

# WINDY CITY TIMES

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

VOL 34, NO. 30

JULY 10, 2019

## 50TH ANNUAL CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE

Stonewall anniversary is celebrated.

Photo by Julia Hale

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# THIS IS PRIDE

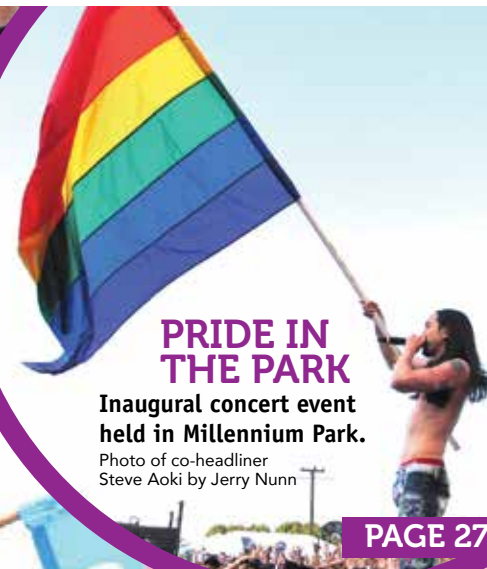


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## PROUD TO RUN

38th annual event introduces half-marathon.

Photo of Mayor Lori Lightfoot (center) by Carrie Maxwell



## PRIDE IN THE PARK

Inaugural concert event held in Millennium Park.

Photo of co-headliner Steve Aoki by Jerry Nunn

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## PRIDE SOUTH SIDE

First-ever range of events celebrate Pride on the South Side.

Photo of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus by Matt Simonette

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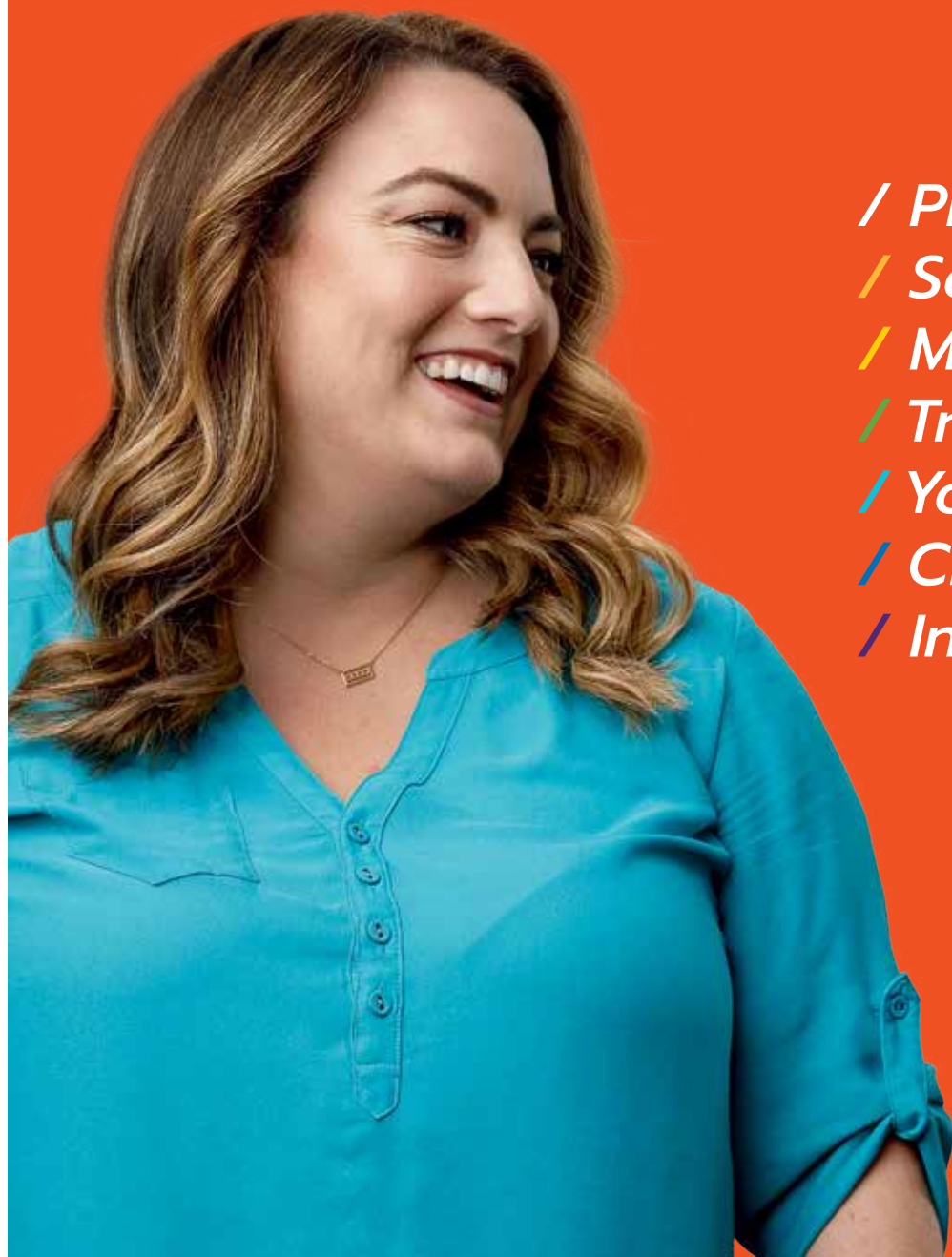
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July 10	Sep. 4	Nov. 13
July 24	Sep. 18	Nov. 27
Aug. 7	Oct. 2	Dec. 11
Aug. 21	Oct. 16	Dec. 25
	Oct. 30	

online exclusives at  
[www.WindyCityTimes.com](http://www.WindyCityTimes.com)



### WIN OR LOSE

The local gay band They Won't Win talk about their music—and their connection to Crowded House.

Photo (left) courtesy of They Won't Win

### 'POST'-MODERN



WCT reviews the Wrigleyville spot Maddon's Post, which offers Italian and Polish twists on dishes.

Photo by Andrew Davis

### Q&A

The most recent installment of 10 Questions features Felix Maritaud.

### THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Lee Daniels, Kylie Jenner and Miley Cyrus.

plus  
**DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

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# Activist/author Urvashi Vaid keynotes DignityUSA event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Attorney, author and advocate Urvashi Vaid gave a keynote address at DignityUSA's three day conference, "True to the Spirit, True to Ourselves," July 6 at The Westin Michigan Avenue Chicago. (DignityUSA is a national pro-LGBTQ Catholic organization.)

Vaid is a longtime activist in the LGBTQ movement and is currently the president of the Vaid Group, a social innovation firm working for equity, justice and inclusion.

DignityUSA board member and Dignity/Boston member Peggy Hayes introduced Vaid and spoke about her influence on the international stage.

Vaid spoke about the ways in which Dignity has helped LGBTQ Catholics over the past five decades navigate their faith in the face of resistance by the institutional church leadership.

"My focus today covers three areas," said Vaid. "A personal reflection on faith and liberation; where we find ourselves as a movement in terms of what we won, the unfinished business and this cultural moment we are in and where we go next."

Vaid joked that because she was raised as a Hindu in India it makes her a pagan and apostate in the eyes of Christians worldwide.

"I am one of those heathens that my beloved spouse and partner, Kate Clinton, the recovering Catholic, was asked to pray for every Sunday during Mass," said Vaid. "Pray for the pagan babies," she was told. Little did she know that her prayers for one would be answered."

This drew uproarious laughter and applause from the more than 300 people in the room.

Vaid said she has always viewed her political activism as an act of faith even though she did not have a religious practice, a fact that bothered her late mother. She explained that there is a difference between religion and faith and being spiritual is more interesting than any tradition.

She said emigrating to the United States in 1966 and moving to a small upstate New York town when Vaid was 8 made her an outsider and that, she explained, was revealing to her. She said that an outsider's perspective has informed her entire life's work.

"Alongside the experience of being an outsider, this formative experience of being an immigrant taught me that migrating and leaving everything you know behind to seek a better life for oneself and one's family is a deep act of open-heartedness and faith," said Vaid.

Vaid decried the Trump administration's inhumane and violent conditions and treatment of the human beings who are imprisoned in for-profit camps because a "vicious, opportunistic, loathsome, immoral, monstrous, slimeball ...decrees

that it must be so."

Activism and faith in change was also shaped by two encounters Vaid had with Catholic tradition—attending Catholic school in India where she was taught by Carmelite nuns and discovering liberation theology in college, including reading theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez, credited as a founder of liberation theology.

"Gutiérrez ... proposed that there are three levels or dimensions of liberation—material, internal, and spiritual ... and that the true measure of spiritual life was to be found in praxis or action for social justice," said Vaid.

According to Vaid, the LGBTQ movement is an example of the principles of faith and liberation in action.

"The advocacy arms of our movement have worked to enable each person to find well-being and emerge from material conditions of suffering caused by inequality and discrimination," said Vaid. "The service and cultural arms of our community have worked to strengthen our inner sense of freedom, and overcome self-hatred and shame as well challenge as intra community prejudice. The faith-based arms of our movement have built alternate churches, theologies, spaces and movements within each faith tradition despite massive persecution and repression."

Vaid spoke about LGBTQ movement advances across five dimensions—legal equality, cultural respect, material or lived equality, inclusion, power and freedom and self-determination. She noted that LGBTQ people have only won partial legal equality, gains have been uneven and transgender and gender non-binary people, people of color and people living in poverty have not benefited as fully.

"Cultural progress has been great because of marriage equality and Kate always says it 'turned outlaws into in-laws,'" said Vaid.

Vaid noted that 37 percent of U.S. residents still say that sexual relations among same-sex adults are always wrong, and an indicator that they still see LGBTQ individuals as immoral. She also analyzed the history of the backlash that is still happening in the U.S. Vaid cited a number of individuals to discuss the alliance between evangelical white Christians, the religious right and the Republican Party—from Nixon to Reagan to both Bush presidents to Trump.

"There is an intricate connection between racism, sexism and religion," Vaid argued. "We have to face it and organize against it especially in this country."

Vaid said many white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump—whom she called a candidate without any moral or Christian values because they fear they are being displaced and losing cul-



Urvashi Vaid

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

tural control. She discussed her theory of how a form of toxic masculinity is fueling the white nationalist movements, and urged LGBTQs to speak out about the danger and limitations of traditional forms of masculinity and femininity from our feminist and non-binary gender perspectives.

The current political climate does not leave Vaid in despair. Instead, she said she sees a vital role for Dignity and faith-based organizations in this moment, to provide the moral compass for liberation. She urged Dignity members to continue to love and support LGBTQ Catholics, be an

outspoken moral voice on gender and sexuality and a witness for social justice in society, work for those who are the most vulnerable and persecuted and organize with other progressive faith-based groups and leaders.

Vaid called this moment the most exciting time for progressive politics in her lifetime because of the organizing that has emerged since 2016.

"I refuse to give in because I have a stubborn optimism," said Vaid.

A Q&A session followed.

## Gay tourism group cancels Ethiopian trip after death threats

Dan Ware, the owner of Chicago-based Toto Tours—which has a mostly gay clientele—has cancelled an October trip to Ethiopia after receiving death threats from people in the African country, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

The "Treasures of Ethiopia" trip had been in doubt since May, when an anti-gay Ethiopian blogger posted a comment about Toto and the trip. Dozens of emails to Toto followed, and one read, "Forget your planning to visit Ethiopia as a group of gays!!! You will never get back in ONE piece!!!"

Recent killings in Ethiopia and a coup attempt convinced Ware that the situation in that country were too unstable to risk a trip. The five people who had booked the trip have had their money refunded, Ware said.

The Sun-Times article is at <https://chicago.suntimes.com/business/2019/6/25/18744139/gay-tour-group-toto-cancels-ethiopia-trip>.

Chorus; After School Matters Choir; and others. In addition to the inauguration, Lightfoot and wife Amy Eshleman will host an open house at the mayor's office in City Hall beginning at 2 p.m.

Information on both events and access to the free tickets for the inaugural ceremony can be found at [BetterTogetherChicago.com](http://BetterTogetherChicago.com).



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# Buttigieg speaks at Rainbow PUSH event

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Openly gay presidential candidate and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg spoke July 2 at a the Rainbow PUSH Coalition and Citizenship Fund's annual Business Breakfast event at the Sheraton Grand Chicago.

Buttigieg did not discuss LGBT issues at the event, but spoke at length about race relations and equity issues. The candidate, currently garnering much interest and enthusiasm from supporters on the campaign trail, is nevertheless contending with serious policing issues in South Bend—with the most recent being the shooting of a Black man by a white officer last month.

"Our city's hurt has gone even beyond the grief of the family that's lost one of its own," Buttigieg said July 2. "Even as we wait for outside investigators to deliver their judgment about what took place, we have a pain now that reminds us that our community lives around the chasm, a racial [divide] in which white residents and Black residents experience every facet of life

differently."

Buttigieg emphasized work on police-community relations that had taken place in South Bend under his watch, but added, "But events have compelled me to acknowledge that whatever we've done has not been nearly enough. As long as a traffic stop is not a completely different experience for a Black driver than it is for a white driver, we know that we have not done nearly enough. We know that police departments—and this is true of my own—do not reflect the community they serve in their makeup, we have not done nearly enough."

Buttigieg added, "We accept responsibility—I accept responsibility—for the work that is left to be done."

He further outlined police-community relations work that has taken place in the wake of the shooting. At the gathering, Buttigieg's other topics included equity, reproductive rights and minority contracts.

Rainbow PUSH founder Rev. Jesse Jackson introduced Buttigieg.



Mayor Pete Buttigieg at the Rainbow PUSH event. Photo by Joshua Irvine

## Convicted Lake View killer hangs himself

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A Chicago man who had been convicted of killing two gay men in 1987 has died after hanging himself in jail.

The incident, which took place the evening of July 2, was reported on the CWB Chicago blog on July 3.

Patrick Tullis hung himself in Cook County Jail after he had been arrested on weapons related charges the early morning of June 25. Neighbors

in Uptown had then reported a gun being fired as well as seeing an individual with a gun.

In 1987, Tullis was charged with the deaths of two gay Chicago men. He said at the time that he had done so because they'd asked to have sex with him. He was convicted in 1989.

Tullis served half of a 60-year sentence, having been released in 2017.

The 2019 charges against Tullis included Class X felony armed habitual criminal; possession of a weapon by a felon; reckless discharge of a firearm; and resisting police.

