing to **Jussie Smollett's** guilt, some people are still giving him the benefit of the doubt and holding onto hope that it's all just a big misunderstanding. His most vocal supporters are **Tyler Perry** and **Queen Latifah**, who say it is premature to have an opinion until we hear all of the evidence. The fact that two people with ginormous secrets say we don't have all the facts speaks volumes.

Last week, I went to a gala evening at the Dolby Theatre celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Laugh-In*. For *Still Laugh-In: The Stars Celebrate*, Netflix hoped to assemble the remaining living cast members. They were one short—no **Goldie** (for reasons well known to them, or so I'm told). In the role of Goldie Hawn we got Miss **Loni Anderson** (no, not in a bikini). Happily, we did have **Lily Tomlin** (who did two new Ernestine and Edith Ann sketches—both of which were pre-taped), **Jo Anne Worley** (chewing the scenery) and **Ruth Buzzi** (who currently bears a striking resemblance to Ruth Bader Ginsberg). The event was hosted by **Tiffany Haddish** and self-proclaimed sword swallower **Neil Patrick Harris**. Guest stars included **Jay Leno**, **Billy Crystal**, **Bill Maher**, **Chelsea Handler**, **Cheri Oteri** and a bunch of others who I must say neither **Bruce Vilanch** nor I could place. The low point was a musical number by the two **Ritas—Moreno and Wilson**. And we had to sit through it twice. I loves me some Moreno, but this was not good. The spunky Latina made sure to let the audience know it wasn't her fault: "I'm not taking the blame for this shit—we've been sitting back there in the freezing cold for two hours!"

The evening ran very long and, toward the end, people were leaving. At one point, I was pulled from my seat and asked to sit in the front row next to **Norman Lear**—talk about television royalty! Two seats over was *Laugh-In* creator **George Schlatter**—who recognized me and said hi. All I kept thinking was, FINALLY I'm the young one! Then Norman leaned over to George and said, "Can you believe we created being funny on tele-



Andy Cohen recently weighed in on anatomy, Billy says.

Photo courtesy of Bravo

vision?" George said, "Yeah, and they're KILLING it! But we can fix it in post!" Priceless. The special will air later this season.

If you're a fan of RuPaul's Drag Race, you'll wanna catch **Peaches Christ's** touring production of *Mean Gays!* The outrageous parody features a cavalcade of stars, including **Kim Chi**, **Willam**, **Peaches** and **Laganja Estranja**. The capacity crowd at LA's Montalban Theatre could not have been more enthusiastic—especially with the surprise appearance of **Daniel Franzese**, who was in the film *Mean Girls*. I eagerly await their next endeavor—a mash-up of *First Wives Club* and *Fight Club* called *First Wives Fight Club*. For dates and tix, check out PeachesChrist.com.

Time for another *Fayewatch*. You'll recall I told you that **Miss Dunaway** would be returning to Broadway playing Katharine Hepburn in Matthew Lombardo's play, *Tea at Five*. Faye Dunaway playing a legendary Hollywood actress—what could possibly go wrong? Prior to opening on Broadway this summer (theatre and date to be announced), the show will run June 21-July 7 at Boston's Huntington Theatre. It's somewhat of a homecoming for Faye—she studied at Boston University, which operates the theater. Tix are on sale now at HuntingtonTheatre.org.

When we're looking forward to months and months of *Fayewatch* items, it's definitely time to end yet another column. For the best dish, be sure to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that'll never jerk you around. Sorry we didn't have room for an "Ask Billy" question. But I always have time for you. Dash your queries off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before **Peaches Christ** is announced as Faye's understudy! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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ST. PATRICK'S DAY

MUSICAL REVIEW from page 20

concerns Puerto Rican working-class immigrants to Chicago in the post-WWII 1940s-60s, and their favorite gathering spot, the real-life La Havana Madrid nightclub at Belmont and Sheffield avenues. This play, with music by Sandra Delgado (who also takes the lead role), re-creates the vibrant nightclub with live band, singers and dancers. Once again, Cheryl Lynn Bruce is the director. Info: TeatroVista.org

—**Queen of the Mist**, Firebrand Theatre at The Den, May 25-July 6: Anna Edson Taylor was 63 when she became the first person to shoot Niagara Falls in a barrel and live (lucky rather than smart). She sought fame and fortune, but fame was fleeting and money skipped town. This 2011 musical is her colorful story (it wasn't just Niagara), with book, music and lyrics by Michael John LaChiusa. Stellar veteran Barbara E. Robertson portrays Taylor, and Elizabeth Maroglius directs for Firebrand, the ambitious and capable female-focused musical theater company. Info: FirebrandTheatre.org

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the DISH

Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Tuscany on Taylor; Victory Italian

BY ANDREW DAVIS

"That's Italian!"

