

WINDY CITY TIMES

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ANGELA BARNES

Center on Halsted board chair has some things to say.

Photo courtesy of Barnes



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LEGAL EAGLE

A discussion with legal icon Sebastian Patti.


Photo by Jamie Anne Royce

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ACTIVE VOLCANO

Intersex artist Del LaGrace Volcano's on display.

Photo courtesy of Volcano



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From left: Ann Christophersen, Lynn Mooney, Linda Bubon and Sarah Hollenbeck.
Photo by Melissa Wasserman



TURNING THE PAGE

PAGE 28

Women & Children marks 40 years

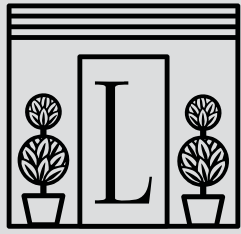


MARKET MOVES

Singer Brian Justin Crum takes the stage at this year's Northalsted Market Days

Brian Justin Crum.
Photo by Mark Mendoza

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WINDY CITY TIMES

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Oct. 2	Jan. 22	May 13
Oct. 16	Feb. 5	May 27
Oct. 30	Feb. 19	June 10
Nov. 13	March 4	June 24
Nov. 27	March 18	July 8

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



QUEER OF INFLUENCE

Queer actor Heath Saunders (left) headlines Darling Grenadine.

Photo by Liz Lauren

MONAE, MONAE



Janelle Monáe was part of the scene at Lollapalooza and at a private event that she hosted with Belvedere Vodka.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images/Belvedere Vodka

'SUGAR' AND SPICE

In an op-ed, Ella Vincent writes about the LGBTQ representation on the OWN show Queen Sugar.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Vic Mensa, Sara Gilbert and Chris Pine.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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'Trailblazer' confirmed to federal district bench in Illinois

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Senate, last week, confirmed lesbian magistrate Mary Rowland to a U.S. district court judgeship in Illinois, prompting U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth to express appreciation for the Trump administration's "willingness to work with us and with our nonpartisan screening committee to reach consensus on nominees who will serve the people of Illinois well."

President Trump nominated Rowland in June 2018—his first openly gay appointee to a federal judgeship. The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended Rowland's confirmation by a 16-to-five vote, but the nomination was never advanced to the full Senate. When the 2017-18 Congressional session adjourned, Trump re-nominated most of his other yet-to-be-confirmed nominees, but Rowland's name was no longer on the list.

Then, in May of this year, the Trump administration re-submitted Rowland's nomination. The Judiciary Committee recommended her confirmation by a 14-to-eight vote, and the nomination sat on the Senate calendar until July 31. The nomination was approved along with about a dozen others, by a voice vote.

Rowland, 57, is a native of Ohio and attended University of Michigan and then University of Chicago Law School. She clerked for a federal judge in Michigan, then worked for two years with the ACLU of Illinois. Since 2012, she has served as a magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for Northern Illinois. The American Bar Association rated Rowland as "well qualified" for the position.

Rowland resides in Oak Park, Illinois, with spouse Julie Justicz and their two children. The questionnaire she filled out for the Judiciary Committee included mention that she is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago and was a member of Lambda Legal between 1992 and 2010. It noted she had made three presentations before the Chicago gay legal group and spoke to a law firm about her "path to the bench as an out lesbian" in June 2017. And she has worked on several Democratic campaigns.

At Rowland's confirmation hearing last August, Senator Durbin (D-Illinois) introduced her, saying she was a "trailblazer...inspiring a generation of LGBTQ attorneys who watched her break glass ceilings with fearlessness and determination." He and Senator Duckworth (D-Illinois) welcomed "Mary's wife, Julie Justicz," to the hearing, noting that their children were off at school. Rowland's connections to the LGBT community, including pro bono work for Lambda Law.

President Trump's second openly gay nominee



Judge Mary Rowland.
Photo by Hal Baim

to the federal bench, San Diego attorney Patrick Bumatay, is still pending in committee. Trump nominated Bumatay in October 2018 to serve on the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Like that of Rowland, his nomination was also sent back to the president after the end of the Congressional session. But when Trump re-nominated Bumatay in February of this year, his slotted him for a district court seat, not the appeals court. His nomination has not moved since.

Several court-watch media reported that Trump did not consult with U.S. sens. Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, both Democrats from California, for nominees from that state, as is tradition. And they said both senators opposed Bumatay because he believes in strict reading of the constitution, a reading that often works against the interests of LGBT people. Several conservative news sources are speculating Trump might re-nominate Bumatay to a Ninth Circuit seat that is expected to come open soon due to a retirement.

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Randy Boston.
Photo courtesy of Armando Smith

PASSAGES

Randy Boston

Randy Boston died July 1 in Rogers Park. He was 56.

He was the eldest of six children and was preceded in death by his mother.

Randy grew on Chicago's South Side, in the Back of the Yards community. He graduated from Lane Tech High School in 1975, where he studied office administration. Randy was the fellowship coordinator and administrative assistant in the division of hematology/oncology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital during 1999 through 2011. Randy was so professional that he was the personal assistant for five physicians, exceeding the department normal assignment of three.

After high school, Randy resided in Chicago's Rogers Park, Lake View and Andersonville neighborhoods. Randy, like many members of the LGBTQ+ community, found acceptance and community at Horizons—a social-service agency that later became known as the Center on Halsted. While at Horizons, he first was an active member in Horizons' youth program. Later, he volunteered on Horizons' gay and lesbian

helpline and HIV/AIDS hotline; he also was an assistant to agency staff and was a team member on the organization's volleyball team.

Also, Randy was very knowledgeable and well-read in the arts and cuisine. He was a member of the Usual Suspects Book Club.

Randy is fondly remembered by family and many loving friends. He was a valued, cherished, thoughtful, sensitive, funny and good and supportive friend to many. Randy often, selflessly and tirelessly, offered his help and assistance to all of his friends and co-workers.

He was a good travel companion and once, while visiting New York City, he casually met actor Neil Patrick Harris and, without pretense, shared his delightful encounter with those traveling with him. His wonderful and loving presence will be longed missed and remembered by many. We all loved him dearly.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, Aug. 24, 4-7 p.m., at Francesca's on Bryn Mawr, 1039 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. in the Verona Room (phone: 773-506-9261). Immediately after services, all are welcomed to join in for refreshments, in loving memory and celebration, of our dear friend Randy Boston.

—Courtesy of Armando Smith

Mills, Logue among ACS honorees

Attorney and activist Alan Mills was among those honored July 24 at the 2019 Legal Legends Luncheon of the Chicago Lawyers Chapter of the American Constitution Society. Mills, who is executive director of the Uptown People's Law Center, is active in representing the rights of persons experiencing homelessness as well as transgender persons, among other Chicagoans.

Also honored at the luncheon was openly lesbian Cook County Circuit Court Associate Judge Patricia Logue, who was unable to attend. Camilla Taylor, director of constitutional litigation for Lambda Legal, accepted the award on Logue's behalf.

—Matt Simonette



Alan Mills.
Photo by Matt Simonette



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Photo © Todd Rosenberg Photography. Dancers: Ari Israel & Greig Matthews.
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CMSA Hall of Famer/ former North End co-owner Bobby Nicholson dies

BY ROSS FORMAN

Games were played Aug. 4, but with heavy hearts—and tribute ribbons attached to players' and umpires' uniforms. The balls and strikes, safe and out calls were, in large part, secondary to the memories that ran throughout the Open Sunday Softball League of the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA), at all fields, in all games, in all divisions.