CWB Chicago's report is at [www.cwbchicago.com/2019/07/paroled-double-murderer-arrested-with.html](http://www.cwbchicago.com/2019/07/paroled-double-murderer-arrested-with.html).



Myles (left) and Precious Brady-Davis. Photo by Mystic Images Photography

## Local trans couple the Brady-Davises expecting baby

Chicago trans couple Myles and Precious Brady-Davis have publicly announced they are expecting a baby this coming winter. Myles, 37—who identifies as a trans masculine, two spirit person of faith—is carrying their child with the support of Precious, 33, who identifies as a queer biracial trans woman of color.

The announcement comes three years after the couple married at Rockefeller Chapel, in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Their union was featured on TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress* in 2016, and they became the first trans couple ever to appear

on the series. Earlier that same year, they were featured in Miley Cyrus' Instapride campaign in collaboration with Instagram and were also invited to meet President Obama at the White House.

"Our love has brought us to this place and space where growing our family is now a priority. It was daunting as a Trans couple navigating the world of fertility and we relate to those who struggle to conceive. We hope once again that through sharing our story individuals are inspired to see that all kinds of families exist in our world and should be celebrated. There have been many tears through our two year journey, but now we are celebrating a moment of triumph," said the expecting couple in a statement.

The couple underwent IVF treatments at Fertility Center of Illinois under the supervision of Dr. Brian Kaplan M.D.



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## PASSAGES

## Steven Courtney

Steven Joseph Courtney died of natural causes in his home on June 26 in Chicago. He had just turned 59 in May.

Steve was born on May 8, 1960, in Dekalb, Illinois, and graduated from Dekalb High School in 1979.

Steve loved Chicago and made his way into the city soon thereafter. His first foray into working in Chicago's gay business community was at RJ's Video and then Ragin' RaeJean's gift shop on Halsted Street in the 1990s. Steve's began his career in bar employment at the Cell Block and then at Circuit Nightclub. For the past several years, he served as a bartender at Touché in Rogers Park.

Steven's passions were gardening and the Chicago Cubs—not necessarily in that order. He attended countless games at Wrigley Field and followed the team passionately. One of his proudest moments was having his photo taken with the World Series championship trophy the Chicago Cubs had won in 2016.

Off-duty from the bar, Steve loved to tend his plants both indoors and out. As was evident in his physique, Steve was also an ardent bodybuilder. Any injury to keep him from the gym was a grave inconvenience.

His years working behind bars in Chicago's gay nightlife scene allowed him to befriend and touch many lives over the years. His smile and humor made him an instant friend to many—especially if they were Cubs fans, too. With any drink served, he would offer a quick joke, how



**Steven Courtney.**  
Photo courtesy of David Boyer

the Cubs latest game went down or comment on the day's latest news. There was no doubt that he was no fan of our current President.

Steve was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Toinette Courtney. He is survived by

his brother Richard; sisters and brothers-in-law Valerie and Tim Pierone, Mary and David Todmen, and Nancy and Jim Schmidt; his twin sister, Stephanie Govig; and a number of nieces, nephews and cousins.

A celebration of Steve's life will be held for his

family and friends at 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 14, at Touché, 6412 N. Clark St. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Steve's life. In lieu of flowers, donations in his name to the Groceryland Pantry or TPAN (Test Positive Aware Network) are encouraged.

## Supreme Court to hear LGBT-bias cases Oct. 8

The U.S. Supreme Court has slated Tuesday, Oct. 8, as the date when it will hear arguments on if Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies to cases of anti-LGBT discrimination, The Washington Blade reported.

The consolidated case of *Zarda v. Altitude Express* and *Bostock v. Clayton County* will determine if sexual-orientation discrimination is a form of sex discrimination. Also, *Harris Funeral Homes v. EEOC* will determine if anti-transgender discrimination is a form of sex discrimination.

In addition to Title VII implications, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling will affect all federal laws barring discrimination on the basis of sex, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Fair Housing Act.

The Blade item is at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2019/07/01/supreme-court-sets-oct-8-to-hear-whether-workers-can-be-fired-for-being-lgbt/>.

## ACS to honor Pat Logue on July 23

The Chicago lawyer chapter of the progressive organization known as the American Constitutional Society (ACS) will honor several individuals at its 2019 Legal Legends Luncheon on Tuesday, July 23, 12-1:30 p.m., at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd.

Among the 2019 Abner Mikva Award honorees is The Honorable Pat Logue, a Circuit Court of Cook County associate judge. She was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 2003.

Other Abner Mikva Award recipients will include Uptown People's Law Center Executive Director Alan Mills and civil rights/criminal defense attorney Standish Willis. Counsel and The Decarceration Collective co-founder MiAngel Cody will receive the 2019 Ruth Goldman Award.

Tickets are \$60-\$100 each; visit <https://www.acslaw.org/event/acs-chicago-2019-legal-legends-luncheon/>.

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- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) for program information.



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Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com).





Leif Forre.  
Photo by  
Jake Wittich

## Custom frame shop has served LGBTQs for two decades

BY JAKE WITTICH

Duran Duran's 1982 album, *Rio*, blasts from the record player of Wall to Wall Framing, a custom frame shop in Edgewater. The record sleeve is propped up against a bookshelf lined full with other classic records, displaying the Patrick Nagel-designed album cover as if it were hanging in a gallery.

Leif Forre, the openly gay man who owns the shop, stands at a nearby work table, drilling hangers onto the back of a framed artwork. He's surrounded by almost a dozen other pieces—a portrait of Prince, a poster for an upcoming char-

ity and several other artworks—all in need of his custom framing.

Forre's shop, located at 5554 N. Winthrop Ave., celebrates its 20th year of business later this year. What started as a small operation in the basement of a West Loop industrial building in 1999 has now grown to a business staple in the Edgewater community.

"When I moved the shop to Edgewater 16 years ago, the neighborhood had a lot of boarded up and abandoned buildings. There weren't many businesses here, so it was kind of a rough start," Forre said. "But then a lot of the gay community started moving here, new businesses came in and my businesses really grew alongside the community."

Most of Forre's clients include artists, designers and a range of people from the neighborhood, downtown and the suburbs. He doesn't advertise, so most of his business comes from word-of-mouth, he said. In the last year alone, his business grew by about 20 percent.

In an emailed statement, Ald. Harry Osterman commended Forre's business success, calling Wall to Wall Framing a "an anchor" in the neighborhood's business district.

"[Forre] has contributed to the areas increased vibrancy and safety, and his business brings new people to our community," Osterman said. "Leif contributes to many important organizations that serve and support the LGBTQ community, leading by example. I look forward to working with Leif for another 20 years."

Forre has consistently used his business to support the LGBTQ community, donating his services to LGBTQ organizations such as Chicago House, TPAN, Howard Brown, The Legacy Project and Heartland Alliance, where he volunteers at the Edgewater food pantry every Thursday evening.

"You have to give back to the community,"

Forre said. "When you reach a stage in life where it's been good to you, you need to give back. I need to help with other organizations and make sure that I'm using my business to help the LGBTQ community."

Lori Cannon, founder and Northside Food Program coordinator of the Heartland Alliance, said she met Forre shortly after he moved to Chicago from a small town in Iowa in 1991. He was new to the city and looking to get involved with Open Hand Chicago, an in-home meals program for people diagnosed with AIDS that Cannon co-founded in 1988.

"I always thought his phraseology was unique for a young man, but he said he wanted to be part of 'a mission that offers good intentions,'" Cannon said. "He came to my program with this larger-than-life personality and just rolled up his shirt sleeves, then got to work stocking shelves and serving clients."

## HRC makes historic choice for next president

After a nearly seven-month search, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) announced Alphonso David as its next president—marking the first time a person of color will lead the nation's largest LGBT organization, The Washington Blade reported.

David—a 48-year-old gay Black man who has a background as a civil-rights lawyer, legal advisor and law professor—was named after the board of directors launched an extensive search to replace Chad Griffin, who announced in November he'd leave the organization. David is slated to start in August.

"I believe that together, we can harness the strength that's inherent in our differences, to stand together in the face of fear and division," David said in a statement. "And that's exactly what the Human Rights Campaign was built for."

According to HRC's website, David most recently made history as the first openly gay counsel to the governor of New York and, before that, served as the first deputy secretary and counsel for civil rights in that state. In these roles, he played an integral role in securing marriage equality in New York in 2011, banning the practice of so-called "conversion therapy" on minors, establishing non-discrimination protections for transgender New Yorkers and more.

The Blade item is at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2019/06/25/human-rights-campaign-taps-alphonso-david-as-next-president/>.

## Mayor promotes Nat'l HIV Testing Day, gets tested herself

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot joined representatives from Beyond Care and Walgreens to highlight the importance of HIV testing in observance of National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) on June 27.

Cannon said Forre even bought a record player for Heartland Alliance's Vital Bridges Food Program.

"Every week, he comes in with his carrying case full of vintage albums," she said. "It'll be an Ella Fitzgerald homage, some early Aretha Franklin or '70s rock. He's got a very eclectic, like himself, collection of music, fashion and frames."

Cannon commended Forre's long history of charity work and giving back to the LGBTQ community. She said he's always offered his framing as a gift to community organizations' Black-tie events, fundraisers or silent auctions.

"Over the last two decades, I've seen his shop transform from downtown to where he's at in Edgewater, but he's always generously donated his superior and artistic work," Cannon said. "It bespeaks a young gentleman who's not just a good businessman and talented trades professional, but a very kind and generous person."

Lightfoot received an HIV test in front of a dozen media outlets at Walgreens' store at 3405 S. King Drive.

The National HIV Testing Day Community Partnership is part of an ongoing effort between Walgreens, Greater Than AIDS and more than 260 health departments, AIDS service organizations and other community organizations to broaden the reach of HIV testing and information in non-traditional settings and help people understand the latest in HIV prevention, treatment and care.

Glen Pietrandoni, senior director, patient care and advocacy at Walgreens also spoke to the media. Over the last three decades, Pietrandoni has worked in communities to improve access to information on HIV.

Carlos Meyers, executive director of the testing partner organization Beyond Care Inc., gave remarks and administered the test.

Isaetta Walton, a volunteer at Beyond Care Inc, spoke about why this issue is important to her.

Video and more photos from the event are at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## Meister announces run for clerk

Activist and civil-rights attorney Jacob Meister launched his campaign for Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court with a video announcement on Facebook.

Meister—who founded the LGBTQ advocacy organization The Civil Rights Agenda—has been practicing law in Chicago for 29 years.

In the announcement, Meister says, in part, "The Clerk of the Court's office is ground zero of corruption, fraud, and waste in Cook County government. The current clerk runs a patronage den, collects political contributions from employees and sells jobs for cash. ... It's time to acknowledge that not all Democrats are the same—that those who make a career of selling-out government for personal profit are a danger to us all and that the Democratic party must embrace true reform and say, 'Never again.'"

See [JacobForClerk.com](http://JacobForClerk.com).

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# LGBT veterans saluted, vet speaks for trans military service

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

The City of Chicago held the annual Salute to LGBT veterans, "Liberty and Justice for All," at Daley Plaza on June 25.

The guest speaker, Tatyana Moaton—a transgender veteran and human resources manager at Howard Brown Health—criticized an order by President Trump banning transgender soldiers from serving openly in the military. The ban, against which multiple federal judges filed injunctions, was ultimately upheld by the Supreme Court and went into effect in April.

Calling the ability to serve "a right we should all be afforded," Moaton rebuked the president's claim that trans service members hampered the military.

In basic training, you are taught you're a soldier first, and your traits second," Moaton said. "It is foolish and irresponsible to claim that the service of transgender soldiers is disruptive and burdensome. Trans people have always served in the U.S. armed forces, and the cost has never been any greater than that of our cisgender counterparts."

Prior to Moaton's remarks, Commission on Human Relations Chairman and Commissioner Mona Noriega read a proclamation from Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot declaring the day as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Veterans of America Day. The proclamation made note of the Stonewall riots, which began 50 years earlier in June of 1969. Noriega has worked as an activist for lesbian mothers and their families since the

1970s and was appointed to her current position by former mayor Rahm Emanuel.

American Veterans for Equal Rights Chicago Chapter has participated in the Salute event annually since 2002. The ceremony opened with the presentation and posting of colors followed by the pledge of allegiance and the performance of the national anthem by Drew Murley. It closed with a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the eternal flame on the north side of the plaza. Echo taps were sounded by Susan Jones and Melissa Terrell of Lakeside Pride Marching Band.

CAN TV aired the event on various days through the end of June.



The wreath-laying ceremony in front of the eternal flame at Daley Plaza.

Photo by Hal Baim

## THERE'S PRIDE in QUITTING, too.



Tatyana Moaton, transgender U.S. Air Force veteran and current HBH diversity and inclusion services coordinator.

Photo by Hal Baim

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PRIDE 2019

## Chicagoans display their Pride before rain erupts

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The 2019 Chicago Pride Parade was initially halted and spectators told to seek shelter at about 2:15 p.m. on June 30 when a severe storm erupted, drenching parade goers and participants.

City officials halted the procession because of the potential for lightning and high winds, according to Parade Coordinator Richard Pfeiffer. Chicago Police announced via Twitter that the parade was cancelled outright at about 3 p.m. City officials ordered the cancellation, Pfeiffer said.

Parade organizers, in response to the storm predictions, had kicked off the parade about 10 minutes early at 11:50 a.m., and many parade en-

tries had left the stepping-off point at Broadway and Montrose Avenue in Uptown by the time the storm arrived.

According to Pfeiffer, about 39 entries—nine floats and 30 decorated vehicles or marching entries—had not passed the stepping-off point. There were about 160 entries in the parade. He added that the number of entries who'd been able to traverse the complete parade route had yet to be determined.

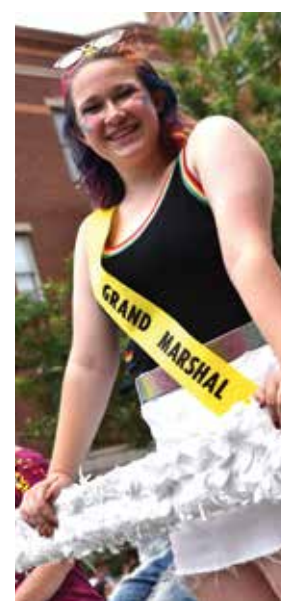
While weather reports did predict the rain, spectators still showed up to celebrate; the occasion was especially auspicious, marking both the 50th anniversary of the New York City Stonewall uprising that played a key role in inspiring the

entire LGBT-rights movement as well as the first parade with an LGBT person—in this case, Mayor Lori Lightfoot—sitting in the City of Chicago's top executive office.