Besides being the slogan for a popular spaghetti sauce, that was my immediate reaction after visiting a pair of restaurants that seemingly encompass the essence of Italy—albeit in different ways.

Tuscany on Taylor (1014 W. Taylor St.; <https://www.tuscanychicago.com/location/chicago/>)—located, fittingly, in Chicago's Little Italy neighborhood and just steps away from the University of Illinois at Chicago campus—is the only Taylor spot in Chicago. (The others are in Oak Brook and Wheeling.) And, for anyone looking for classic Italian dishes done well, this is the spot—and it's been serving said classics since 1990.

The casual restaurant has tantalizing antipasti such as polpi (grilled baby octopus), bruschetta (with Roma tomatoes, basil and EVOO) and carpaccio di Manzo (with arugula salad, shaved parmigiana and truffle oil). Soup and salad options include calamari done three ways, spinach salad and Caesar salad with chicken, among several other items.

The pizzas (cooked in a wood-burning oven) are delightful. I especially liked the Regina—which counts Tuscan sausage, roasted pepper, mushroom and mozzarella as its toppings. Entrees are also done well: The chicken parmigiana was absolutely wonderful, and the duck was solid,



Agnolotti at Victory Italian.
PR photo

if unspectacular. However, all the standards are there, ranging from veal piccata to linguini with scampi.

And the hits keep coming with desserts. Although the cannoli cake I had seen online wasn't available when I was there, the chocolate mousse cake was a more-than-suitable substitute, and other options include cheesecake, tiramisu and cannoli.

Tuscany on Taylor sticks with the tried-and-true—and definitely succeeds.

Victory Italian

While Tuscany on Taylor does its thing, River North restaurant **Victory Italian** (434 W. Ontario St.; <http://victoryitalian.com/>) also takes patrons to Italy—albeit with a more ambitious style.

Victory (the latest establishment from the Victory Restaurant Group, founded by Chef Joe Farina and Anthony Gambino, and featuring Director of Operations Yvonne Farina) even describes itself as "upscale" on its website, although you don't need to wear a suit or dress to enter. However, the cuisine may have you thinking you're in a place that's considerably more expensive. (And this place reminded me of the wonderful Centro—a now-defunct spot what was in the spot now occupied by Imperial

Lamian.)

An appetizer pizza is almost necessary. Choices—divided into olive oil- and tomato-based) include fungi (wild mushroom, fontanelle and rosemary); Elmwood Park (red sauce, mozzarella, Italian sausage, Italian beef and hot giardiniera); and Vendura (asparagus, caramelized onion, mozzarella and balsamic glaze), among others. Another must-try app is the meatball salad, which comes with a giant beef-and-veal ball that is supremely tasty. However, those are just the tip of the iceberg, as there are other options like mussels, roasted Brussels sprouts, fried and grilled calamari, jumbo stuffed mushrooms and more.

The garlic bread, which comes with every order, is among the best I've ever tried—thick slices topped with parmesan (that somehow tasted even better after I got home—and topped it with white truffle oil).

And as for the pasta dishes, they're compelling. The agnolotti dish stuffed with ricotta, parmesan and bacon is a 2018 Baconfest winner (although, strangely, this was the least intriguing dish for me, although it was nonetheless quite good)—but I liked the pappardelle Bolognese even more. However, there are scores of pasta dishes and other entrees (pork chop Calabrese, crispy brick chicken, etc.) that would make things nightmarish for the indecisive if everything weren't so good.

Lastly, save room for dessert—it's certainly worth it, thanks to items like tiramisu (supremely good), the not-too-large cannolis and various gelatos.

I mentioned that Victory's style is ambitious. And while ambition doesn't guarantee success, it works wonders in this case. (BTW, checking out the interior is a must. Just try to see how many famous faces you can identify from the portraits that fill the walls throughout this restaurant.)

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



PROFILE BY
TONY PEREGRIN
DRAG PROFILE OF THE WEEK
RACHEL DENNIS/HER?™

NAME

"My stage name is Her?. You have to say it like you're

confused and maybe add

a stink eye. It is an Arrested Development reference. I wanted a good name that people would remember like Cher [laughs]."

FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

"I started doing drag after I told Yvie Oddly that I felt like a drag queen stuck in a woman's body. I had never seen or heard of AFAB [assigned female at birth] drag queens at the time. Yvie invited me to come hangout at her place with her sisters and get painted a week later. That night was the best night that I had had in a long time.

Two months later, I performed on stage to 'Heads Will Roll' by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, like a spooky dragula baby. My makeup was terrible but my performance was actually pretty good."

DRAG INSPIRATION

"My drag inspiration, as cheesy as this sounds, is Yvie Oddly. She is such a trash baby dumpster mom with amazing stage presence and wildly attractive personality. She works her ass off and is always creating something with her own hands. And she kept pushing and now is going to be the star of Drag Race Season 11. WHAT!? As you can tell I love my Drag Mom, she's hot."

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY THE CROWD

"It used to be this Gaga mega mix, but lately it's been any song by The Killers."

FUN FACT

"I played roller derby for three years, starting in Lancaster, Penn. and ending in Denver. I decided to leave after I started drag because both hobbies are expensive and I also had seen too many people break their ankle on the rink. I like to incorporate roller skating into my drag, but I'm pretty particular about where/when I do it!"

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

"I host a show called Hype!Her? with Fay Ludes every 4th Friday at Mary's Attic. I started this show in Denver so that I could book other up-and-coming trans, non-binary, and afab queens. ... I am happy to say that Denver is completely open to all kinds of drag artists now!"

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: /rachel.a.dennis.3
IG: @her_the_queen

Photo by
Erik Hollday-McCann



JACKHAMMER

Congrats to John William, the newly-chosen Mr. Leather 64TEN!

William will join the other titleholders in the pursuit of the title of International Mr. Leather, taking place over Memorial Day weekend in Chicago. At left, William (second from right) is pictured with, among others, the current International Mr. Leather James Lee (kneeling).

Photos by Joseph Stevens
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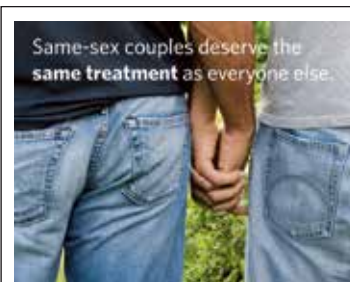
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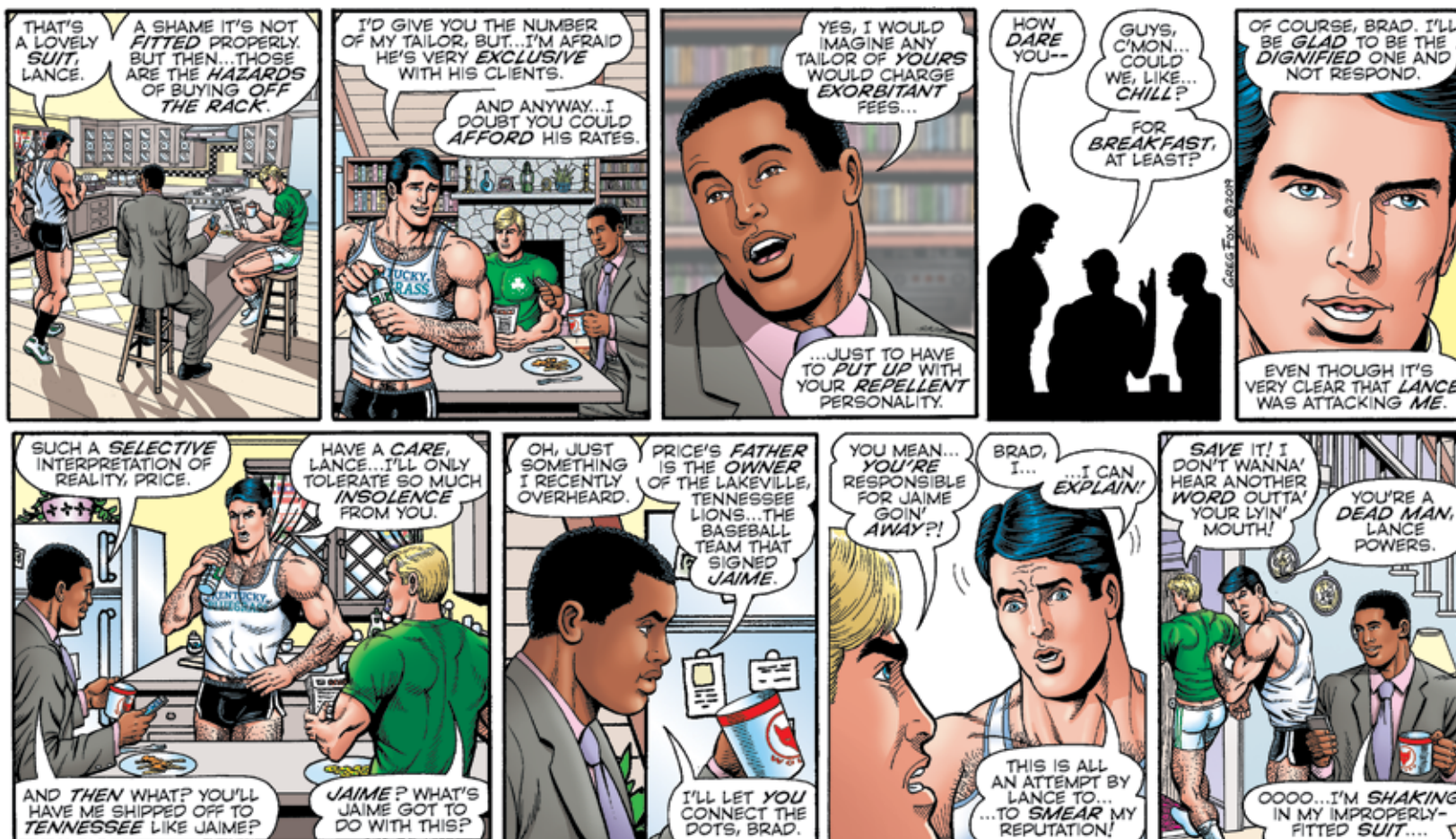
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KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox



WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., March 13

Remembering Clarence Darrow, The Leopold and Loeb Files, evening program An Intimate Look at One of America's Most Infamous Crimes. The 1924 murder of fourteen-year-old Bobby Franks by Nathan Nina Barrett, author. Leopold and Richard Loeb, and their defense by Clarence Darrow, raised profound and disturbing questions about social class, criminal psychology, morality, justice, and mercy. Registration is requested at the link 6:00pm Newberry Library 60 W Walton St Chicago <http://darrowbridge.org>.

'Hear Our Voice' election forums Analysis of election events to date. Subjects and questions raised by community members will be posed to mayoral candidates when AARP holds livestreamed "Telephone Town Halls" with them later in the month. Free with registration. 7:30pm DuSable Museum 40 E 56th Pl Chicago <http://suntimes.com/aarp-forum>

Thursday, March 14

Peach Presents: Jewel's Catch One (Chicago Film Screening) by Peach Join Peach and the Center on Halsted for a night of history and Disco cocktail hour, followed by the film screening and a community discussion. The Peach 2019 Series Live will be announced. Free 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/peach-presents-jewels-catch-one-chicago-film-screening>



PRECIOUS 'JEWEL' Thursday, March 14

Peach will present Jewel's Catch One at Center on Halsted.

Photo of Jewel Thais Williams courtesy of Dancing Pictures/L.A. Times

tickets-56539762953

Friday, March 15

HIV Resource Community Lunch n' Learn Complimentary lunch is provided. Free event 2:00pm - 3:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/lunchnlearn?erid=9660304&trid=0692708a-73d6-41cd-abf0-c6f60f73293e>

"SHOUT" Book Tour Women & Children First hosts New York Times bestselling, award-winning author Laurie Halse Anderson in conversation with Mikki Kendall on her memoir and call to action, "SHOUT." Also author of "Speak" about rape culture and consent. Doors 6:30 p.m. \$15/\$20 7:00pm The Swedish American Museum Center 5211 N. Clark St. Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com> Tickets: <http://lauriehalseanderson.brownpapertickets.com/>

Saturday, March 16

Cabaret Benefit for Makom Shalom Charlene Brooks performs swing, Latin, Carole King, Broadway, and joyful Yiddish songs. Also Makom's rabbi and nationally renown cantor, Michael Davis. Performers to be accompanied by pianist Gail Mangurten of the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band. \$50. Kids 12 and under free. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Broadway United Methodist Church 3338 N Broadway Chicago Tickets: <http://www.makomshalom.com>