CMSA, particularly softball, lost a local legend on Friday night, August 2. Robert F. "Bobby" Nicholson passed away, leaving a long local and national gay sports legacy that dates back about 40 years. He was 69.

Nicholson is a member of the CMSA Hall of Fame, inducted in its second-ever class of inductees in 2008, along with Richard Essig, Art Johnston, Doug Malm and Sidetrack. He also later served on the CMSA Hall of Fame committee. Plus, Nicholson was a 2009 inductee into the NAGAAA Hall of Fame from the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance, which operates the annual Gay Softball World Series. That 2009 induction class also featured fellow Chicagoans Phil Runions and Sam Coady.

"CMSA would not be what it is today without Bobby Nicholson. It's no surprise that he's been inducted in every Hall of Fame out there," said Shawn Albritton of Chicago.

CMSA Hall of Fame member Marcia Hill, inducted in 2007, simply said: "CMSA has lost one of [its] bests."

"Bobby was in a class by himself," said Brian Sommer of Chicago. "He was always so nice and kind to all softball players."

And comical, too, even if it was a dry humor.

Sommer, for instance, recalls umpiring a game with Nicholson, with Nicholson working as the plate umpire. "He told me that he would signal [to] me every time the teams switch, so I would know if it was the top or bottom of the inning," Sommer said. "So, for the top of the inning, he would stand in front of the plate and just start hitting the top of his hat, [thus] I knew we were in the top of the inning. Then for the bottom of the inning, he would stand in front of the plate and just start spanking his own butt."

"I laughed so hard whenever it was the bottom of the inning."

"I will miss his humor and kind words so much."

Albritton added, "His fun spirit and sportsman-



Robert "Bobby" Nicholson.

Photo courtesy of David Liechty

ship rubbed off on me and those who knew him."

Nicholson was from suburban Evergreen Park, but lived in Kansas City, Missouri until his return to Chicago in 1965. He joined the Gay Athletic Association (GAA), the predecessor to MSA and later CMSA, to continue his lifelong joy of playing team sports.

From 1980 through 1999, he was a softball player, in both 16- and 12-inch gay softball leagues in Chicago. He was a member for 13 NAGAAA Gay Softball World Series teams.

"Bobby represented the best of LGBT sports," said Kevin Boyer of Chicago. "He was always there with a joke and a laugh. [He was] smart, fair, and committed to the players. Every game [that] he umpired was more fun."

Added Brian Lopez, of Chicago: "I'm having trouble comprehending that he's gone. Unfortunately, I don't have a quote or words to express how amazing this guy was. For so many of us, he was one of the first introductions we had into the gay sports world, and what an incredible representative he was."

Nicholson, during 1983-1999, was the co-owner of The North End, a sports bar in Boystown, and he financially sponsored softball, bowling, volleyball and flag football teams.

From 1984-1990, he bowled in the Thursday and Friday night GAA/MSA leagues.

Nicholson was the 1995 recipient of the James R. Brody Award, presented to the Open Sunday Softball League player for outstanding sportsmanship.

Nicholson started umpiring CMSA's Open Softball league in the late-1990s, including a time as its umpire-in-chief.

"I knew Bobby for 28 years ... he was my umpire mentor many years ago," said Doug Malm, who is now the CMSA Open Sunday Softball League UIC. "He taught me how to be an umpire on the field and a better person off the field. I will miss his friendship."

Hill added, "Bobby was a class act—as a player, coach, manager, umpire and friend."

Nicholson was a founding committee member in 1999 of the Senior Cup and team sponsor of Bob's Old Bats.

Nicholson was, for years, an umpire in the annual Gay Softball World Series

"[Bobby] was the one who got me to start umpiring, and [he] mentored me," said Albritton, who tagged Nicholson as a "very dear friend."

"He was someone who I always looked up to and aspired to be. I was lucky to [also] play in a couple of softball tournaments with him."

Nicholson was voted Most Valuable Player at the Emerald City Classic softball tournament in Seattle by his Chicago Jackhammer teammates.

"When I think of Bobby, I will always remember his smile and the way he made everyone feel special," said Julie Colwell. "I always had a blast [umpiring] the Senior Cup for Bobby."

"He truly was an ambassador for CMSA Softball, [a] hard-working umpire and [he] could remember softball stories for days."

"The entire NAGAAA family will miss his smile, his laugh and wit that made you just want to hug him. He will just have to share his softball stories with all the Cubs fans in heaven."

Sam M., a longtime friend of Nicholson, added: "I have a tremendous amount of great memories from my friendship with Bobby. First as a player with the [team called the] Bushmen, then as an owner/sponsor for The North End, then just as a player again."

"I was so excited that Mike Travers and me, along with our teammates, were able to retire the 16-inch championship trophy to Bobby and The North End. I was sad when Bobby sold his part of The North End because he also had to 'sell' the MSA trophy to the new owner. Bobby told me that was his only regret about getting out of the bar business—[that] he couldn't keep the trophy."

"I'm going to miss that guy. He was a major supporter of GAA/MSA and me. He'll not be forgotten by me. I think the ribbons worn by the players [on August 4, the day after his death] was a fitting and well-deserved honor for a great guy."

Nicholson played in the Windy City Athletic Association's basketball league in the mid-2000s.

He also was the umpire-in-chief for the 2006 Gay Games, held in Chicago, for both the men and the women's divisions.

Nicholson's longtime partner, David shared the sad news, saying: "It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I write to you [that] our dear friend Bobby Nicholson passed away today. According to his wishes, there will not be a public service. Instead, we ask that you pause and reflect on those special memories you shared with him, remembering the laughs and smiles you brought to each other's day. He truly enjoyed time spent with friends and family."

"Tonight, before you fall asleep, as a tribute to Bobby, whisper 'Good Night Irene' to wish him well on his journey. Thanks for being a part of his life!"

CMSA will pay tribute to Nicholson during the Open Sunday Softball League's end-of-season get-together on Sunday, Sept. 15 at Jackhammer. Additional information on the tribute are forthcoming.

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ACLU opens arguments for trans prisoners' healthcare rights

BY MATT SIMONETTE

ACLU of Illinois began arguments the week of July 30 for a federal injunction they say would improve healthcare conditions for transgender state prisoners.

According to a May lawsuit filed by five transgender Illinoisans, transgender state prisoners are subject to medical decisions made by ad hoc committees, not all of whom have core competencies or necessary training in transgender healthcare. As such, transgender prisoners cannot obtain gender dysphoria-related medical treatments save for hormone therapies, said plaintiffs. The suit was filed in East St. Louis, Illinois.

There are about 100 transgender persons in the Illinois prison system at any given time, according to John Knight of ACLU of Illinois.

In a July 24 press briefing at ACLU's downtown offices, organization officials, and additional attorneys and advocates, described conditions wherein transgender prisoners were routinely denied essential care as it pertains to gender dysphoria.

The lawsuit asks for an injunction that would require reforms to the standards of medical care, and would seek certification of a class of all transgender persons seeking care for gender dysphoria.