Lightfoot, who was the grand marshal, followed the scouts leading the parade; Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker was not far behind.

At a press conference that morning, Lightfoot said, "It shouldn't matter who you love to be part of this great city, so as long as I'm mayor, I'm going to do everything that I can to make the city welcoming."

Additional grand marshals included activist and Joel Hall Dance Company Founder Joel Hall; activist and Baton Show Lounge owner Jim Flint; activist and His 'n' Hers owner Marge Summit; Molly Pinta, a young person who organized a Pride parade in her hometown of Buffalo Grove this year; and Indivisible Aurora, who similarly launched a Pride parade in that community in 2018.







Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography), Joseph Stevens, Jerry Nunn, Matt Simonette, Joshua Irvine and Julia Hale

Lightfoot and Pritzker were, of course, not the only politicians on hand. Among those elected officials and candidates who marched or sent contingents were U.S. Reps. Mike Quigley, Sean Casten, Jan Schakowsky, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia and Robin Kelly; U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth; state Rep. Sarah Fiegenholtz, who took selfies with the crowd; Marie Newman, who's just launched another campaign to unseat U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski; Cook County Court Clerk Dorothy Brown; attorney Jacob Meister, who just announced that he's making another bid to unseat Brown; Illinois Treasurer Mike Frerichs; Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza; Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul; Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx; and Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison.

Members of the Chicago City Council's LGBTQ Caucus included Alds. Tom Tunney, Raymond Lopez and James Cappleman. Alds. Matt Martin and Andre Vasquez also took part.

Sizable groups marched in support of presidential candidates Pete Buttigieg and Kamala Harris.

One of Harris' supporters brandished a large placard illustrated with a depiction of the California senator as Wonder Woman.

Balloons by Tommy held up its Pride tradition with numerous colorful balloon sculptures and costumes. Their theme this year was mainly food. Participants were adorned as mugs of beer, cupcakes, a wedding cake and ice cream sundaes.

A Liza Minnelli impersonator doing Liza's Sally Bowles schtick rode Broadway in Chicago's float, while members of Blue Man Group weaved between the floats. Second City Outlaws also entertained the crowds. Nations who were represented by either their regional consulates or tourism boards included Great Britain, Israel, Ireland, Australia and Canada; Hamburg, Germany, was also represented.

Community and national organizations who took part included Howard Brown Health, Thresholds, Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal, ACLU of Illinois, Center on Halsted Project Vida, Gerber Hart Library, HRC, AARP, Chicago Gender Society,

Chicago Black Gay Mens Caucus, TPAN, Obama Foundation, and the Legacy Project.

Educational institutions included Truman College; City Colleges of Chicago; University of Chicago; Purdue University Northwest; Illinois State University; Elmhurst College; Nettelhorst School, Near North Montessori; Francis Parker School; Bernard Zell Anshe Emet, King College Prep and Lycee Francais de Chicago.

City agencies included Chicago Police Department; Chicago Housing Authority; Chicago Park District; and Elgin Police Department. The Federal Bureau of Investigation also had a contingent.

Professional organizations and unions included Chicago Teachers Union, SEIU, Heels and Hard Hats Contractors and American Institute of Architects. The airline industry was also well-represented, with participants from United Airlines, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Boeing.

Additional corporate and media participants were Walgreens, Jewel Osco, Fifth Third Bank,

U.S. Bank, PNC Bank, T-Mobile, AT&T, Uber, Grab Magazine, WGN (whose float featured Bozo the Clown dancing to Madonna's Express Yourself), WXRT, NBC 5, Telemundo and Univision. McDonald's cheekily proclaimed "Equality with a side of fries."

Sports organizations and teams included Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, Chicago Fire, Chicago Dragons, Chicago Women's Rugby Association, Chicago Gay Hockey Association and Chicago Smelts.

Dozens of area churches and synagogues sent contingents for the parade. Congregation Or Chadash, the longtime LGBT synagogue that has since been folded into Temple Sholom in Lake View, brought members and supporters through in a trolley.

The Lakeside Pride Marching Band punctuated its numbers with some twirling at various points in its numbers. Organized Chaos members also revved up the crowds—by revving up their bikes.





# More from Pride 2019

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography), Joseph Stevens, Jerry Nunn, Matt Simonette, Joshua Irvine and Julia Hale











Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography) and Vern Hester



## PRIDE 2019

# Chicago Dyke March spreads Pride through Little Village neighborhood

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Pride filled the streets of Little Village as Chicago Dyke March Collective led its 23rd annual Dyke March on June 29.

According to the group's mission statement, Chicago Dyke March Collective is "a grassroots mobilization and celebration of dyke, queer, bisexual, transgender, and lesbian resilience."

With an inclusive vision, the grassroots effort is anti-racist, anti-violent and volunteer-led. It works toward bridging together communities across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, size, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, culture, immigrant status, spirituality, and ability, as well as embracing body positivity, while challenging fatphobia.

The collective also describes itself as anti-capitalist, anti-state, and anti-police, adding it does not accept funds or donations from state, corporate or oppressive institutions.

Chicago Dyke March is a celebration and gathering organized by the community, for the community. Centered around queer and trans people of color, the event created a space for the community to gather, while supporting local POC centered art, music and performance.

The march kicked off at Little Village Academy and ended with a celebratory rally at Piotrowski Park. Chicago Dyke March Core Organizer Chrissy Puga said her favorite part of the event, which welcomed over 2,000 attendees this year, is "this electrifying sense of community."

"We are not corporate-sponsored in any way and so everyone who is vending and tabling here, they're all a part of the community in some way," said Puga of Chicago Dyke March. "We also have opportunities for folks to have resources like STD

testing, legal advice, there's an organization OCAD, Organized Communities Against Deportations, that are here, so a lot of it is connecting queers with their resources and that brings me a lot of joy because a lot of resources for queers are located on the North Side and the fact that we can bring it back to a different demographic is very important to us."

This year was the consecutive second year that the march was held in Little Village and that Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) served as the event's community org sponsor.

"It's evolved so much too," Puga said of the event in its 23rd year. "We started in the '90s and evolved since to be a really dynamic and changing organization. Every year we get new recruits that offer their own perspective and right now we have a great group of organizers, I think. Our goal is really to shed light to the oppressed and also give Black and Brown, indigenous, queer, two-spirit folks the platform."

"Now that borders are contested in the media, we also want to offer our support [to undocumented folks experiencing struggle]," added Puga of this year's focus on undocumented queers. "We want to stand with all of our queer family and all of their different needs. This neighborhood in particular is an immigrant neighborhood [and] we want to show solidarity with them."

Despite the hot temperatures outside, Dyke March participants chanted loudly as they represented many different communities and causes.

"I feel so much joyful energy and celebratory energy and everyone is vibing," Puga described. "... it's like being home, like seeing your family again."

As the marching crowd dispersed into Piotrows-

ki Park, the celebration continued into the evening with music, performances and food. Various partnering organizations from all around Chicago had tables set up as resources where people could get more information and get involved.

Stephanie Skora, coordinating committee member of Jewish Voice for Peace-Chicago (JVP), one of the partnering organizations that was present at Dyke March, enthusiastically said Dyke March is the best thing that happens in Chicago.

"Hands down, nothing else in Chicago can compare to Dyke March for me," said Skora, who identifies as a gender-queer transwoman, hard fem lesbian and working class, anti-Zionist, Ashkenazi Jew.

"This is a space that is soaked in Jewishness," Skora said. "Every single year there have been visibly Jewish people, invisibly Jewish people, Jewish people of all races, of all kinds of Judaism. It's a wonderful space... We marched in the parade with some trans and queer Jewish banners. It was wonderful and I think our participation in the parade, our visible participation in the parade, is not just because we think it's a valuable, radical space for queer and trans Jews, but also we want to exquisitely challenge the narrative that Dyke March isn't a space for Jews and say, 'No, this is a space that Jews want to be.'"

"This march is also about community building and healing," said Puga. "We also want to create a safe space for all folks any way that they identify. We have ideological differences amongst all of us, but what remains the same is the respect for all kinds of religions, sexualities, gender representations and we hold space for all of it; especially, Black and Brown folks. That's our focus today."







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# Pritzker signs order that protects trans+ students

BY ANDREW DAVIS

On June 30—typically, the culmination of everything LGBTQ during Pride Month—Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed an executive order protecting transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary students throughout the state.

The event took place at Chicago's Lake View High School, and featured attendees such as state Reps. Kelly Cassidy, Sara Feigenholtz and Greg Harris; Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Board Chair Mary Morten; Affinity Community Services Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon; Howard Brown Health Manager of External Communications Channyn Lynne Parker; AIDS Foundation of Chicago President/CEO John Peller; Howard Brown Health CEO David Munar; Lambda Legal Midwest Director Brian Richardson; and several LGBTQA students and their parents.

Lake View High School Principal Paul "PJ" Karafiol started things by saying, "As educators, our first priority is always to ensure the safety of our students, and to support them as they grow into young adults. Our motto at this school is 'Lake View is home'—and I'm proud of the work our dedicated teachers and staffers do to support our [LGBTQ+] young people who call Lake View their home." He added that the support extends to facilities, athletics and even out of school—but added that he himself is father to a transgender son: Ari, 17.

The principal also talked about the gender-expansive services available in the school district, "from the anti-bullying policy to the new student-information system [that] allows students to identify which pronouns and names they'd like to be called by."

Ari—who his proud father described as "a writ-

er, activist and someone who pushes me every day to be a better person," and who came out three years ago—acknowledged that it's easier now than ever to be trans. However, he added that "being trans in America is [still] much harder than it should be, and harder than most people can imagine," noting the "disproportionately high rates of suicide, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness [and] discrimination" the demographic suffers, especially among people of color. He added, "Our dignity and growth should be treated as [givens], rather than being dependent on the willingness of individuals [going] beyond what is required of them."

Pritzker (who has a transgender cousin, Col. Jennifer Pritzker) acknowledged the WorldPride parade in New York City that was slated to go by the Stonewall Inn—site of the 1969 riots that sparked the LGBTQ+-rights movement. "That uprising was led, in part, by transgender and gender non-conforming people, and trans people of color, especially," he said, to applause. "While the LGBTQ community has so much to celebrate today, we must recognize that the trans community that ignited this movement has been left out of so many of its victories." Pritzker echoed what Ari said, acknowledging the hatred, discrimination and violence that many trans people continue to be subjected to.

"One thing remains certain: Illinois is becoming a leader and a beacon of equality and hope for that national LGBTQ community," Pritzker added, noting several LGBTQ-related achievements he's accomplished in his first few months in office, including supporting Getting to Zero, expanding Medicaid to include gender-affirming surgeries, providing aid to trans students, and planning to sign legislation to bring inclusive



Gov. J.B. Pritzker (center) with order.

Photo by Andrew Davis

curricula to schools.

As for the order itself, Pritzker said it will "establish a task force with the mission of disrupting these patterns of discrimination by identifying best practices for guaranteeing inclusive school environments for students of all gender identities."

Lightfoot praised Pritzker for his pro-LGBTQ actions as governor. She added, "I'm proud that CPS [Chicago Public Schools] has been a leader on this front, with its own guidelines for transgender students and staff—ensuring that, in this city, transgender students have the same access and opportunities as everyone else."

Attendees also heard from CPS Chief Education Officer LaTanya D. McDade (who also talked about

CPS's efforts to create/maintain a safe and inclusive environment, including training and even a trans-supportive tool kit); trans activist Syd Robinson (a onetime Trans 100 honoree who said the Stonewall Riots were reflective of Sir Isaac Newton's first law of motion—that every object will remain at rest or in uniform motion in a straight line unless compelled to change its state by the action of an external force); and Illinois State Board of Education Chair Darren Reisberg (who is himself a member of the LGBT community, and who also called for a safe and inclusive atmosphere for students, adding, "All children deserve to be themselves").

The full article is at [WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



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## WorldPride crowds estimated at 5M

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said that approximately 5 million people attended WorldPride in New York City over the June 29-30 weekend, surpassing estimates of about 3 million, ABC News reported.

The mayor also noted how the crowds welcomed

the New York Police Department's presence during the event. Law enforcement—including members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—were photographed taking part in the festivities.

Members of cast of the FX drama Pose, a show about New York City's LGBTQ ballroom culture in the 1980s and 1990s, served as grand marshals, CNN.com noted.

The city hosted WorldPride march on June 30, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, which launched the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

However, there was also a Stonewall 50 Commemoration Rally at the site of the Stonewall Inn

gay bar on June 28 that attracted elected officials, LGBT activists, some of whom were present during the Stonewall riots, and big-name entertainers, The Washington Blade reported. Among those who spoke at the rally on Christopher Street outside the Stonewall Inn were de Blasio, U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York), U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-New York) and New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson.

Singers Melissa Etheridge and Deborah Cox were among the entertainers who performed at the Times Square closing ceremony. Elsewhere, Madonna performed a set that included "Vogue," on Pride Island.



Trans-pride flag creator Monica Helms presenting Stonewall Inn co-owners Kurt Kelly and Stacy Lentz with flag. Photo by Sam Estep for Target Cue

## Anti-racism forum to be held July 13

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lighthouse Church of Chicago, 2335 N. Orchard St., will host a meeting July 13 to address the pervasiveness of racism within the LGBT community.

The gathering, Racial Justice Summit: Boystown & Beyond, is aimed at forming a locally-based coalition to tackle the issue, is intended for clergy of LGBT-welcoming churches and their parishioners, as well as anyone who considers themselves an ally of LGBT persons of color, said Lighthouse Pastor Jamie Frazier.

His announcement comes weeks after a large-scale controversy erupted after the owner of Progress Bar issued a dictum that rap and hip hop music would be banned in the bar, an edict that has often been regarded as a tacit ban on persons of color in other locales. Allegations of racism were also leveled against the store Beatnix in Boystown.

"We believe that our white allies are going to want to stand up and speak," said Frazier. "Many churches are looking for a way to make real that commitment. Lighthouse is going to create a way for them to do so."

The meeting will be held at 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Lighthouse. For more information, see [LighthouseChicago.org](http://LighthouseChicago.org).

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## viewpoints


**Mark S.  
KING**

## Larry Kramer gives us one more chance to wake the f\*ck up

Our friend Larry Kramer, the godfather of the AIDS activism movement, hasn't lost his edge. That should surprise no one. In his speech at the Queer Liberation March on June 30 (at the Queer Liberation March in New York City), however, Larry was nearly wistful, reminiscing on his legacy and acknowledging his advanced age. ("I'm approaching my end...")