Monday, March 18

Spring Equinox Celebration 2019 Performance by Raquel Punto (Mexico). Hosted by Jon Poindexter. \$10 donation requested. 6:30pm - 9:30pm Outerspace 1474 N. Milwaukee Ave. <http://www.theolutionsforoptimalhealth.com/seminars.html>

'Hear Our Voice' election forums Analysis of election events to date. Subjects and questions raised by community members will be posed to mayoral candidates when AARP holds livestreamed "Telephone Town Halls" with them later in the month. Free with registration. 7:00pm Arturo Velasquez Institute, 2800 S. Western Ave. <http://suntimes.com/aarp-forum>

Wed., March 20

Support Lori Lightfoot and the LGBTQ Electoral Strategy Join Equality IL PAC. Honorary chair and special guest U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly; host committee in formation. \$1,000 Chair; \$500 Host; \$100 Individual ticket. Donations are made directly to Equality IL PAC. 6-8 pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., <https://www.facebook.com/events/30611595993682/>

Celebrating Intersectionality: Queer Women Entrepreneurs StartOut Chicago and the LGBT Chamber of Commerce are celebrating Women's History Month with an inspiring panel of dynamic queer women entrepreneurs on how their identities shaped their paths, with lessons for all 5:30pm - 8:30pm Hinshaw and Culbertson, 151 N Franklin St #2500 <http://business.lgbtcc.com/events/details/celebrating-intersectionality-queer-women-entrepreneurs-3953>

Chicago Flower & Garden Show 2019 FlowerTales: The Story Grows On. Garden displays, DIY solutions, more than 700 plant varieties. \$10 \$5 - \$20. Through March 24. 9:00pm Navy Pier 600 E Grand Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/chicago-flower-garden-show-2019-tickets-48562267048>

Friday, March 22

Southern Comfort Heartwarming musical with a lush folk/bluegrass score based on the award-winning 2001 Sundance Film Festival documentary. Trans man in rural Georgia attempts to live his life as fully as possible with those he loves while they struggle with will inevitably come. Through March 31. \$40/\$30/\$25 12:00pm Broadway Theater, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N Broadway 866-811-4111 Tickets: <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Glen Phillips New material and tracks from his acclaimed solo album, SWALLOWED BY THE NEW, including "Nobody's Going to Get Hurt." \$28 11:00pm Old Town School of Music, 4545 N Lincoln Ave Tickets: <http://www.oldtownschool.org/concerts/2019/03-22-2019-glen-phillips/>

Saturday, March 23

Songs That Speak Cabaret featuring favorite musical-theater tunes and popular music with Jonathan Zeng (vocalist), Michael R. Oldham (Pianist/composer), Daniel Eastwood (percussionist), Jackson Jay Kidder (Bassist). \$15 7:00pm Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St. 309-255-0284 Tickets: <http://www.JonathanZeng.com>

Is this fascism? Author Jason Stanley, Yale University, author How Fascism Works, The Politics of Us and Them, presentation and discussion. Refuse Fascism and United for Democracy Now host. Free 2:00pm Levy Center, 300 Dodge Ave., Evanston 773-808-4577 Tickets: <https://bit.ly/2Ta5IE9>

Welcoming Churches Pride Month Planning Meeting Hosted by Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches 10:30pm Christ Church of Chicago 6047 N Rockwell St, Chicago http://www.facebook.com/events/894233567580403/?active_tab=about

Sunday, March 24

POSEIDON! An Upside Down Musical Hell in a Handbag Productions revival of a musical parody and a loving homage to the classic 1972 film, The Poseidon Adventure, the grandmother of all disaster films. Through April 28, 2019 3:00pm The Edge Theater, 5451 N. Broadway, Chicago 800-838-3006 Tickets: <http://brownpapertickets.com>

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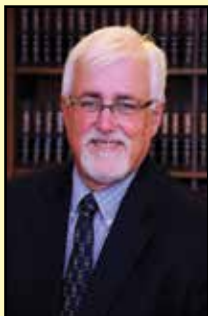
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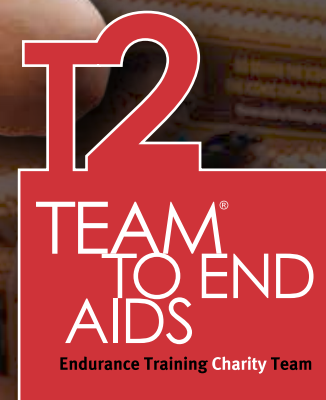
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