Knight, who is director of ACLU's LGBT & HIV Project, said that Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) determines to whom it doles out services by committee; those committee members, he added, quite often have no core competency, or even basic knowledge, about transgender health.

IDOC rarely provides transgender health services beyond hormone therapy, and that's only after the prisoners must wait years for their treatment to begin. Quite often, added Randi Ethner, MD, a specialist in transgender healthcare, those hormones are misdiagnosed at dangerous levels.

Knight suggested that committee determinations are fraught with inaccuracies and catch-22s. IDOC officials, for example, frequently say that prisoners must address "trauma" before initiating hormone therapy. Most experts would agree, however, that untreated gender dysphoria and being in incarceration would indeed be a source of trauma.

Strawberry Hampton, a recently incarcerated transgender woman who successfully lobbied to be transferred into an all-female facility—and who is one of the five persons represented in the suit—also attended the July 24 briefing.

Hampton said that she was subjected to treatment in prison that left her feeling "embarrassed, degraded and dehumanized" during her time in prison.

"It was a disgrace to be transgender" in prison, Hampton said. "Every day you were in there, you were fighting for your life."

"It has been a struggle to get IDOC to see it as an issue they should focus on," Knight added.



ACLU of Illinois' John Knight and transgender former inmate Strawberry Hampton.
Photo by Matt Simonette



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Sebastian Patti: Legal icon talks past, health issues and accomplishments

BY ANDREW DAVIS

To say Sebastian Patti has achieved milestones—for himself and the LGBTQ community—might be giving him short shrift.

More than two decades ago, Patti, 66, became the first openly gay appointed judge and, in 2009, he took his seat as the first openly gay appellate court justice. He retired from being a Cook County Circuit Court judge last year, and is now in Los Angeles, hearing asylum cases for the U.S. Department of Justice. Recently, he received an award from the Alliance of Illinois Judges—a group of lesbian and gay judges in Cook County.

Windy City Times: Looking into your background, I noticed that you were a history/science major [at Duke University]. What propelled you to go into law?

Sebastian Patti: Zoology is a real passion of mine—birds, and so forth. However, the reason I went into law is [really] simple: My father believed that a legal education was extraordinarily important. He admired lawyers a lot, and he thought the world of his personal lawyer. He thought practicing law would be hugely beneficial for me.

And—I hope you're sitting down for this—when I went to law school in Kansas (so it was an in-state school), tuition was \$750 a semester! We certainly don't do that any more.

I was interested in environmental law. I teamed up with a professor to write a couple law-review articles on wildlife law.

WCT: And on a more personal level, when did you come out?

SP: You know, I knew I was gay when I was in high school—11th or 12th grade. By the time I went to college, I knew I was gay—and I didn't hide it. By the time I moved to Chicago in '79, I was completely out.

WCT: And the political climate for the [LGBTQ] community has changed since then.

SP: I'll say! If someone had put a gun to my head in 1995, when I was appointed judge, and said that same-sex marriage would be a constitutionally protected right, I would've said, "Absolutely no way."

WCT: You've established some firsts in your legal career. Do you see yourself as a role model?

SP: I actually don't. My position is that I have been so lucky in life, and life has presented me



The Honorable Sebastian Patti with the Honorable Nancy Katz, the first lesbian judge in Illinois.
Photo by Mary C. Marubio

with so many options that I feel an obligation to give back—no matter how that manifests itself. I try to capitalize on it, so if I have a way, an approach or a manner of looking at an issue, I do it. If that ends up the sum and substance of being a role model, I plead guilty.

When I got that award on June 26 [from the Alliance of Illinois Judges]. ... I [mean], I received an award that was named after me! What an honor—but, with my self-deprecating humor, I said, "I'm still alive, and I'm getting this award!" I raised my right hand and swore I'd never jaywalk again. [Laughs] It really was a wonderful event.

WCT: You've moved to L.A. There are some who thought you'd be in Chicago forever.

SP: I had some health issues. I was diagnosed with throat cancer in early 2016. Of course, it was life-altering; the treatments were brutal, and my stamina is not what it used to be. So a warmer climate is easier on me. I'm looking out right now—there isn't a cloud in the sky, and the temperature is probably 82, 83.

WCT: Being an immigration judge for the DoJ in the age of Trump... What can you say about it?

SP: Never a dull moment! I actually have nothing but very positive things to say. [Note: Patti requested that this be the extent of questioning regarding his current job or thoughts regarding immigration.]

WCT: When I last interviewed you in 2008, I asked if you had any LGBT icons. You listed Ron Soble, Tom Chiola, Nancy Katz and Jon-Henri Damski. Just curious: Should that list remain intact?

SP: I'll always remember [Jon-Henri] wearing that cap. I'd keep that list—but I'd add [presidential candidate] Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Judge Mary Rowland [confirmed to federal district court in Illinois].

WCT: And what do you consider to be the most groundbreaking cases for the LGBT community?

SP: There are several. I'd definitely say *United States v. Windsor* [which struck down the Defense of Marriage Act] and *Obergefell v. Hodges* [which established same-sex marriage as a constitutional right], but there are also *Bowers v. Hardwick* [a controversial case that upheld the constitutionality of a Georgia sodomy law] and *Lawrence v. Texas* [which held that laws prohibiting private same-sex relations between consenting adults are unconstitutional].

WCT: Looking back over your career, what would you say is your biggest regret—and what are you proudest of?

SP: Well, that's one I didn't see coming! [Pauses] I think my greatest satisfaction is being able to look back and say that I was (and am) regarded as an excellent judge and—because of that—in some way, I have been able to contribute to people saying, "If that old Patti can do it, then maybe I can do it!" And maybe this is the functional equivalent of being a role model, I love that I've encouraged people to not be afraid and take the leap. We now have 16 or 17 openly gay judges in Chicago. That's amazing!

As for my biggest regret, I can't say that I have a significant professional one. I once told a therapist, "You know what? If I go to the pearly gates tomorrow, I'd be happy to present myself because I'd have no explaining to do." It's that satisfaction that, in large measure, helped me get through the cancer treatment. I'm a pretty positive person—even with developments like not having salivary glands now, so I have to keep water with me all the time. I told my oncologist, "You fried my salivary glands, but you know what? You cured me of cancer, and I can do that math." He smiled.