Larry isn't particularly fond of waxing poetic about his place in history; he told me as much in my 2017 profile of him for POZ Magazine. He much prefers to focus on the next battle, even if it is the same war.

Larry's dim view of "gay life" these days—the ceaseless, senseless pursuit of hedonistic pleasures—remains firm, virtually unchanged since Larry wrote *Faggots* forty years ago and became the Cassandra of our time in the process. His claims of governmental genocide aren't new either, but they take on new urgency in a country that is stripping civil rights from LGBT citizens and packing innocent people into detention camps.

Larry makes me afraid of our future, if we don't take this shit seriously. Larry's words make me believe we are in big fucking trouble. Larry's words make me afraid that Trump could win again.

Thankfully, Larry also makes me want to do everything I can to avoid that potentiality. He is beseeching us to do just that.

Read the speech below, and tell me what it makes you want to do about it.

**Mark S. King is a GLAAD Award nominee for his blog, *My Fabulous Disease*, and author of *A Place Like This*, his memoir of Los Angeles during the dawn of AIDS.**

\*\*\*\*

*Larry Kramer's Address to the 2019 Queer Liberation March on June 30*

What does Pride mean to you? I'll tell you what it means to me. I love being gay. I love my people. I think, in many ways, we're better than other people. I really do. I think we're smarter, and more talented and more aware of each other. And I do. I do. I totally do. I am very proud to be gay.

I'm approaching my end, but I still have a few years of fight in me to scream out the fact that almost everyone gay I've known has been affected by

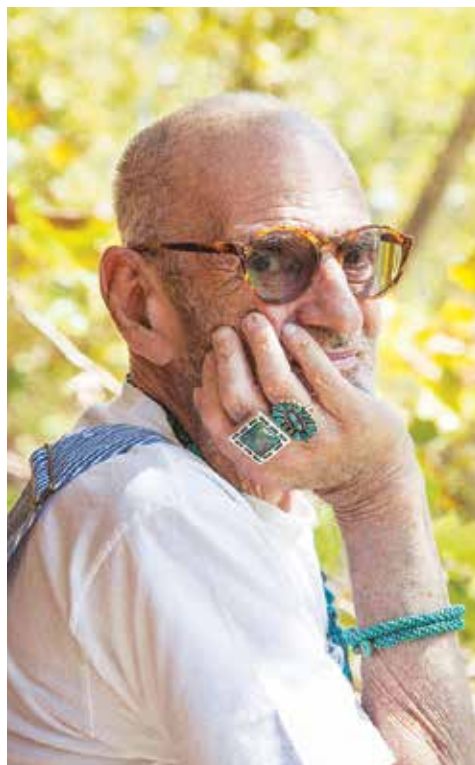

**Larry Kramer.**

Photo by Ryan McGinley

this plague of AIDS. As it has since its beginning, this has continued to be my motivation for everything I've done. It's been a fight I've been proud of fighting.

I almost died three times. I started a couple of organizations to fight with me against the plague. In the end, we failed. I certainly feel that I failed.

There is no cure for this plague. Too many of us are still getting infected. We have become too complacent with PrEP. Research for the cure is still in the Stone Age. The few treatments we have are woefully expensive and come with troublesome side effects. Their manufacturer is holding us up to ransom.

Yes, we have lost the fight against AIDS.

It is hard to stand up to the huge portion of the population of American people that hates us. I don't mean dislike—I mean hate. When we started dying, we told "The American People" what was happening to us. But "The American People" didn't do anything. I hope it's finally dawning on you that maybe those American people didn't and don't want to do anything about this. I hope you might have noticed. I can't tell.

Laws and regulations that sort of protected us are being repealed and rewritten.

Their media, their newspapers, their networks of the rich and religious, their very president and vice president will see to it that we are useless. Their

wildest dreams come true! The faggots are disappearing, and they are doing it to themselves! We have everything required to save our world except the will to do it.

It should have been simple: fight for our rights; take care of ourselves and each other; be proud of ourselves; be proud we are gay. This should be what every gay person is fighting for seven days each and every week.

Most gay people I see appear to have too much time on their hands. Hell, if you have time to get hooked on drugs and do your endless rounds of sex-seeking cyber-surfing until dawn, you do have too much time on your hands. We are better than that. I repeat: We are better than that.

If we do not fight back against our enemies, we will all continue to be murdered. But we have a population that is inept at organizing ourselves. And we have a monstrosity bad record of attempting unity. We are not very good at fighting back.

All this is very sad and frightening. A large uncongealed mass of potentially excellent people doesn't know what to do with themselves or even bother to learn the history that got us here. So, they dance. So, they drug. So, they go on the apps to find more sex. These are useful lives being wasted.

Do you think our enemies care about the rise of HIV infections? "They" are grateful for them. "They" thank us for our cooperation, and our silence and our invisibility.

And while all this happened, what did we do? We shrank from our duty of opposition. Yes, our duty of opposition. In other words: Fight back! We need to fight back! I would love to hear you and see you express the importance of this. If you love being gay as much as I do, fight back!

Now word has come down from on high: Get rid of the faggots once and for all. You think the law, and this president and Supreme Court will protect us? Think again.

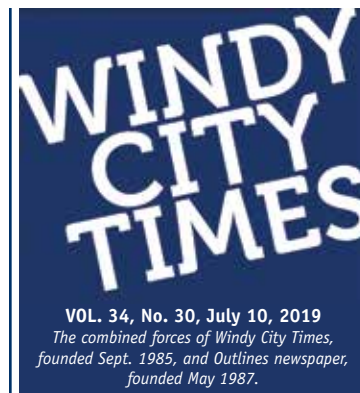
Tell me: What do you do with yourselves all week long—seven days and nights a week—that amounts to anything really important for us as a people? What do you do to make your world—our world, our history—a better place? A world that needs every bit of help it can get—our world, not their world. Because I do not see enough of us fighting this fight, performing our duty.

I love being gay. I love my people. I think in many ways we're better than other people. I really do. I think we're smarter, and more talented and more aware of each other. And I do. I do. I totally do.

But I am finding that I am not so proud of being gay today as I was yesterday. As much as I love being gay and I love gay people, I'm not proud of us right now. I desperately want to feel full of pride again.

Please give me something to be proud of again. Please—all of you—do your duty of opposition in these dark and dangerous days.

Thank you for being here.



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WINDY  
CITY  
TIMES

# ARTS + THEATER

WEEKLY



## PRIDE NORTH

POPULAR NORTHSIDE FESTIVAL  
DEBUTS  
TWO-DAY  
FORMAT

PAGE 32

Photo by  
Kirk Williamson



## THEATER REVIEW

## King Lear

Playwright: William Shakespeare  
 At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.  
 Tickets: Redtwist.org and  
 773-728-7529; \$35-\$40  
 Runs through: Aug. 4

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

What comes to mind first when we hear “Shakespeare’s King Lear” is grandeur: scenery-chewing by a celebrated thespian of lengthy reputation and years, Wagner-opera scenic effects—the entire Balkan Wars, for example, in Robert Falls’ 2006 production at the Goodman—a running time exceeding three hours and don’t even guess the admission price.

Well, thank the muses for storefront theater! Where else can you see Shakespeare’s late-career play in a cozy neighborhood “black box” studio where every word uttered is clearly audible without the distractions of visual and aural spectacle,

where the performers reveal their intentions from close enough to look us in the eye as they share these confidences and where the patriarchal hero is portrayed by an AARP-eligible actor at least a decade short of conventional age-appropriate casting.

This is no mere classroom exercise, however. In an artistic agora dominated by barely post-baccalaureate talent, Redtwist Theatre is the rare company whose play selection offers opportunities for actors both emerging and experienced. How much more inter-generational can you get, after all, than a controlling father whose ego spurs him to set up his children in competition for his affections.

The setting for this family drama, we are told in the playbill, is an “island kingdom,” although the hedgerow boundaries on its map immediately identify it as England—in this case, an England sporting a diverse population encompassing the African-American Earl of Gloucester’s clan, along with a female-cast Earl of Kent, a genderfluid King of France and a Fool of non-binary infrastructure (played by the protean Liz Cloud).



Darren Jones, Robert Hunter Bry in King Lear.  
 Photo by Jan Ellen Graves

Far from confusing the audience, this multicultural stage picture not only facilitates our comprehension of the social boundaries indicated by the unfamiliar courtly titles, but our recognition of filial dynamics echoed in family disputes to this day. After hearing Gloucester joke at his second son’s illegitimate status, or Lear’s daugh-

ters, witnessing their sire’s mistreatment of their daddy’s-girl younger sister, conspire to have him declared unfit to exercise parental authority, we easily detect, beneath the iambic pentameter, the roots of the reckoning suffered by elders who come to regret lessons learned all too well by their offspring.

Even when realized within restricted dimensions and budget, a text calling for a furious thunderstorm in open country, several murders/corporal injuries, fugitives adopting disguises and an abundance of star-turn orations is a hefty undertaking. Under the direction of Steve Scott, though, Brian Parry (Jeff-nominated for his 2018 portrayal of Richard Nixon) essays the strenuous role of western drama’s worst dad, redeeming in vigor the necessary reduction in oratory flourish, assisted by a classically, if unevenly, trained performance ensemble and efficiently mobile scenic design, to bring home the famous “fivefold never” speech in a tidy two and a half hours, excluding intermission. Oh, and did I mention the affordable tickets?

## THEATER REVIEW

## Head Over Heels

Songs: The Go-Go’s; Conception and original book: Jeff Whitty;  
 Book adaptation: James Magruder  
 At: Kokandy Productions at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.  
 Tickets: 773-975-8150 or  
 KokandyProductions.com; \$35-\$40  
 Runs through: Aug. 25

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Who knew that Sir Philip Sidney’s gender-bending pastoral romance The Arcadia from the 1590s

could be paired with the 1980s song hits of The Go-Go’s? That’s the unconventional thinking that largely works for Head Over Heels, a 2018 jukebox musical this is an unabashed and joyous LGBTQ fairytale.

Kokandy Productions scored a coup by snagging the rights for the Chicago premiere of Head Over Heels just six months after it closed on Broadway. While co-directors Derek Van Barham and Elizabeth Swanson do not have a production budget to approach the lavishness of Head Over Heels on Broadway, they certainly can’t be faulted in terms of their talented ensemble’s overflowing enthusiasm.

Head Over Heels is set in the fictional royal court of Arcadia. King Basilius (Frankie Leo Ben-

nett) is thrown into a tizzy when he receives four usurping predictions from the Oracle of Delphi named Pythio (a role pioneered on Broadway by transgender drag star Peppermint and played in Chicago by Parker Guidry). Rather than share the predictions with Queen Gynecia (Liz Norton), Basilius fabricates lies to force his court to travel to Bohemia.

Pythio also inspires the lowly shepherd Musesidorus (Jeremiah Alsop) to switch genders in his efforts to win the hand of the princess Philoclea (Caitlyn Cerza). Meanwhile, the haughty elder princess Pamela (Bridget Adams-King) soon discovers that she has feelings for her lady-in-waiting Mopsa (Deanalis Resto).

The script for Head Over Heels (originally



Parker Guidry (center) and the cast in Head Over Heels

Photo by Michael Brosilow

conceived by Jeff Whitty and then adapted by James Magruder) is alternately silly and earnest as it mixes Elizabethan formality with expanding views of non-binary expression and love.

And though it is a stretch for some of The Go-Go’s songs to fit in at times, they genuinely do forward the plot along as they tap into the characters’ doubts and inner-feelings.

The show’s fairy-tale quality is enhanced by G. “Max” Maxin IV’s flashy lighting design, Breon Arzell’s bouncy choreography and Chris Rhonton’s unit set of a symbolic circle. Yet one wishes that Uriel Gomez’s costumes could have been more “Elizabethan” fabulous (and perhaps more conservative up front to differentiate between the Arcadian court’s early rigidity and its later acceptance of more gender fluidity).

Mike Patrick’s sound design is a tad too blaring at times, especially with some lyrics getting drowned out by the rocking onstage band led by music director Kyra Leigh.

But overall, Head Over Heels serves as a corrective to all the ancient fairytales that have excluded LGBTQ protagonists for far too long. Kokandy Productions’ enthusiastic take on Head Over Heels is wonderful way to keep your Pride Month celebrations going all summer long.

## THEATER REVIEW

## The Flower of Hawaii

Authors: Paul Abraham (composer); Alfred Grunwald & Fritz Lohner-Beda (librettists)  
 At: Chicago Folks Operetta,  
 Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.  
 Tickets: FolksOperetta.org; \$30-\$40  
 Runs through: July 14

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The music is the only thing that matters, really, and it’s tuneful, lush, spritely, sweet, sassy and smooth. “I can piss a melody,” Richard Rodgers once said, and it seems to fit composer Paul Abraham (1892-1960), too, whose score is played with luster by a 19-piece orchestra and sung with vigor and charm by a large, capable company under conductor Anthony Barrese.

The Flower of Hawaii was a 1931 smash romantic operetta in Berlin where Abraham’s career flourished until Hitler gained power in 1933. Abraham, a Hungarian Jew, ran for his

life and his work disappeared. The Nazis tagged The Flower of Hawaii as “degenerate art” partly because Abraham was Jewish, but also because the plot featured forbidden interracial romance (although at the end Caucasians married Caucasians while Others married Others). This production is part of Chicago Folks Operetta’s Reclaimed Voices Series, featuring composers and works lost to Nazi oppression.

Abraham delighted audiences by combining traditional Viennese love songs with more contemporary up tempo comic songs. Indeed, Chicago Folks Operetta (CFO) promotes The Flower of Hawaii as an “exotic jazz operetta,” but it’s not jazz as we know it, for a saxophone section doth not a jazz band make. Sure, the up tempo tunes are toe-tapping sparklers, but they echo (favorably) Jerome Kern’s up tempo tunes in his Princess Theatre Musicals over a decade earlier.

Nonetheless, it’s easy to take music supporting typical tangled operetta nonsense with four couples embracing at the end. It revolves around Hawaiian nationalism, Hawaii having been an independent kingdom until colonized by the United States in 1893.

You see, Hawaiian Prince Lilo-Taro (tenor Rodell Rosel) and royal heir Princess Laia (Marisa

Bucheit, a 2014 Ms. Illinois who can sing, too!) were betrothed as children, although long separated. Princess Laia is a dead ringer for French singer Suzanne, who’s engaged to U.S. jazz singer Jimmy Fox (high-stepping Ryan Trent Oldham). Jimmy arrives in Honolulu with the Princess posing as Suzanne, just as Prince Lilo-Taro also returns. The comic villain is the alcoholic, skirt-chasing U.S. governor (Jerry Miller, a convincing drunk) and the chief comic role is his assistant, John Buffy (tall basso buffo William Roberts). A U.S. Navy captain, the gov’s niece and a Hawaiian soubrette complete the four couple total.

The oversized Henri Rousseau-style foliage in Eleanor Kahn’s scenic design is simple but pleasing and Patti Roeder’s colorful costumes are suave and stylish. Director Amy Hutchinson and five (!) choreographers keep the staging invigorating. Although translator Hersh Glagov and co-adaptor Gerald Frantzen (CFO’s artistic director) have toned down the operetta’s non-PC racial elements, The Flower of Hawaii remains quite sexist with a lot of racy ogling and innuendo. So, please remember: It’s about the music.





Anthony Jordan Santiago, surrounded by spirits of the island, from *The Tempest*.

Photo by James Murphy/Trainman Photography

## THEATER REVIEW

### The Tempest

Author: William Shakespeare

At: Lincoln Park and various other Chicago public parks

Tickets: MidsommerFlight.com;

Tickets are free, no reservations required

Runs through: Aug 25

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Producing the ideal Shakespeare in the park is a choose-your-own-adventure undertaking with pitfalls left and right. High winds? Peals of laughter from nearby barbecues? The thump of nearby dub-step? They are all ready to swallow your mournful soliloquies. So you'll need a production that's familiar, but not tedious, and actors with strong lungs and expressive faces. With *The Tempest*, Midsommer Flight Theatre manages to ensnare the attention of outdoor theater-goers by staging four shows in one; a political thriller, a

romance, a screwball comedy and a fantasy novel.

Prospero (Stephanie Monday) was once a jilted duke, robbed of her title and cast out to sea with only her daughter Miranda (Jennifer Mohr) in tow. Now, she commands an island of subservient magical creatures like Ariel (Elana Weiner-Kaplow) and Caliban (Richard Eisloeffel) with fearsome powers of her own. When she learns that her brother Antonio (Dylan S. Roberts) and the queen who plotted against her, Alonso (Julie Proudfoot), are near her refuge, she plots mischievous revenge, but ends up with lovesick teens, disoriented drunks, and another murder plot that needs thwarting.

This *Tempest* subverts what we know about traditional casting for Shakespeare productions by casting women in powerful roles typically reserved for men. Director Beth Wolf has assembled a solid team of outdoor players, but I wish I could have seen more risk-taking with casting actors of color in speaking roles, especially in such an accessible work. Wolf creates intriguing visuals with little more than bodies on stage, and music director Elizabeth Rentfro gives the island sprites magic in the form of music, sometimes simple, and sometimes sweeping.

Midsommer Flight's actors have more ambience to overcome than your average performer, and are roundly successful in getting their pentameter to the furthest picnic blankets. Jennifer Mohr and Anthony Santiago have fantastic interplay as Miranda and Ferdinand, the immediately smitten, practically sugar frosted young lovers. Ian Deanes and Kat Moraros are the perfect injection of humor as Stephano and Trinculo, two increasingly drunk royal servants, washed ashore.

Richard Eisloeffel is an interesting choice for Caliban, a person forced into servitude and constantly mocked. There's something poignant in that Eisloeffel's Caliban is not costumed/made up differently than any other performer, but is still referred to as monstrous and beastly by all. To me, it serves to highlight that no one deserves that abuse, and even characters we think of as honorable are the worst offenders. Stephanie Monday is booming and commanding as Prospero with a stage-filling presence that resonates, and Elana Weiner-Kaplow is a whirlwind as Ariel, the nimble connective tissue binding everyone—not at all shabby for a free evening in the park.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**The Ballad of Lefty & Crabbe**, Underscore Theatre, through July 14—Jokes, puns and nonsense fly at you fast and furious in this lickety-split new musical about two comedians transitioning from vaudeville to Hollywood circa 1927. *JA*

**Prophet\$**, Factory Theater, through July 20. The golden-calf age of huckster televangelism may be 20th century history now, but the Factory still thinks we should be warned to beware of false you-know-what. *MSB*

**Ms. Blakk for President**, Steppenwolf Theatre, through July 21—The past is very present in Tarell Alvin McCraney and Tina Landau's deliberately rough-around-the-edges collaboration about Chicago drag queen Joan Jett Blakk and her 1992 protest candidacy for Prez. *SCM*

**Six**, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through Aug. 4—This acclaimed and proudly feminist British fringe musical smartly reimagines the six wives of King Henry VIII as contemporary pop song contestants in a flashy sing-off. *SCM*

—by Mary Shen Barnidge, Jonathan Abarbanel and Scott C. Morgan

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## ART

# Darling Shear on artistic journey, making history



**Darling Shear.**  
Photo by Molly FitzMaurice

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Mixed-media artist Darling Shear will become the first transgender artist to receive a grant from the Chicago Dancemakers Forum at the organization's annual awards celebration and benefit, to be held Thursday, July 11, at The Arts Club of Chicago, 201 E. Ontario St., 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Shear will receive a Lab Artist grant alongside five other people, while four individuals will be given Greenhouse Artist grants.

Chicago Dancemakers Forum (launched in 2003) is, according to its website, "the only organiza-

tion in Chicago dedicated solely to nurturing artistic advancement in dancemaking; it is also the single largest source of support for individual choreographers in the city with an open call process."

When asked what it means to be receiving this grant, Shear said, "I am still [shaken] from it all. It is great to be one of the people being acknowledged. Getting this grant tells me I have done a good job at being receptive to the things I want so now I am aligning with them more."

Regarding plans with the grant, Shear said they have seven new projects on the horizon and will

be using the money to get them off the ground. They said the money will go toward research, resourcing materials and traveling abroad to do collaborative intensives with artist friends.

"I am ready to get into the studio and twirl," said Shear.

Shear, a Chicago native who spent much of their formative years in Atlanta, identifies as post-gender—which, for them, means they are "a spiritual being having a human experience, spirit in neither male nor female and also both so I am all of the above because I come from 'above.'"

Artistic expression has been a part of Shear's life since they started dancing with no formal training when they were 11. When Shear was 14, they started their classical training in ballet, modern, post-modern, jazz and African dance at North Springs Charter School of Arts and Sciences, just outside Atlanta. After high school, Shear began dancing professionally and has done so ever since.

Shear said their art consists of fashion, movement and therapy.

"I started out in the fashion industry as a designer with my clothing lines 'A.Squire' and 'Knigaroshi,'" said Shear. "I became a stylist because I got burned out designing four collections a year during my last four years as a designer, I worked with The Green Room Agency based out of Atlanta and our work was featured on NBC, FOX, Bravo and Turner Broadcasting. I have a passion for fashion on a few levels and that includes body adornment.

"As for my guerrilla therapy, I ended up having answers to the questions people asked me so it turned into a practice of mine. This was happening through dance primarily but it turned into one-on-one meetings with people helping them with everything from weight loss to dealing with past traumas. I am always upfront with people that I have no formal training. This was something that was passed down through the generations in my family and my own shamanic studies. They still come to me because of what I have to offer."

Shear has worked with many people/groups over the years, including FutureHood, Jamilla Woods, Lauri Stallings, Outkast's Big Boi, Salona-

thon co-creator Jane Beachy, and Reunion co-founders Kristen Kaza and Elijah McKinnon.

"I hosted tea parties at the Ace Hotel and had AceBoomBap, HijoProdigo and Mister Wallace a.k.a Cool Mom as the resident artist who created beautiful soundscapes for the events," said Shear.

The Chicago Dancemakers Forum grant award is not the only accolade Shear has received over the years. Shear said the other one that sticks out to them is being on the cover and featured in the book *Do You Remember House?: Chicago's Queer of Color Undergrounds*, an anthology of house music and its origins.

"My future plans include twirling my best twirl around the world because dancing is flying and I am spreading my wings to take to the sky," said Shear, who, as an aside, listed their ideas of fun as taking naps under a tree and attending 72-hour parties—because they explained that fun can be found anywhere and anytime.

To purchase tickets for the Chicago Dancemakers Forum event, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chicago-dancemakers-forum-2019-awards-celebration-and-benefit-tickets-60540109096>.

See <https://darlingshearblog.wordpress.com/bio/> for more about Shear.

## City of Chicago to give \$1.3M to local theater community

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) announced more than \$835,750 in financial grants to 116 theater and dance artists, non-profit theaters and other community organizations as part of the 2019 Year of Chicago Theatre—with a special focus on organizations located on the South, Southwest and West sides.

In addition to these cultural program grants, DCASE will also provide more than \$448,650 to 157 theaters, theater-makers and dance-makers to cover artist performance fees and commissions so these organizations can maintain their free public programs.

The City of Chicago and the League of Chicago Theatres have designated 2019 as the "Year of Chicago Theater." This citywide, year-long focus on theater is the first of its kind in the United States.

"Theater has the power to bring people together, influence the way that we think and feel, encourages personal reflection, and fosters creativity and expression—all while making our lives better," said Lightfoot in a statement. "Our performing arts organizations are integral to the fabric of Chicago and help to define its world-class status. It is only right that we support those organizations that add so much value and culture to Chicago."

DCASE grants, performance fees, and commissions are made possible by the City's annual budget and through the generous support of Chicago's philanthropic and business leaders.

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—Chicago Tribune

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# Teen performer talks Jimmys, being on B-way

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

He was standing on an escalator in the lobby of a Times Square theater when the magnitude of what Jacob Simon was experiencing hit him.

"It was surreal," Simon said. "I was, like, 'Wow, we're in New York, on a Broadway stage on a Broadway theater, doing a show.'"

Simon came to New York as a contestant for the annual Jimmy Awards, a competition among the nation's finest high-school theater actors and actresses, after winning in Illinois. A performer for most of his life, the recent high school graduate competed in a weeklong intensive training trip that culminated June 24 at the Jimmys.

A gay man who used to worry about "playing straight," Simon's journey to New York began with Deerfield High School's spring production of *Crazy for You*, in which Simon played lead role Bobby Child. The stage was a familiar place for Simon; he appeared in his first production at age 5 and had performed in more than 60 shows since, including performances with *Another Door Theatre Project* and the *LookOut* series at *Stepenwolf Theatre*.

"You need to be somebody who is willing and able to put in work," Simon said. "[But] I love what I do so much that it doesn't feel like work."

Broadway in Chicago selected *Crazy for You* and the Bobby Child role as qualifying for nomination to this year's Illinois High School Musical Theatre Awards, where the casts and crews of more than 60 high schools vie for a shot at a host of theatrical and performing arts honors. After representatives from Broadway in Chicago came to see the Deerfield production, they announced Simon as one of 12 nominees for their Best Actor award. (The Deerfield show's director, Susan Gorman, was also nominated for Best Director—and won.)

After a day to rehearse a musical number that would open the Illinois awards ("All that Jazz," from the Broadway show *Chicago*), the nominees took the stage of the James M. Nederlander Theater on May 6. Of the male nominees, a panel of judges selected Simon and two other finalists to perform a solo from their respective shows before announcing Simon as the winner of Best Actor, at which point Simon performed a song of his choice.

He picked *West Side Story*'s "Something's Coming"—a musical number he said he's been singing, save for a period of pubescent voice change, for eight years. Of all his songs, Simon said he can always find a way to "latch on" to the emotion of the music.

"It's maybe the only song that I can still sing that I could sing when I was younger," Simon said. "I love that piece."

From the Nederlander, Simon moved on to New York, arriving in the city June 17 for a week's worth of training and rehearsal. Working and sleeping out of New York University's dorms and theater facilities, Simon and 85 other local winners worked with Broadway stars, producers and

conductors to stage a series of performances that would open the Jimmys less than a week from their arrival. Simon received coaching sessions from star Adam Kantor, who played Mark Cohen in the closing cast of *Rent* on Broadway.

Despite an intense schedule, Simon said he was "pleasantly surprised" about the positive atmosphere, citing an anecdote repeated throughout the week: "We have nothing to prove, only to share."

"The community is just really wonderful," Simon said, describing a culture of "mutual respect" in his time working with both his fellow high school students and the Broadway professionals.

When not rehearsing, the contestants attended the Broadway production of *Dear Evan Hansen*, whose current lead, Andrew Barth Feldman, won last year's Jimmy for Best Actor.



Jacob Simon.

Photo by James Jinn for Performing Arts Project

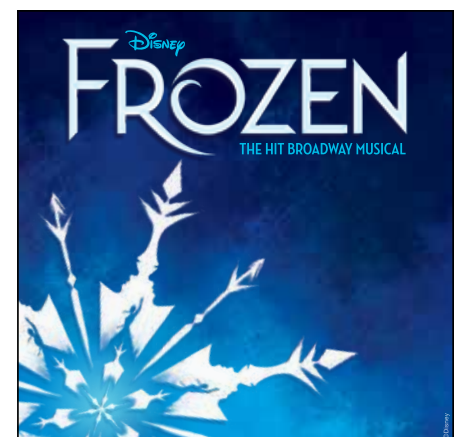
The Jimmys were presented June 24 at the Minskoff Theatre, where Simon had his realization. The contestants opened the awards with a series of performances that included contestants giving a medley of their high school roles (in which Simon participated), a tribute to the 15th anniversary of the Broadway debut of *Wicked* and, lastly, a broad homage to show business.

That night, Simon was honored with the Rising Star Award and also received a \$2,000 scholarship that will go toward his planned study at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

There was much less fanfare when Simon received his award in New York; he didn't get to sing "Something's Coming," and only had his name read aloud. That was okay with Simon, though, because the person reading it was Ben Platt, who originated the role of *Evan Hansen* on Broadway.

So even though he didn't come home with the Jimmy, Simon has few complaints. "You just gotta think of it as an opportunity, and anything else is a bonus," Simon said.

## BROADWAY IN CHICAGO LAST CHANCE TO SUBSCRIBE! SEASON SALES CLOSE SUNDAY, JULY 14



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Left to right: Esteem Awards recipients Sampson McCormick, Archy Jamjun (OUTspoken!), Imani Rupert-Gordon, Ka'riel Gaither, Karen Cross Durham (Gene Siskel Film Center) and Channyn Lynne Parker.

Photo by Joshua Irvine

## PRIDE 2019 Esteem Awards honor local, national Black LGBTQ communities

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

The 12th Annual Esteem Awards paid tribute to 11 individuals and organizations Sunday for their contributions to the LGBTQ community.