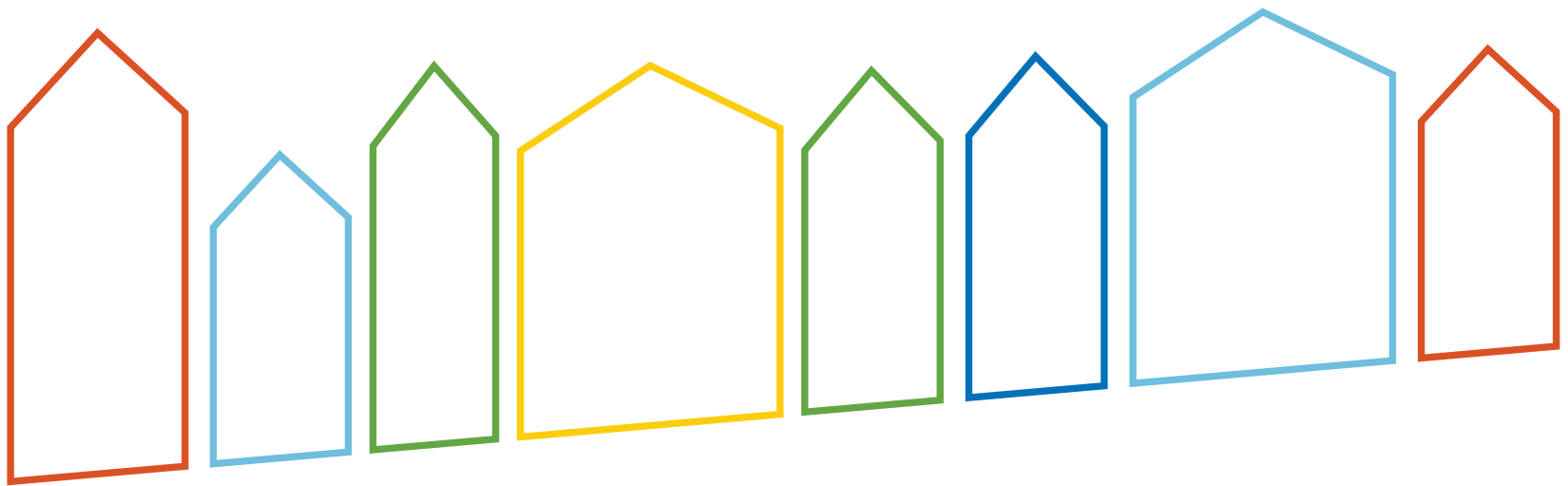


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Angela Barnes discusses chairing Center on Halsted's board

BY ANGELIQUE SMITH

Growing up in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago, Angela Barnes learned the importance of “volunteering and giving back as much and as often as you can” early on from her parents.

From bringing queer women together to empower others through co-founding She100—which will be relaunched soon—to serving on the leadership council for GLAAD, Barnes’ name often appears on the rosters of various organizations. And now, as the new chair of the board for the Center on Halsted, she is looking forward to making the board more diverse and robust.

A corporate attorney who also has her own consulting business (Hoffman-Barnes Risk Management), Barnes attended Wellesley before obtaining a juris doctorate from Columbia University School of Law. An avid runner and golfer, Barnes has been with her partner, Sofia Anastopoulos, for more than 20 years.

Windy City Times: What do you think is the most pressing issue affecting the LGBTQ community and how does the Center on Halsted (the Center) plan on addressing it?

Angela Barnes: From my perspective, there’s an intersectional component. While I think that there’s still frontiers in terms of the rights of the LGBTQ community, and there’s much more that can be done in terms of transgender rights, I have to say that it’s our communities of color that I’m primarily concerned about.

We have to ask, with all of the gains that we make, how is it impacting every component? Our communities of color are still struggling. It’s great that we can get married, it’s great that we

have the ability to “get to zero” so we can help eliminate the HIV threat to our community, but we have to make sure that the benefits are reaching all of the members of our community.

WCT: How do you foresee your time as board chair being different from your predecessor, Richard Turner?

AB: I don’t know Richard that well, [though] I’ve gotten to know him and I think that he’s very thoughtful. Obviously, he’s comes at this whole position from a different perspective. I think that my perspective fits very neatly into where the Center is going in terms of our strategic mission, our desire to make sure that this isn’t just a building that sits in Lake View that is seen as catering just to white, male LGBTQ—that the Center represents something greater. We need to make sure that its impact is being felt around the city. To that end, we try to move into other communities with our presence, our services, and our support.

WCT: Meaning?

AB: We’re serving all of these young African-American people and they have to get on a bus or a train and come to the North Side usually, in order to not only get these services but, on some level, to feel community. It shouldn’t be that you have to go and seek it out.

Given that there are so many organizations that serve populations on the South and West sides, what can the Center do to support building that community so that people really feel comfortable where they live? And that means a lot of things, it doesn’t just mean you feel comfortable in, “I’m out, I’m gay and I’m proud,” but what are the services that are lacking in these communities and can we do anything to help? It has to involve a lot of listening. And I think I bring the perspective of understanding these communities a lot better because I’m from that community.

WCT: Which programs or events at the Center are closest to your heart?

AB: Silver Fork is my favorite! At base level, it’s a jobs program. Taking people in and saying, “Here’s a skill,” and it’s a skill that [can help you] go out and get a job. That’s important. And a lot of these culinary programs are very expensive, so they’re prohibitive to a lot of people. To have space and the expertise to have people teaching front of the house, back of the house, and then we also try to find jobs for people so they can be placed, this is something that should be replicated. We are going to, or might have even already started, replicating it at Daley College. These are the types of programs that work.

WCT: How did you get involved with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless?

AB: I have been on the board for about six years now. I became involved because of the former executive director, Ed Shurna. He is probably one of the most amazing people I’ve ever met, just in terms of his passion for the work that the



Angela Barnes.
Photo courtesy of Barnes

Coalition was doing. He knew that I was concerned about young people and my community, and he kind of thought this would be something I could be involved in and really make a difference. I met with him as a favor to his wife, Michelle Saddler, and I had every intention of having this beer with him and saying, “I’m really too busy to be on this board, but thank you and I’ll consider it.” And I left being like, “And what else can I do?”

WCT: Some of the stats on the organization’s website were surprising.

AB: I think probably 80 percent of what I knew about homelessness was challenged. It was so amazingly eye-opening for me. Because we’re an advocacy group, the only service we provide is legal clinic. And to see what they’re doing for families and for young people, it made me think that I hadn’t done enough in my life to help the cause.

Two years ago, I became the chair of that board and, mercifully, my term ends in two months ... and really only because I’m taking on the Center. Being at the Coalition helped me decide to join the the Center board. I saw a direct connection between the work that the Coalition does with youth homelessness and the populations that the the Center serves. It made sense, there’s such an overlap given how many homeless youth are in the LGBTQ community.

WCT: You hosted a fundraiser at your home for Lori Lightfoot in advance of her becoming mayor. What inspired you to put your support behind her candidacy?

AB: I was an early supporter of Lori because I know Lori. I am not a big fan of politicians and typically don’t support them. I’m a bit cynical, being a Chicagoan. When Lori reached out and said she was running ... I’m not a religious person, but I thought my prayers have been answered. I practiced with her at [law firm] Mayer Brown years ago. I looked at her as a mentor and I certainly looked up to her. After we became friends, we disagreed on some social issues and

different things like that, but one of the things I did respect about her is that she’s just wicked smart. As far as I was concerned, this was a no brainer.

WCT: And now that’s she’s mayor? What do you think having an openly Black, lesbian mayor means for the city?

AB: I think it’s a game changer. It’s not going to be all rainbows and bubblegum, we have a lot of issues that have to be addressed. I think what you’re going to have is somebody who is approaching issues in a more equitable way than has been historically done. You really need to rebuild a lot of these neighborhoods that have been ignored for a lot of years. Where are a lot of these kids coming from who come to the Center? There’s going to be a ripple effect and I think it’s going to be very good for the LGBTQ community and, again, that intersection of communities of color.

Author Toni Morrison dies at 88

Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison has died at 88.

Morrison was the first Black woman to receive the Nobel literature prize, awarded in 1993. Her novel *Beloved*—in which a mother, Margaret, makes a tragic choice to murder her baby to save the girl from slavery—won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988.