Held in conjunction with the Lighthouse Church of Chicago's Black Gay Pride Worship service on July 7, the mostly Black honorees received their awards in a ceremony-slash-chicken and waffle brunch co-hosted by Pastor Jamie Frazier and the Awards' founder Phil Esteem. The honors went to LGBTQ persons from both Chicago and across the nation as well as several local institutions.

"It feels really good to know people are paying attention to the work you do," said Ka'riel Gaither, the honoree for the Future Leaders/Outstanding Millennial-Chicago award.

Gaither, a doctoral candidate at California Southern University and "cis-passing" non-binary person, described himself as a "spokesperson" for the intersection between the LGBTQ community and people of color.

Gaither was one of several activists honored. Affinity Community Services Executive Director Imani Rupert-Gordon received the Outstanding Service-Female honor for her 15 years' work for social justice in higher education, social work and nonprofit management.

"A lot of people that I admire and respect have been honored, and I'm just happy to be among these amazing people," Rupert-Gordon said. (Affinity received the Esteem Awards' Outstanding Social Service/CBO honor in 2012.)

One honoree had been waiting on his award longer than others. Sampson McCormick, a stand-up

comedian, had performed at the Esteem Awards five times since 2012. He received the Special Recognition-National honor when he performed his sixth set for the Awards, earning laughs as he discussed navigating barber shops as a gay man and drug-centric racism in his hometown of Los Angeles as well as throwing humorous barbs at an older white man seated near the performer who turned out to be Tyrone Mixx, the founder and DJ of the legendary nightclub The Generator.

McCormick's material addressed more serious topics as well, particularly the prevalence of deaths of Black and trans men under 30. He said he wanted his comedy to focus on highlighting "where [Black LGBTQ persons] need to heal as a community" and closing the gap between Blacks and the greater LGBTQ community.

This was Lighthouse Church's first time hosting this particular award ceremony, in Lincoln Park's Saint Paul's United Church of Christ. Describing the congregation as a predominantly African American, LGBTQ-friendly community, Frazier said the event was an opportunity for the church to demonstrate its commitment to inclusion.

"It's a beautiful thing to celebrate being Black and gay in Chicago," Frazier said.

Other honorees included transgender advocate Channyn Lynne Parker, LGBTQ storytelling forum OUTspoken! and the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Department of Public Health administrator Antonio King, writers Steven Fullwood and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, performer Perre Shelton and the Brave Space Alliance were also honored, but did not appear or send representatives.

### PRIDE 2019

## Black Gay Men's Caucus holds annual LoveFest

BY VERN HESTER

On July 6, The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, in partnership with Rails Marketing Group and David Dodd Productions, presented the annual LoveFest at The Promontory in Hyde Park. This year's festival featured a brunch buffet; entertainment from Ms. Ruff N Stuff, Otis Mack and Flame Monroe; and beats by Darryl Garcon and DJ Superman.

In previous iterations, the event featured a health village; however, this year the focus was on socializing, with a separate event focus-

ing on health set for later in the year. Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus Executive Director Erik Glenn said, "We like to try different approaches to things."

Also, the Caucus will be launching The Prosperity Project—a three-year campaign to eliminate HIV among Black gay/bisexual and same-gender-loving men in Chicagoland. The project will target the underlying causes of the HIV epidemic by improving access to health-care and reducing unemployment.

For more information on the Caucus, email [info@chiblackgaycaucus.org](mailto:info@chiblackgaycaucus.org).



Photos by Vern Hester



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## PRIDE 2019

## Pride in the Park features music, drag stars



BY JERRY NUNN

A new celebration was held the day before the Pride parade called Pride in the Park, on June 29. Located on the north side of Grant Park, the idea behind the massive undertaking was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pride/Stonewall Riots as well as bring people together in the heart of the city.

There were several vendor booths in the area with outreach and food options from the Din-eamic group, but the focus remained on the entertainment presented throughout the day and night. Drag was also a major component to the lineup with RuPaul Drag Race alumni Alexis Michelle, Coco Montrese, DiDa Ritz and Monica Bev-

erly Hillz all on hand to hype the crowd. Another personality from Drag Race, singer/dancer Todrick Hall, started early in the afternoon and was followed by singer Taylor Dayne, with her pop hits.

Kathy Sledge sang the classic Sister Sledge song "We Are Family," and trans performer KC Ortiz slayed with some spirited original material.

Steve Aoki really shone in the outdoor space, showing why he's earned his loyal electronic dance music following over the years. Songs like "Delirious" and "Pretender" had his fans singing along, including the man himself on a mic over the vocals. Aoki also brought fans behind the booth to dance with him and waved a rainbow flag during his segment—and had 10 rainbow cakes with him to throw at the crowd for his song "Cakeface."



From left: Steve Aoki; Tamar Braxton; KC Ortiz; Iggy Azalea; Khloe and Mimi Marks.  
All photos by Jerry Nunn



Next, Tamar Braxton performed and had a team of dancers with matching costumes who assisted her in captivating the crowd. The singer and winner of Celebrity Big Brother cranked out some R&B tunes that had listeners gagging for more and she continued the trend of bringing a few lucky fans up to dance and be a part of the show.

At 9 p.m., local entertainers Mimi Marks and Khloe had the duty of introducing Azalea, who ran a bit late—forcing them to keep the party going. Dancers and smoke machines surrounded the rapper when she finally arrived to dramatic results that included her catchy song "Black Widow."

After performing "Sally Walker," Azalea talked about Pride and explained its importance. She had received a tweet earlier from a transgender

person named Michelle Morganite, who stated in the message that Morganite sometimes struggles leaving the house because of fear. Morganite happened to be in the audience and Azalea hugged the fan onstage with emotion after security assisted. Azalea then invited Morganite to perform her song "Goddess" and even turned over the microphone completely when Michelle knew every word to the track.

After shooting T-shirt cannons out into the crowd, Azalea ended her set with her popular hit "Fancy."

Following Azalea's performance, fireworks ignited above the stage to finish out the long day of colorful festivities.



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## PRIDE 2019

# Proud to Run marks 38 years with first-ever half-marathon

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Proud To Run, presented by Frontrunners Chicago, celebrated 38 years with its annual 5K run/walk, 10K run and, for the first time ever, a half-marathon on June 29 at The Grove, just north of Montrose Harbor.

Like last year, Proud To Run's theme was "Run Forward." Race results were immediately available at the event for the 2,204 participants.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and her daughter,

of Commerce of Illinois Director Jerome Holston. Lowe said this year's event was dedicated to Patricia Nell Warren, author of *The Fronrunner: A Novel*. (Warren passed away in February of this year.)

"I am so proud and humbled to be your mayor," said Lightfoot. "I am especially proud to be here on Pride weekend."

Lightfoot spoke about having a lot to celebrate as an LGBTQ community.

"Chicago is a beacon of hope," said Lightfoot.



Vivian, came to cheer on the runners and walkers at the finish line and hand them their medals. Lightfoot also spoke to participants and volunteers ahead of the awards and beneficiaries presentation.

Since its inception, Proud To Run has raised more than \$600,000 for various local LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS organizations.

"It was a dream come true to invite Mayor Lightfoot to speak this year," said Proud To Run Co-Director John Avila. "It was also great to have her walk through our race village and mingle with the crowd. I was so proud to be part of this iconic Chicago LGBTQ event."

"The passion and commitment of recent race directors have significantly raised the prominence of Proud To Run in the eyes of the entire Chicago community," said Proud to Run Co-Director John Bowen. "The future looks very bright for this event that adds so much to Chicago's Pride celebrations."

Award-winning WGN-TV reporter Mike Lowe returned for the second year in a row to emcee the event. Lowe brought Lightfoot to the stage; announced the first-, second- and third-place winners in each category and introduced each beneficiary representative: About Face Theater Artistic Director Megan Carney, GenderCool Project Co-Founder Jennifer Grosshandler, HOME Executive Director Gail Schechter and LGBT Chamber

"It is a place where people from all over the country can visit and have a moment where they can live their full authentic lives."

Lightfoot said a number of LGBTQ youth are still suffering because their families have rejected them after they have come out, adding that a few LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness will be riding with her during the Pride Parade. Lightfoot also spoke about looking out for the transgender community, and that other communities need support, including Muslims, Jewish people and immigrants.

"We must continue to fight against hate wherever it rears its ugly head," said Lightfoot. "Not in our city, not in these times."

Carney said the grant money will be used so About Face Theater can tour more and spread its message.

Grosshandler spoke about her transgender daughter, Chazzie, and the origins of the GenderCool Project that she co-founded with Gearah Goldstein. She explained that the organization is youth-led and focused on spreading a positive message across the country. One of the GenderCool Champions, Gia, also spoke.

Schechter said HOME is the only organization in Chicago that provides intergenerational affordable housing, and is focused on building inclusive and diverse communities.

Holston noted that the LGBT Chamber of Com-



Left: Chicago Spirit Brigade. Right: David Reithoffer and Corbin Woodling. All photos by Carrie Maxwell



GenderCool Project members.

merce of Illinois is 23 years old and has grown to about 300 businesses.

The half-marathon's first-place winners were Melissa Kuhlman (women), Steve Browne (men) and Ing Swenson (non-binary).

First-place winners in the 5K race were Amanda Porter (women), Nick Fagan (men) and Dan Solera (non-binary). The 10K race winners were Malory Dreyer (women), Alvaro Montoya (men) and Chris Ramacciotti (non-binary).

The 5K mixed-gender team winner was "That

hustle. That jam." and the 10K mixed gender team winner was from United Airlines.

Frontrunners Chicago Former President and Proud To Run Former Director David Reithoffer presented Frontrunners Chicago Former President and Proud To Run Former Director Corbin Woodling with a plaque that honored his years of service with the organization.

Ahead of the races, Lakeshore Sports & Fitness' Nicole Thomas led participants in warm-up exercises and local transgender singer Molly Jane Powers performed the National Anthem.

Chicago Spirit Brigade cheered on participants at the start and finish lines and the Lakeside Pride Brass Quintet performed at the finish line.

Following the races, Urban Pooch head trainer Jim Bahr and his dogs performed an agility demonstration, Chicago Spirit Brigade showcased its signature dance moves and Tiny Bubbles Ukulele Ensemble performed.

Urban Pooch co-founders and co-owners Ed Kaczmarek and Dan Gaughan (who are also a married couple) spoke about the company's seven-year involvement with Proud To Run and what it means to them.

Also, Windy City Cycling Club members guided runners/walkers along the race course.

Sponsors included Ankura, Bswift, CMSA, Cushman & Wakefield, Fifth-Third Bank, Fitness Formula Clubs, Fleet Feet Chicago, Fred Astaire Dance Studio, here, Jewel-Osco, joyboi Smoothie Bowls, Lakeshore Sport & Fitness, Neurosport Physical Therapy, PepsiCo, Protiviti, RSM, Running to the Beat, SAGIN LLC, Sapphire, Solving IT, TBI, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Thorek Memorial Hospital, Townie, United Airlines, Urban Pooch, William Blair & Company, and ZS.

See [frontrunnerschicago.com/proud-to-run-chicago/](http://frontrunnerschicago.com/proud-to-run-chicago/).



Above: Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and daughter Vivian Lightfoot handing out medals at finish line. Below: Proud to Run Co-Directors John Avila and John Bowen.





## PRIDE 2019

Back Lot Bash  
returns to A'ville

The woman-focused Back Lot Bash returned to the Cheetah Gym parking lot for two days of entertainment on June 29-30.

On June 29, there was the Flagship Festival, with hosts Rose Garcia and Kat Florek, and headliners The Veronicas.

After the parade on June 30, the Bash continued with Catfight, Dorian Electra, Psalm One, DJ All the Way Kay, Gemini Jones and headliner Jackie Cruz.

The weekend also included a Family Fest on June 29, complete with children's-music performers, face-painting, family photos, balloon artists and a petting zoo.



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald ([www.MysticImagesPhotography.com](http://www.MysticImagesPhotography.com))



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The Company of SIX, photo by Liz Lauren

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## PRIDE 2019

## Pride South Side debuts

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The first Pride South Side was held the weekend of June 28-30 at various locations, giving residents and visitors an alternative or additional option to visiting the North Side over the course of Pride weekend.

About 700 persons had RSVP'd for the June 29 portion of the event, an all-day festival outside the DuSable Museum, according to organizers. The festival featured a number of musical performances as well as talks pertinent to community members.

Lead organizer Jared Lewis said the idea for Pride South Side arose late last year, but organizing really went into overdrive just a few months back.

to help spread the message about mental health services.

"I decided to come here because I thought this was the perfect venue to reach queer people of color, which is exactly what my demographic is, and who my clients are, and they are the people I want to educate about mental health and connect with affirming services," she explained.

Brandon Maurice Wright of Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus said, "This event means tangibility, access and community firsthand, especially for the South Side. It also means that all spaces are open for our constituents. It means so much for the Caucus to be here since we serve so many people on the South Side. Just to have our organization here, and see other organizations who are part of our cohort, is amazing, and we are



**Clockwise from top left: Lead organizer Jared Lewis; Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus; co-organizer Adrienne Irmer; AIDS Healthcare Foundation.**

Photos by Matt Simonette

"We doubled and tripled down, and really made it happen," Lewis said, adding that many of the performers were "friends of friends who were local. We are a community but what we aren't is sufficiently organized. So this was a way to organize people who are 'communing' with one another but are disparate from one another in odd and interesting ways. None of these people are unreachable. They are all people where I could call somebody who can call somebody."

Bronzeville-based vendor Peter Gaona, who was selling his ReformedSchool brand merchandise and greeting cards, said, "It's important that we have spaces on the South Side as gay people to hang out and have events, so we don't have to leave our own neighborhoods to celebrate Pride—or any other day, really."

Another vendor, psychologist Monica Lyn, said that the event was a good opportunity for her

happy to be a part of it."

Co-organizer Adrienne Irmer said, "We're all really proud of how this came together as a collective. ... There was a dearth of spaces for Black and Latinx folks, especially youth who are queer-identified, to commonly celebrate their identities, especially during Pride weekend. A lot of South Side youth live in areas that are transportation deserts—it's hard to get up north and its cost-prohibitive. In realizing this, we wanted to put together something that would allow anyone in the 'Southland' who has a queer identity, or is an ally, or has a family member with a queer identity to come and have fun, dance, have a couple of drinks, eat some good food and really celebrate."

Pride South Side sponsors included AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Lyft, Chicago Park District and South Side Help Center, among others.



**CDPH LGBTQ Health & Outreach Liaison Antonio King (left) introduces Pat McCombs.**  
Photo by Joshua Irvine

## PRIDE 2019

## CDPH hosts '50 Years Since Stonewall'

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Publisher, producer and LGBTQ activist Tracy Baim gave the keynote address at the Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) LGBTQ Health & Outreach Program's Pride Health reception, "50 Years Since Stonewall: Collaborating to Achieve Health Equity," June 28 at the Chicago Cultural Center's Preston Bradley Hall.

CDPH LGBTQ Health & Outreach Liaison Antonio King opened the evening's festivities with the line that he said his mom uses to describe his job—"they pay me to be gay." In addition, he spoke about his 15-year history with CDPH and how proud he is to do this work. He explained that the balloon towers that were present throughout the venue represented the many Pride flags that celebrate the various identities in the LGBTQ community.

"My responsibility is to bring visibility, voice and viability to those LGBTQ family members who have not always been consistently represented or acknowledged," said King.

King introduced special guest Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who spoke about the Stonewall Uprising and the roles that transgender icons Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera played during that time. Lightfoot said there is still so much work to be done toward full equality across the country. She explained that, unlike many LGBTQ people during that time, when she came out to her parents in the 1980s they were immediately loving and accepting.

Lightfoot conveyed a grim statistic to the crowd: that 11 transgender people have been killed across the country during this calendar year. She explained that there is still an extremely high rate of LGBTQ youths experiencing homelessness, especially among Black and Latinx youth, adding that this is unacceptable. She explained that efforts need to be accelerated to achieve the goal of HIV-infection elimination by 2027.

Lightfoot said she took an HIV test at a South-

side Walgreens the previous day for National HIV Testing Day to raise awareness and encourage others to get tested. She explained that health equity is the key to everyone, no matter who they are, getting the healthcare they need. [Editor's note: More info about that event is at [WindyCity-MediaGroup.com](http://WindyCity-MediaGroup.com) .]

Baim—who is the founder and owner of Windy City Times as well as publisher of The Chicago Reader—outlined the history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that began in 1981. She said media bias against most of the people with HIV/AIDS was evident immediately. Baim explained that then President Ronald Reagan ignored the epidemic.

"In 1984, when Chicago had fewer than 100 diagnosed cases of HIV/AIDS, I started work at GayLife newspaper," said Baim. "We started to see our friends and colleagues, advertisers and community members get diagnosed and many of them die within days. At times gay newspapers had several pages of obituaries."

Baim spoke about the many organizations that stepped up to help with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Chicago including Howard Brown Health, Gay Horizons (now Center on Halsted), Open Hand, Kupona Network, Project VIDA, Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Chicago House and AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

"Political activists were fighting back horrible legislation, including quarantine bills," said Baim. "Funeral homes would not take bodies, dentists would not treat those with HIV and landlords kicked out surviving partners."

Baim said there were many people that pushed back against this discrimination during that time including Bobbi Campbell, Dan Turner and others that led to the creation of The Denver Principles. She explained that these principles are still applicable today and encouraged everyone to find them online. Baim also spoke about three notable Chicago men who died of AIDS and the work they did—Robert Ford, Dr. Ron Sable and Danny

**Turn to page 34**



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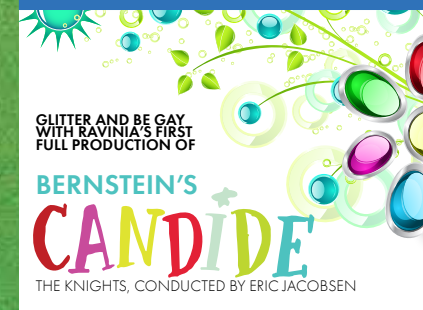
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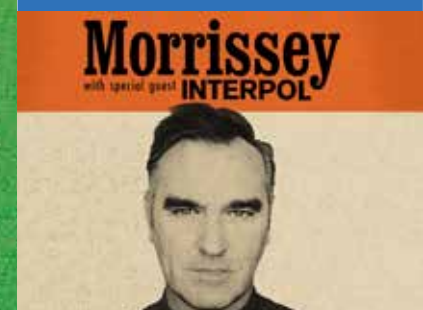
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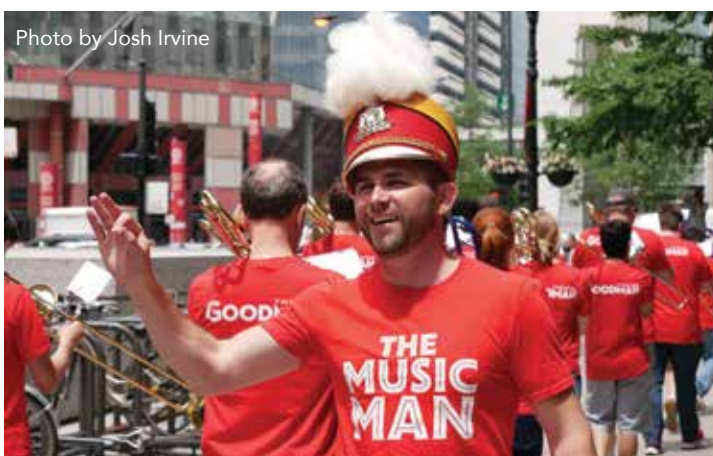




Expanding for the first time to a two-day festival, Pride North brought hundreds to Rogers Park to celebrate under the sun (and occasional rain). Two stages of DJs kept the colorful crowd moving from noon until 10 p.m. both days. In the brief periods of rain, the crowd brought the party inside to The Glenwood and Pub 626. Photos by Kirk Williamson



Photo by Josh Irvine



## PRIDE 2019

# Lakeside Pride takes part in Loop musical parade

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

Performers from the LGBTQ organization Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles marched through the Loop with close to 100 other volunteer musicians in commemoration of Goodman Theatre's revival of *The Music Man*.

The 30-minute parade marched from the theater to Daley Plaza and back

while performing "Seventy-Six Trombones," an iconic piece from the Tony Award-winning musical. Performers—including exactly 76 trombonists—ranged in age from 10 to 82. According to a press release, the parade was the largest the Goodman Theatre ever organized.

Onlookers crowded on sidewalks and street edges as the procession strode down Dearborn Street and around the

edge of Daley Plaza, the performers corralled by Goodman Theatre personnel and led by a white-clad drum major who pranced across the pavement and dodged oncoming traffic.

Upon returning to the theater, the performers delivered an encore performance before posing for photos, with Lakeside Pride members unfurling a Pride flag indoors for a group photo.

The *Music Man* tells the story of a con man who finds himself at the head of an amateur marching band after falling for one of the Midwestern townfolk he's attempting to scam. The show premiered at the Goodman on June 29 and will run through Sunday, Aug. 11.



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Photos by Joseph Stevens Photography



## PRIDE 2019

# Chicago is a Drag festival not dampened by rain

The inaugural Chicago is a Drag festival, taking place on Friday, June 28 in the Cheetah Gym parking lot in Andersonville, was a wet and wild affair. But brief periods of rain could not dampen the spirits of the crowd as they reeled at performances by special guests Raja, Candis Cayne and Spikey Van Dyke. Emceed by Aunty Chan, Dida Ritz, Khloe Park, Lucy Stoolie and T Rex, the stage

was populated by sparkling lineup of stunning local talent, including such names as Lila Star, Irregular Girl, Mokha Montrese, Alexis Bevels, Imp Queen, Danika Bone't and many more. The event was hosted by reality TV star Tiffany "New York" Pollard and entertainer, entrepreneur and LGBT activist TS Madison.



## PRIDE 2019

# Prince Poppycock entertains at Pride event

BY MACKENZIE MURTAUGH

Chicago's Pride celebration began June 28 at the Center on Halsted with a performance by Prince Poppycock, the opera-singing entertainer known for his time on America's Got Talent.

Poppycock took the stage after a few hours of drinks, hors d'oeuvres and music on the Center's third-floor patio. Boystown locals and out-of-towners piled into the building for a night of mingling, dancing and celebrating the festivities of Pride weekend.

Poppycock began his performance with a few jokes, telling the audience "You know pride is a sin, right?" and "I hope you all know Italian." The fourth-place contestant on the fifth season of "Talent" showed his with songs showcasing his vocal range and Pride-related comedy.

Poppycock's performance was preceded by DJ Amy Alderman, a Richmond, Virginia-based queer musician. She supplied remixed dance hits from artists like Jennifer Lopez and Lady Gaga during the pre-performance party. The party was almost halted by a large hailstorm that lasted about 15 minutes—but after the hail melted and the clouds parted, attendees were elated to see a rainbow overlooking Halsted. Attendees and Alderman herself took a moment to cheer and snap a photo of the rainbow (and Pride symbol).

Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle made a speech just before Poppycock took the stage to remind the audience and the LGBTQ+ community of the transgender individuals who ignited the Stonewall riots. Valle honored the individuals by prompting other LGBTQ+ community members to uplift the transgender community as often as they can.



Prince Poppycock.  
Photo by Julia Hale

## CDPH from page 30

Sotomayor.

"There are approximately 35,728 people living with HIV in Illinois and 19,704 of them are in Chicago," said Baim. "In Illinois nearly 47 percent are African America, 27 percent are Latino and 19 percent are white. As of this year, we have lost about 700,000 people to HIV/AIDS in this country alone. This is more than the combined losses in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War and in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Baim said the fight to end HIV/AIDS is a war that some still do not acknowledge to this day, despite the high number of deaths from the disease.

Chi City Foods and DAB of Consulting Founder Xavier (they prefer to only use their first name) and social-justice activist Pat McCombs were also featured speakers.

Xavier said it is important to think about those LGBTQ individuals who are the most vulnerable and what can be done to help them. They explained that their work centers on making local produce available in every neighborhood because it is a social and economic strategy that will

help everyone's mental, reproductive and sexual health.

McCombs—an anti-discrimination activist for more than 35 years—said, during the 1980s, being an advocate included leading the social network gathering organization Executive Sweet alongside Vera Washington after the founders stepped aside. McCombs also spoke about the work of late activists Jackie Anderson, Vernita Gray and Renae Ogletree within the LGBTQ community as well as the efforts of Affinity Community Services and the Lesbian Community Cancer/Care Project (the latter which has merged with Howard Brown Health).

CDPH Acting Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady spoke about CDPH LGBTQ Health & Outreach Program's beginning in the early 2000s and the Getting to Zero campaign to eliminate new HIV infections.

"The policies that protect LGBTQ Chicagoans are policies that protect the rights of all Chicagoans ... to achieve health equity," said Arwady.

Read the keynote remarks in full at [www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Moments-in-the-Public-Health-Response-to-AIDS-CDPH-LGBTQ-Outreach-Keynote-June-28/66482.html](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Moments-in-the-Public-Health-Response-to-AIDS-CDPH-LGBTQ-Outreach-Keynote-June-28/66482.html).





## BILLY Masters

*"Do you know what? I've been giving that some thought recently because a couple of other parents said that to me as well. I think, you really don't start thinking about that until you are a parent, and I think - obviously absolutely fine by me."*—**Prince William's** response to the question of how he'd react if one of his children said they were gay.

Never let it be said that I can't admit when I'm wrong. I was wrong in print and TV. But it's not my fault. I blame **Anderson Cooper**. The silver fox told Howard Stern five years ago that he would not be inheriting money from his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt. Cooper said, "My mom's made clear to me that there's no trust fund. There's none of that. I don't believe in inheriting money. I think it's an initiative sucker." Aside from her Midtown apartment (which goes to Coop's brother, Leopold "Stan" Stokowski), the rest of Gloria's estate goes to Anderson. And that is estimated to be roughly \$200 million. In other words, that's a lot of sucking.

On the other hand, I will shout from the highest rooftop that I was right about the case between **Kevin Spacey** and the Nantucket barback. I previously said that Spacey would get off ... in the legal sense. To briefly recap, three years ago Kevin is said to have attempted to get an 18-year-old busboy off—in the physical sense. He allegedly plied Will Little with drinks in the Nantucket establishment where he works. All the while, Will was texting his girlfriend the blow-by-blow (in the metaphorical sense). Shortly thereafter, Little's mother went public, police got involved, and charges were filed. I hasten to add that I believe every aspect of this story so far. To support their case, the family presented screenshots of select text messages, and the police also examined the phone. Spacey's team claimed the only way to determine what really happened was to see ALL of the messages. They asked to examine the phone. The family said it was "missing." The court ruled the phone had to materialize by July 8. On July 5, the family dropped the civil suit. Hmm. With the civil case dropped, Spacey still had to hear the disposition of the criminal charges on July 8. I believe those charges will also be dropped. I certainly ain't saying Spacey is innocent, but he will get off (physically and metaphorically).

Some folks who ain't getting off are the **owners of Jack'd**, who've been ordered to pay more than \$240K for leaking users' private pics. Not only that, but it's being reported that the company "knowingly leaked" the photos. Apparently, a company employee reported the breach last year. The company did nothing about it until that employee went public. Suddenly, the breach was solved. I noticed a tiny detail in the coverage—the breach affected the app's 2,000 users. That's all? 2K? I don't mind being a big fish in a small pond, but that's a puddle!

Meanwhile in P-town, I was busy with the sun, sand, surf, and studs in skivvies. Call me old-fashioned, but over July 4, I consider myself



**Billy says that Gavin Creel (above) continues to be entertaining.**

Photo by Emily Sopha

a patriot—as much of a patriot as those brave soldiers who stormed the airports and took to flight during the War of Independence. Someone I'd never war with is the gorgeous **Gavin Creel**, who was at the P-town Art House courtesy of **Seth Rudetsky**. The show was a delight—you can always tell when Seth has a personal relationship with his guest. This was effortless—like Gavin's mellifluous range. Seth has a cavalcade of guests stopping by all summer long, so check out [PTownArtHouse.com](http://PTownArtHouse.com) for the latest schedule.

Then there's **Varla Jean Merman**, who never disappoints ... even when she's bored. Yes, this year's show is called "A Star is Bored" and, trust me, you'll be anything but. The songs, the costumes, the video, the cheese—it's all there. Varla even pays homage to those who came before her—so it's almost educational. Catch it before it turns up on your local PBS station during Pledge Week! Get your tix early at [PTownArtHouse.com](http://PTownArtHouse.com) because she's got a limited schedule and is selling out each and every show.

To continue promoting Billy Masters' Fabulous Friends, congrats go out to the insanely talented Sam Harris. The film version of his stage show "HAM—A Musical Memoir" will premiere at Outfest in Los Angeles on July 23. I'm told the film is gorgeous and, of course, Sam is incandescent. You can snag tix at [Outfest.org](http://Outfest.org).