She also chaired the humanities department at Princeton University, where she taught from 1989 to 2006.

Director Timothy Greenfield-Sanders’ film *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am* recently ran at Chicago’s Music Box Theatre. In 2010, her novel *A Mercy* was a selection for *One Book, One Chicago*.

Her last work, *God Help the Child*, was published in 2015.

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Rainbow pylons are now city landmarks

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The rainbow pylons dotting the Halsted Street landscape—and are the basis of the Legacy Walk outdoor museum—are officially city landmarks.

The City Council approved a recommendation July 24 that the pylons be given landmark status. The approval was part of a larger set of recommendations forwarded by the Council's Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards. The measure did not elicit any comment beyond brief remarks by Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward), who chairs that committee and in whose ward the pylons stand.

Flanked by longtime activists Lori Cannon and Rick Garcia, Tunney said, "The designation will make the Legacy Walk and the rainbow pylons streetscape the only multi-acre site in the world to be declared a landmark because its importance to the LGBTQ people."

Tunney also acknowledged Legacy Project Executive Director Victor Salvo, who was in the Council chambers as well on July 24.

The rainbow pylons were erected in 1998, and plaques dedicated to notable LGBT individuals were first mounted on them in 2012. The final plaques were dedicated once the Legacy Walk reached capacity in 2018.



Legacy Walk plaque of Alfred Kinsey.
Photo courtesy of Impact Signs



Gary Wasdin and Norman Sandfield, with Dureau photo.
Photo by Matt Simonette

Leather Archives unveils Dureau photo

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Leather Archives & Museum (LAM), on July 28, unveiled a newly acquired photograph by the late photographer George Dureau (1930-2014).

Best known for capturing images of male nudes, Dureau was noted for having been a key influence on the work of Robert Mapplethorpe, said LAM Executive Director Gary Wasdin.

"He's a photographer that's not well-known

in many circles," he added. "... Mapplethorpe learned a lot from Dureau and their works are almost identical—including Mapplethorpe reproducing Dureau's same works. But Mapplethorpe has gotten the glory. Nevertheless, Dureau's black and white works, especially his male nudes, are stunning."

The photograph was donated to LAM by Chicago philanthropist and LAM supporter Norman Sandfield. The acquisition was arranged through the archives of the late Fort Collins, Iowa-based collector and artist William Doan (1940-2015), who spent many years in Chicago and was a member of the ONYX leather club.

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Barrington residents talk local LGBT issues

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Organizers said they were heartened by the turnout—about 80 or 90 people—for a July 23 meeting to discuss how Barrington can be supportive of its LGBT residents.

“We received a great deal of support from the community, and there were a lot of distinguished members of the community who showed up,” said co-organizer Patrick Watson. “They just wanted to show support for us.”

Co-organizer Diane Scholten, who is lesbian, noted that even Village President Karen Darch attended a portion of the meeting, adding, “It was a really wonderful night.”

The meeting was prompted in part by two anti-LGBT incidents that occurred within the past several months in Barrington. The first involved a lesbian couple whose Pride flag was stolen and replaced by an American flag. The second involved a lesbian high school student whose reporting of online harassment led to vandalism on her front lawn. That student’s family awoke to the sight of numerous forks on their lawn—to be construed as “fork you”—along with a sign suggesting she should kill herself. That incident has been treated by authorities as a hate crime.

The student’s mother, Sharon Nelles, was a panelist July 23, as was Scholten; openly gay Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison; Village of Barrington Trustee Emily Young; Equality Illinois Director of Civic Engagement Anthony Galloway; Pastor Jana Chwalisz of St. Paul’s United Church of Christ; therapist Brittany Rotelli-Morey; and parent Barbara Pintozzi.

Watson, a local activist and organizer who is an ally of the LGBT community, formed a Facebook group, One Barrington Area, after many community members attended a village trustees meeting shortly after the episode involving Nelles’ daughter to register support.

“Both Diane and I thought about, ‘What can we do beyond that?’” Watson said. “What can we do to have some form of action that could continue to happen over a short period of time? We thought it should be a form of community conversation, and we had a panel of people that came together and just spoke about the LGBTQ community in the Barrington area as a whole. These are your neighbors and these your friends. They have been in the community for years, so what can we do going forward?”

Watson added that some residents have floated the idea of a Pride event for Barrington, and they thought the online and in-person conversations would be ideal platforms from which to start working. An additional goal is likely to address bullying of LGBT youth.

“Patrick and I are both of the persuasion of,



Diane Scholten (with Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison behind her) addresses the Barrington meeting courtesy of One Barrington Area.

Photo courtesy of One Barrington Area

‘What can we do to make things better?’” Scholten added. “Even at that first [board of trustees] meeting, a lot of people said, ‘This is great—what’s next?’”

Beyond discussing the anti-LGBT episodes, Scholten further emphasized that the July 23 gathering was also about conceiving of an action plan which organizers will develop using surveys they collected following the meeting. She also praised Watson’s efforts as well as the initial enthusiasm from the community and local officials.

Watson added that perhaps the moving portion of the meeting was when Chwalisz described the work her church had done so as to be welcoming to LGBT persons and their families.

“[Chwalisz] made it well-known that her church is very open to everyone, that they are a very affirming church, and that anytime we needed space, are welcome to the church, free of charge,” Watson said. “There are members of the congregation from all backgrounds.”

Scholten said, “That might have been the first part of the night when there was spontaneous applause—a lot of applause on that one.”

For more information on One Barrington Area, see bit.ly/2YnXdXL.



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BOOKS

Victoria Noe documents straight women on front lines of HIV/AIDS crisis

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A new book by Chicago author Victoria Noe pays tribute to dozens of unsung heroes of the HIV/AIDS crisis, chronicling myriad contributions from straight women who, since the early '80s, have intervened in numerous capacities to give aid and comfort to those persons impacted by the infection.

"They felt compelled to help, knowing that they'd get little to no recognition, and it's been that way since the beginning," said Noe. "It's still that way, but maybe a little less so. It was certainly that way for the first 10 or 15 years."

Fag Hags, Divas and Moms: The Legacy of Straight Women in the AIDS Community, published in late March, documents how numerous women around the world stepped up in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, even when government, media and the general public were all in the dark about AIDS' origins and its potential consequences. Among those persons Noe profiles are healthcare providers, researchers, religious personnel, mothers and celebrities.

Noe's book shatters a number of stereotypes about who was doing much of this activism work. She notes, for example, that numerous members of the Junior League were early activists on behalf of persons with AIDS, volunteering at hospices and day care centers dedicated to their care, at a time when many Americans were not willing to do so.

Noe said, "They'd been doing that since 1986. There's such a stereotype about Junior League members—it sort of blows up that stereotype."

The organization shared with her their vast records that detailed the work, not attributing to them much importance.

"The international office in New York and the [local] office in San Francisco just sent me stuff," Noe said, adding that upon actually reading the materials, she'd often end up asking Junior League officials, "Do you know what it is that you have here?"

Indeed, many of the persons she profiled did not see any significance in their accomplishments.

"It wasn't about [service] awards, or anything like that," said Noe, who said she tried to present a mix of different stories.

She was especially proud to be able to tell the story of Trudy James, an Arkansas hospital chaplain who noticed that few of the AIDS patients in her charge received visits from family or friends. James eventually coordinated a large-scale program that linked persons with AIDS and their families with pastoral volunteers, essentially developing an AIDS ministry; she was nevertheless adamant that those volunteers were not allowed to proselytize, however. She eventually moved

and founded a similar program in Washington State.

"Linking these patients with church volunteers was unheard of, even here [in Chicago]," Noe said. "The relationship between those two communities was tense, to put it mildly."

Noe added that, when she contacted her, James similarly questioned why an author would be interested in her story.

Noe herself put in much time contributing energy to AIDS-related causes and activism, and did worked as a fundraiser for various organizations. She doesn't remember if any one incident or development specifically inspired her to become a active, she said.

"I think it was just the growing worry," Noe recalled. "At the beginning, it just seemed so



Victoria Noe.

Photo by Matt Simonette

small. Then it was like it just exploded. I was in the theater, so it was affecting people that I worked with and guys that I went to college with. I was outside the [LGBT] community, but it was reaching me."

EXCLUSIVE: Community activists launch focus on Center on Halsted

BY MATT SIMONETTE

After several community conversations this summer about allegations of racism from some Boystown business owners and other organizations, a Chicago activist organization is calling for Center on Halsted to drop its security provider, Walsh Security, which has long been associated allegations of racism.

Lighthouse Foundation—a non-sectarian, non-profit social justice organization associated with Lighthouse Church of Chicago—is organizing the initiative through its Coalition of Allies for Racial Equality (CARE) arm.

"The folks who came together [in previous community forums] essentially said two things," explained Rev. Jamie Frazier of Lighthouse Church of Chicago, who is the Foundation's board president. "One was that they want to create businesses and not-for-profit centers that center the experiences and needs of Black LGBTQ-plus folks. The second thing was they wanted regular accountability from people who have amassed great resources to serve Black LGBTQ-plus folks. We think that Center on Halsted sits at the very apex of that conversation; they have received so many grant dollars and [so much] financial support in the name of LGBT inclusion. For them to be employing a racist security firm is just unacceptable."

Frazier added that the target of the protest is not the Center itself, but rather CEO Modesto 'Tico' Valle.

"At the end of the day, the buck stops with him," Frazier added. "We believe that rank-and-file folks who work at Center on Halsted are doing a great job serving our community, despite a very high people of color turnover rate [there]."

Walsh Security's presence at the Center has long been the focus of community controversy. In 2012, Windy City Times reported that officers at the Center wore hats and sweatshirts that obfuscated the fact that they were not police, for example. Furthermore, various persons of color have alleged they've been made to feel unwelcome in the Center by its security. Walsh Security is headed by CPD Officer Thomas Walsh. In 2017, CWB Chicago noted that Walsh was allegedly involved in a brawl and repeatedly used a racial epithet at the Lucky Horseshoe Lounge in 2013.

Frazier said that so far he's culled anecdotes and information from about 10-15 persons, including himself, about problems with security at the Center.

"I have spoken to current and former Center on Halsted employees," he added. "I have spoken to African-American LGBTQ-plus folks who have visited or frequented the Center on Halsted. I myself have done programming at Center on Halsted and I've met with staff before. I do have my own personnel experiences with that institution."

Center on Halsted officials, for their part, say that they've tried to engage the activists in conversation to no avail and are committed to racial equity and inclusion (REI) initiatives.

In a statement to Windy City Times, Center

Another reason the story Noe tells has largely been ignored is that society overall has failed to comprehend how a group of straight women could have been profoundly affected by HIV/AIDS. Noe said that her physician years ago scoffed when she first asked to be tested for HIV.

"He asked, 'Why would you need to be tested? What have you been doing?'" she recalled. "I said, 'Why shouldn't I be tested?' ... That was because the narrative, at least for the first 15 years, was overwhelmingly about gay men."

The energy around this particular moment in AIDS activism died down with the advent of AZT triple-therapy in the mid-'90s, Noe said. But her book details a number of contemporary straight women who are making their voices prominent in HIV/AIDS activism.

"The Positive Women's Network is doing remarkable work, mostly with minority women," she said. "What I also love is that today's divas are women of color and are younger. The divas of the old days were mostly older and white, and there's nothing wrong with that. But now, they are women who are younger, mostly African American, and can harness social media. They are able to reach their communities in ways that someone like me could not do."

on Halsted Chief Operating Officer Kim Fountain said, "Center on Halsted is in alignment with Lighthouse Foundation that there is racial equity and inclusion work to be done in 'Boystown and Beyond' to work toward ending racism within the LGBTQ communities of Chicago. This focus is not new to Center on Halsted, though it seems we approach the work differently."

She added, "Racial Equity and Inclusion as a primary focus was put into the [Center's] Strategic Plan. From this, a Director of Racial Equity and Inclusion was hired as well as nationally recognized REI consultant Inca Mohamed. These two individuals helped to form the Equity Leadership Groups for the Board and Staff. In May, Center on Halsted stopped all programming for two days while the staff attended an REI staff development meeting. Inca Mohamed also met 1:1 with most staff and hosted six open meetings to speak with staff in groups about REI at the Center. She will use this information to guide the ELG and Senior Team through the development of work plans addressing REI improvement strategy implementation."

Fountain also said that the Center was "exploring different models for security," adding, "When the Center first recognized the need for security, there were some trials and errors, resulting in today's team which does not wear uniforms, does not carry firearms, and is more of a reflection of the communities served. Several months ago, the Senior Team began to focus on alternative security options like that used at the Los Angeles LGBT Center, which trains and employs members of the community. We have also reached out to community partners to ask about their security companies."

"Until a solution is reached, Center on Halsted is also working with Walsh Security to engage an REI training organization that uses a model that we use when we do trainings in organizations

Turn to page 16

Leather/kink event highlights LGBTQ+ history, health

BY MACKENZIE MURTAUGH AND JULIA HALE

"Leather and Kink in the LGBTQ+ Community: History and Clinical Considerations" was held at the Center on Halsted on July 26. The event focused on the history of leather and kink communities and served as an education seminar for health-care providers who work in the LGBTQ+ community, so they can be more informed and culturally aware.

At the talk—which Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health sponsored—five panelists spoke on their connection to the leather/kink community, and why education and stigmatization of the community are important to understanding it.

The panelists included Joey McDonald, president of the Chuck Renslow Charitable Corporation

and manager of events and volunteers at Center on Halsted, and Butch Romero, co-founder of Women's Cruise Night at Chicago's leather bar Touché and founding board member for the Leather History Preservation Foundation. The rest of the panelists were sex-positive therapists and psychologists: Danielle Carlson, the director of training and a staff psychotherapist at Lifeworks Psychotherapy Center; Carrie Jameson, a therapist in private practice who is becoming a sex therapist; and Braden Berkey, a psychologist and associate professor in the Clinical Psy.D. Program at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Their collective work focuses on queer and trans couples and individuals, as well as alternative re-



Joey McDonald.
Photo by Julia Hale

lationships such as kink and non-mongamy.

The panelists stressed the importance of clinical inclusion of the leather/kink community and how its stigmatization can endanger the queer and trans folk who participate. The panelists also discussed basics; for example, McDonald described kink: "Simply put, it's the use of un-

conventional sexual practices, concepts and fantasies."