Time for our weekly Schocking Story. **Aaron Schock**—I know you all secretly lust after him solely as a sex object. And I'm gonna give you about nine more reasons to want him. Yes, we've featured a few dozen nude photos of him from every conceivable angle. But the latest clips we've received are from video chats that feature him full-frontal (including face), fully aroused, shaking his money maker in your ... well, face. At this point, I think I've got less footage of actual gay porn stars! You can take him all in—metaphorically—at [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com).

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Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Mark in Boston: "Rapper **Lil Nas X** has come out as gay this week. This is a big deal, as he is a big star. Do you have any nudes of him? He must be on a gay website somewhere."

I believe the timing of Nas' coming out actually connects to nudes. On June 23, the rapper tweeted, "Can't believe my nudes leaked wtf." Then he came out, which as we say in the media biz "changed the narrative." Unless, of course, you're Billy Masters—I ain't so easily distracted. BTW, Nas ain't so lil, as you'll see on [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com).

When I'm linking Lil Nas X to the Jack'd breach, it's definitely time to end another column. Look at that—I tied it all together. I pulled it off—both metaphorically and physically. You can get a bit of both by checking out [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com)—the site that'll lead to some pulling of your own. If you have a question for me, dash it off to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before anyone else takes the Old Town Road. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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# the DISH

Dining Guide in  
WINDY CITY TIMES

## SAVOR Avli Taverna

BY JULIA HALE

In Greek, the word meraki is used to describe “putting your heart and soul into something,” philoxenia means “treating guests like old friends” and kefi means “living joyfully in the moment.”

I know this because it’s written on the walls of **Avli Taverna** (1335 W. Wrightwood Ave.; <http://www.avli.us/>), the Greek restaurant nestled about 15 minutes walking from the Fullerton stop in Lincoln Park. The three Greek words that were previously mentioned—meraki, philoxenia and kefi—are “what we stand for,” said Nicole Anderson, a Greek wine expert and the manager of the Lincoln Park restaurant. (She’s a sommelier, but prefers to be called a Greek wine expert because that’s her concentration.)

The Lincoln Park location opened in November 2018, courtesy of from chef/owner Louie Alexakis and a group that includes Fox Chicago sportscaster Lou Canellis. There’s another Avli Taverna in Winnetka, and there’s a River North location coming soon. In the development of this location, they really wanted to emulate an authentic Greek tavern, according to Anderson. With exposed white brick, big windows and geometric wall and light fixtures, Avli puts a



**Nicole of Avli Taverna.**

Photo by Julia Hale

modern twist on what you might think of when you think “Greek restaurant.” Avli even defies the Greek stereotype of blue accents, using black and earth tones instead.

While Avli looks like a small corner tavern, upon entering you can see that it’s bigger than perceived, with a considerably large back room and patio seating that stretches almost half the block. In the back room, there’s extra seating, and there’s a mural featuring the definitions of meraki, philoxenia and kefi. There’s also a wall with authentic Greek ingredients like olive oil and lentils for sale in the back.

With one look at the menu, you can tell it’s not your average Greek food. Everything on the menu is made gluten-free, except for the pita, but you can request a gluten-free version of that, too. Anderson assured us that everything down to the lobster spaghetti was authentically Hellenic, with recipes gathered from actual Greek taverns. Anderson started my dining companion and myself with a very spicy feta spread called tirokafteri, along with a Greek village salad and a watermelon salad with creamy manouri cheese,

almonds and mint.

Then came the small plates: pork skewers with garlic aioli, zucchini chips and my personal favorite of the three—hortopita, a northern Greek-style vegetable filo puff. With so much food for just two people, it was frankly incredible that we were able to eat half of two more entrees. Anderson, ever embodying the hospitality that her restaurant stands for, served us three entrees: the lobster spaghetti, gyro sandwiches, and a half chicken with huge, white beans called “gigantes.” I love Mediterranean food so, of course, I loved the gyro. Not being a huge fan of seafood, though, I was surprised to find the spaghetti to be a favorite as well. Unfortunately, we didn’t make it to the chicken, but I can say it made for great leftovers.

Out of all the delicious things I just described, I can tell you that the best was yet to come. By far my favorite part of dining at Avli was its caramel baklava ice cream. The dessert consisted of housemade vanilla ice cream surrounding a caramel baklava center, with shredded filo (or phyllo) on top. Anderson described it as “deconstructed baklava.”

While I didn’t drink anything besides the spot’s tart homemade lemonade, I did notice Avli’s thorough drink menu. Its wines are ranked from crisp to lush, light to tannic, elegant to rustic, pale to vivid, and fine to vibrant. It has not just Greek wine but also Greek spirits and Greek craft brews. There are also cocktails, including the Mykonos Mule—a drink with ginger beer, rum and lime and featuring Roots Rakomelo, a Greek liquor.

With a menu that’s true to Greek authenticity and an atmosphere balanced in modernity as well as tradition, Avli fully embodies its motto of soul, hospitality and joy. You can feel the heart and passion put into the place, and the attention to

July 10, 2019

WINDY CITY TIMES

detail in everything from the menu to the decor cultivates an atmosphere of respect among server and patron. If you’re in the Lincoln Park area, I suggest giving it a try.

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



### NAME

“Bella DeBalle is inspired by my favorite movie, *Beauty and the Beast*. I wanted a really stupid pun name because I’m an idiot, but I also wanted something glamorous and regal sounding because she’s a **QUEEN, LADIES!**”

### FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

“I began doing drag about two years ago. My first performance was at Roscoe’s Drag Race hosted by T Rex. I was hell nervous, but she drunkenly told me I was funny and that I should keep coming out and so I did.”

### DRAG INSPIRATION

“I’m a musical theater baby and a comedian, so lots of my inspiration comes from other comics and artists. Also, my paint is definitely overexaggerated and almost alien-like, so I love mixing alternative and glamour together to create one giant mess of a drag artist.”

### GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY A CROWD

“‘Holding Out For a Hero,’ but the Shrek 2 version because, girl, it makes a crowd lose their MINDS!”

### FAVORITE PIECE IN YOUR CLOSET

“I have a stunning vinyl dress made for me by the fabulous Yolo Ono—it’s hot pink with yellow accents and I feel like one of the *Real Housewives of Pluto* when I wear it!”

### SPILL SOME T

“I’m an introvert who plays an extrovert onstage. I have a lot of anxiety in large crowds when I’m out of drag and I’m super dry. Bella allows me to put on a persona that oozes confidence and wit that I wish I had in my day-to-day life.”

### GUILTY PLEASURE

Degrassi: Next Class. No one come for me—I keep re-watching it and that’s okay.

### WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

“Charlie’s Chicago every Saturday, hosting Popular with my sister Veronica Pop (@vickypop). You can also catch me every second Friday at 10 p.m. hosting Spectrum.”

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Photo by  
Marisa KM  
Photography

Instagram: @deballequeen  
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Taking us Back to Stonewall.  
Photos by Kirk Williamson



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## 'MS. BLAKK' now running thru July 21

Due to popular demand, Steppenwolf Theatre Company has added seven more performances to the run of **MS. BLAKK FOR PRESIDENT**.

Now playing through July 21 at Steppenwolf's Upstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St., this new work was conceived of and directed by ensemble member Tina Landau (SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical) and created by ensemble members Tina Landau and Tarell Alvin McCraney (the Oscar-winning film Moonlight).

Tickets (\$20-\$94) to the extension are available at 312-335-1650 or [Steppenwolf.org](http://Steppenwolf.org).

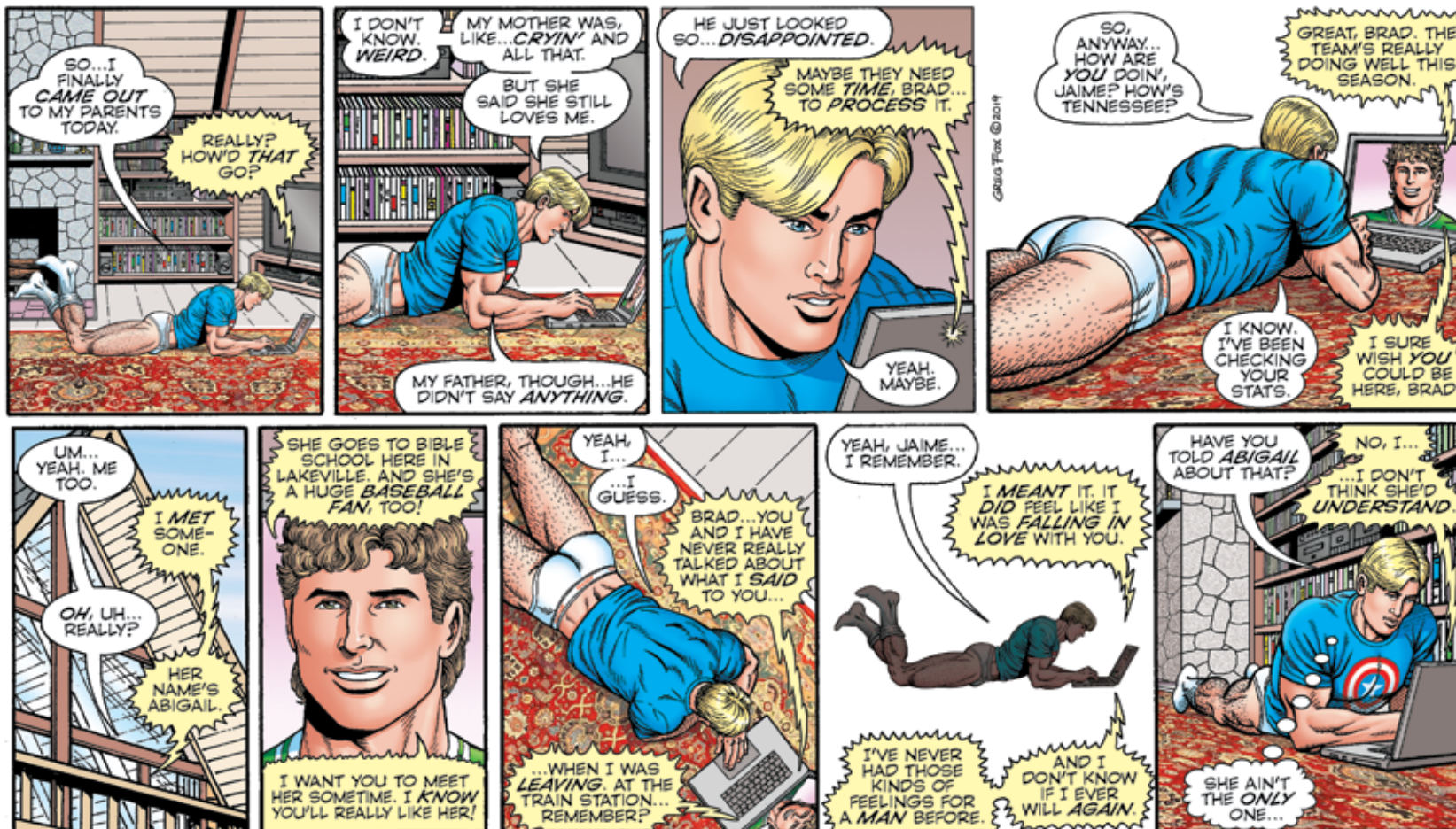


**Tarell Alvin McCraney in MS. BLAKK FOR PRESIDENT.**

Photo by Michael Brosilow

# KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox





# WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Thursday, July 11

**Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am** Film meditation on the life and works of the legendary storyteller and Nobel Prize winner, through Thursday, July 11. Music Box Theatre, 3733 N Southport Ave., Tickets: <http://musicboxtheatre.com/films/toni-morrison-the-pieces-i-am>

## Friday, July 12

**Out of the Closets and into the Streets: Power, Pride & Resistance in Chicago's Gay Liberation Movement** Exhibit continues through Sept. 19, free. Check site for hours. 12:00pm - 4:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St.; <http://www.gerberhart.org>

**The About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble Celebrates 20th Anniversary with 20/20** Devised, performed by The About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble. Co-Directed by Megan Carney, Donny Acosta. Through July 28, 2019 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago 773-784-8565 Tickets: <http://about-facetheatre.com>

## Saturday, July 20

**16th Annual Chicago Disability Pride Parade** Theme: Disability Pride Is Social Justice 9:00pm Parade route TBA <http://www.disabilityprideparade.org/>



### TONI AWARD Through Thursday, July 11

**Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am is running at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave.**

Photo courtesy of Music Box

## Sunday, July 21

**An Uncertain Hour** It happened before. It can happen again. It can happen here. When confronted by Nazi Auschwitz, when Primo Levi very much wanted to give up and die, the immortal words

of Dante called him to the life of a maker of words necessary for life. Free. RSVP at link 6:00pm Lincoln Loft, 3036 N Lincoln Ave. <http://forms.gle/55yrbdwSHEoJEBzP9>

## Saturday, July 27

**Activists and Icons: Photographs of Steve Schapiro, Challenging Status Quo through Lens of a Camera** Forty-six powerful large-format documentary photographs showing issues of the civil rights movement are still deeply relevant today. from Rosa Parks, James Baldwin and David Bowie to an unnamed sanitation striker. 10:00pm - 5:00pm Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center 9603 Woods Dr. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/activists-and-icons/>

## Thursday, Aug. 1

**Ariana, Gambino, Monae in Lollapalooza** Ariana Grande, queer musician/singer Janelle Monae, Childish Gambino, Twenty One Pilots and The Strokes are among the headliners for Lollapalooza. Through Aug. 4. \$130 Time:TBA Grant Park 337 E. Randolph St Chicago <http://http://www.lollapalooza.com/>

**American Veterans for Equal Rights GLBTQ Veterans Monthly Meeting** Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA). 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.averchicago.org/>

**Owen Keehnen, John D'Emilio and St. Sukie de la Croix.**

Photo by S. Papa



## Historians discuss 'Tell Me About It'

On June 27, LGBTQ historians Owen Keehnen and St. Sukie de la Croix discussed their literary collaboration, *Tell Me About It: LGBTQ Secrets, Confessions, and Life Stories*, at Gerber Hart Library and Archives.

Local historian John D'Emilio hosted the event.

*Tell Me About It: LGBTQ Secrets, Confessions, and Life Stories* compiles the answers various individuals gave the co-authors when asked 10 specific questions.



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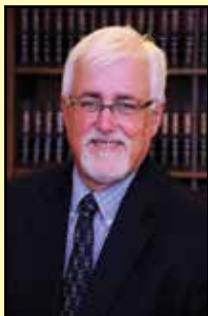


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