Following the panel talk was a question-and-answer session that let the audience inquire about leather and kink, and their relation to the LGBTQ+ community. The program ended with a lunch and discussion.

Candace Gingrich joins cannabis firm

Cannabis operator Revolution Florida—a sister company of Illinois-based cannabis consulting business Revolution Enterprises—announced that prominent LGBTQ leader Candace Gingrich (they/their) is now vice president and head of business development for the company's newly expanded operations in Florida, a press release noted.

Gingrich's focus will be to help lead the company's expansion to Florida, including helping to identify new business opportunities, market the company and its products, stand up new business operations, engage with state and local policy makers and regulators, and create partnerships with patient groups and other stakeholders. They will also serve as Revolution's ambassador to the LGBTQ community.

Gingrich—the half-sibling of Republican figure Newt Gingrich—is a nationally known LGBTQ leader and advocate. Candace is married to Illinois state Rep. Kelly Cassidy.

Corrections

In the June 26 issue, it should have been stated in the Aleshia Ocasio article that the Puerto Rican national softball team has the opportunity to qualify for the Olympics.

In the July 10 issue, Perre Shelton was incorrectly identified in the article about the Esteem Awards.

In the July 24 issue, the term "intellectual disability" should have been used in the article about a couple fighting for their foster daughter. A different term was used.

Windy City Times sincerely apologizes for the errors.

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Education board chair on pro-trans executive order, agency plans

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

After several years as a University of Chicago (UChicago) administrator, former Illinois State Board of Education official Darren Reisberg has returned to the agency as chair of the board.

Reisberg entered the four-year term after seven years with UChicago, where he was the inaugural director of its Institute of Politics; vice president and secretary of the university; and, most recently, vice president of strategic initiatives and deputy provost. He was with the Board of Education from 2005 through 2012, where he worked as a deputy superintendent and general counsel.

"It's exciting to be back in state education policy," Reisberg told Windy City Times, calling himself "passionate" about his new role overseeing the agency.

Reisberg leads the nine-member board selected by the governor to oversee the Board of Education. The board, which meets once a month, prepares the agency's \$12-billion budget for the governor and General Assembly as well as oversees the distribution and implementation of those state and federal funds to 852 school districts enrolling 2 million students.

It also appoints such roles as state superintendent; Reisberg and his fellow board members selected Carmen Ayala for the role in February—and she is the first woman and person of color to hold that role.

The board is also active in combatting the many issues that face the nearly 4,000 schools operating under the agency. Reisberg named a shortage of teachers in rural and urban areas and improving allocations to low-performing schools

as key issues the new board plans to take on.

"We have some big issues as a board we're trying to tackle," Reisberg said, adding the board is planning a retreat in September to formulate a "strategic plan" in response to these concerns.

Reisberg's appointment also coincides with Gov. JB Pritzker's call for a plan to combat harmful treatment of trans students in Illinois public schools. An executive order signed June 30 by the governor calls for an "Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force" to produce a report on policies affecting trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming students; Reisberg spoke at the ceremony unveiling the order.

Reisberg—a gay man who came out at age 30—said he personally recognizes the need for an inclusive and affirming environment around sexual orientation and gender identity in schools and called the task force report a "top priority." He said the Board of Education addressed some of these concerns with anti-bullying policy enacted during his tenure as a deputy superintendent but did not explicitly address protections for trans persons and had not pursued the issue since.

"There's a real hunger and need for there to be some guidance from the state, and that's what I'm hopeful we'll be able to produce through the work of this task force," Reisberg said.

Reisberg stressed that the members of the task force had not been chosen yet and said that any number of people, including himself, could be eligible for the position.

The task force's report is due to be delivered to the governor's office on Jan. 1. Reisberg said that he hoped the Board of Education could develop preliminary guidelines for the treatment of trans



Darren Reisberg.

Photo courtesy of Reisberg

students prior to the beginning of the coming school year.

"Every year that goes by where, before the beginning of the school year, we don't have guidance to our school districts, its another year that the school districts and the students don't necessarily know how to deal with these issues that are becoming more important and more prevalent," Reisberg said.

EXCLUSIVE from page 14

where there has been anti-LGBTQ incidents. These are not one-off trainings but rather more longitudinal engagements. Tom Walsh has received a list of recommendations for organizations that do trainings and offer technical assistance, and Center on Halsted will ensure that there is follow through. Thus far, in the several years that Center on Halsted has worked with Tom Walsh Security, all the requests made have been met."

Fountain further acknowledged Walsh's alleged problematic behavior and language, but added that he had made "a commitment to be trained and mentored, to make a public apology, and to continue to meet with the Center to explore more options and his team's relationship with the youth."

The executive order signed by Gov. Pritzker also charged the Board of Education with producing "non-regulatory guidance" on the legal rights of trans students, though no deadline was given for this task nor was it clear whether this was contingent on the submission of the task force's report. Reisberg said that the Board of Education has held meetings with "stakeholders" invested in gender identity protections, notably Equality Illinois.

"I've been really happy with the direction we've seen the community advance, but there's still significant issues that need to be addressed," Reisberg said.

Reisberg hails from northern New Jersey and has lived in Chicago since 2000. He graduated from Duke University and received his J.D. from Yale Law School in 1999. He previously worked for the law firm Sidley Austin LLP and clerked for U.S. District Court judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

In addition to his role with the Board of Education, Reisberg is also vice president for programs and strategy at the Joyce Foundation, a non-profit funding public policy research and advocacy in several Midwestern states.

Frazier said that before any meetings take place, stakeholders from his coalition will be engaging in extensive research to make sure their demands are clear. He anticipated that after an upcoming Saturday, Aug. 8, community meeting, Lighthouse Foundation would send a letter to Valle requesting a meeting.

"We will lay out our research, ask for his feedback and lay out our demand that Walsh Security be fired," Frazier added.

Lighthouse Foundation's Aug. 8 CARE meeting takes place at 10 a.m. at Lighthouse Church of Chicago, 2335 N. Orchard St. For information, visit <https://bit.ly/2ZFsfmJ>.

CWB Chicago's 2017 reporting on the Lucky Horseshoe incident is at <https://bit.ly/20ERmd3>.



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Immigration activist reflects on long road to the United States

BY MATT SIMONETTE

New York City-based activist Uchechukwu Onwa, who is gay, said that he came to the United States from his native Nigeria “to be someplace where I could be free, someplace where I did not have to be scared.”

But seeking asylum in the U.S. has been no small feat for Onwa. Although he escaped his homeland’s state-sanctioned violence, he nevertheless has spent years navigating this country’s opaque and unorganized immigration system as he now seeks permanent residency.

“I don’t know when they’re going to call me,” he said of his application process in the backlogged New York immigration office.

A rights activist long before he even left Nigeria, Onwa fled when he was targeted by authorities for his advocacy work. Onwa coordinated an HIV prevention program, among other duties, while employed by the International Center for Advocacy on Rights to Health in Abuja. Nigeria has banned same-sex sexual relations and has no legal protections against discrimination. Penalties vary depending on the region, but they can range from imprisonment to stoning.

“My life was really in danger,” he recalled. “... I was getting threatening phone calls and messages.”

A turning point for him was when a close friend—who had acquired HIV as the result of being raped—died by suicide. “It was a moment when I felt, ‘What’s going to happen now?’” Onwa said.

Onwa left the country after he himself was the victim of a brutal mob attack wherein his assailants threatened to burn him alive. Following the attack, Onwa was jailed. He lost his job, home, family and church as the price for his activism and identity.

“I didn’t have anything in that moment” following the attack, Onwa said.

The organization Rainbow Railroad assisted with his flight out of Nigeria. Based in New York

City and Toronto, Rainbow Road helps LGBT persons around the world escape state-sanctioned persecution. Nevertheless, for gay refugees, frequently without initial sources of emotional or financial support, the U.S. immigration system presents numerous challenges.

Onwa said that the memories of a detention facility in Georgia were as triggering as the memories from Nigeria. At one point, for example, he got critically ill. When he was transferred to a nearby hospital, his legs and wrists were chained to the side of his hospital bed. Two guards were posted at the door.

“Even in my own country—where I’d been



Uchechukwu Onwa.
Photo courtesy of Onwa

bullied and criminalized—I had never been chained,” he said. “I just burst into tears.”

He eventually would come to Chicago, where he spent about 18 months and performed volunteer work for several organizations.

“I’m very lucky to have had community support in Chicago, but what about people who don’t have that?” Onwa asked. “I was without a job for a year. It was difficult to survive those moments.”

He moved to New York City upon accepting a position with the Queer Detainee Empowerment Project, an organization that advocates on behalf of LGBT and HIV-positive migrants. Aspects of the organization’s mission include connecting clients with housing resources, transit cards and various wraparound services. Onwa is grateful that he now can help others obtain the assistance he himself has needed at various times.

“This is me,” he said of the position. “This is where I belong. I’ve always wanted to give back. ... There are so many people looking for help, and looking for a place where they can be free.”

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Guests will explore the sights, sounds and culinary traditions of Greece, while celebrating the mission of LCHJ. The organization uses the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being for people facing barriers due to illness or disability.

Tickets (\$75 each) are on sale now at greece.givesmart.com.

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ART

Del LaGrace Volcano: 'About Face' photographer on works, 'gender terrorism'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

A variety of artists are exhibiting provocative works at "About Face: Stonewall, Revolt and New Queer Art"—an exhibit at Wrightwood 659, 659 W. Wrightwood Ave.

Among them is the redoubtable Del LaGrace Volcano, a genderqueer artist who has been showing their works for four decades. ("About Face" curator Jonathan David Katz called Volcano "a world-class genius photographer" when talking with Windy City Times.)

Windy City Times: How did you become part of this exhibition?

Del LaGrace Volcano: Jonathan curated a retrospective seven years ago at the Leslie Lohman [Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, in New York City]. He's known my work for a long time, and I've been doing this for 40 years.

Jonathan—who is like a little brother to me—has an incredible capacity for people, as do I. I work by making images of people in my community, in the queer diaspora. I was a street kid; I ran away at 14. I had a hard family life, as many queer people do. Then, I got it together and got a scholarship to go to art school. I then came out in art school, and was rejected by my teachers and students; [to them,] it was fine to make edgy work—but when I started documenting my own community, which was leather dykes and others in the Mission District [of San Francisco], that was not cool. If it sounds like I hold a grudge against the San Francisco Art Institute, that's absolutely true.

Now, I live in Sweden, and have been outside

of the U.S. for more than half of my life. I'm 62.

WCT: I was wondering about your residence; a 2017 article described you as "a non-binary, intersex American photographer."

DLV: I'm a dual citizen now; I'll be American until I die. I'm an American who lives in Sweden. I'm a non-binary, intersex, queer activist-artist. My 7-year-old and my 4 1/2-year-old call themselves non-binary (and it's "icke-binär," in Swedish)—and came out that way in a documentary. Both of my kids were assigned male at birth, and they're regularly considered to be girls and we roll with it. We don't care about



Del LaGrace Volcano.

Photo courtesy of Volcano



Part of Del LaGrace Volcano's 1999 work "Gender Optional: Mutating Self-Portrait."

Photo courtesy of Volcano

pronouns, but in Sweden there's a gender-neutral pronoun that we prefer people use. [Note: The video can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sPj8HhbwHs>.]

WCT: On your website, you're described as a "part-time gender terrorist." What does that mean?

DLV: It comes from an experience at an airport in London—when I had a long-distance relationship with a queer psychologist (before my current partner). I was wearing a mini-skirt, platform boots, boa—I was flamboyant, and I was meeting my flamboyant lover. People complained, the police was called and I was asked to leave. I guess I was scaring people because I was being genderqueer.

When I came out as intersex and let my beard grow, I felt that people saw me as disgusting or repulsive. I dealt with that for a year, and then I started taking testosterone. I can pass as male now, but I choose not to. Most people still see me as a man in a dress, or a trans woman.

WCT: I went on a tour of the "About Face" exhibit, my favorite work of yours was a montage of photos of you ["Gender Optional: The Mutating Self Portrait"].

DLV: Ahhh, yes. It was made on the very last hour of the last day of the last century, actually. In four years, my husband, Johnny Volcano, was clicking at my instruction while my other lover was doing the makeup.

WCT: Is there an overall message to your work?

DLV: Yes; it's about conformity. The first system we're subjected to, in terms of regulation, is the gender system. People are called "bad boy" or "sweet girl." Their genders are constantly reinforced. It's about what's available to you and what's not. The theme is "Resist—and be fabulous."

WCT: I mentioned to Jonathan that you seem to be everyone and no one in "Gender Optional."

DLV: I don't decide about what I'm going to look like when I wake up. I just put on the clothes that feel right to me in that moment. I just care about staying safe; I have been queer-bashed. You have to alter behavior in some places.

WCT: With this exhibition title, what do you think of when you hear "Stonewall?"

DLV: When you asked me that question, what came to mind was something else. I first thought about The Duchess, where I hung out in New York City. It was a lesbian bar that was very close to Christopher Street. I rode my motorcycle cross-country in 1981, and I spent a lot of time at The Duchess. I was recruited to work at writer Kate Millett's farm in Poughkeepsie [that year], and I ended up hanging out at The Duchess. It was an amazing time.

I also think about appropriation. I think about the commercialization of the whole concept of Stonewall. I'm in a number of Stonewall exhibitions, and it feels like a lot of straight institutions and media are trying to catch the wave—but what about the next 50 years?

I have cult status in my community, but I now need economic validation. It's good to have your work valued. The people who value my work are also marginalized and disenfranchised; they're not valued. The queer community—especially those in the lesbian and trans-masculine part of the spectrum—value my work, but the straight world see my works as niche. Why are we relegated to Pride Month and not seen as valuable to the mainstream?

"About Face: Stonewall, Revolt and New Queer Art" will run at Wrightwood 659 through Saturday, Aug. 10. See <https://wrightwood659.org/>.

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College student balances LGBTQ+ activism, student life

BY MACKENZIE MURTAUGH

After her semester at a new college, Zaiden Sowle knew she found what was lacking at her previous college.

Before, her experience at Connecticut College—a small, liberal arts school in New London, Connecticut—was not the personal and intellectual time she expected to love. Instead, she felt ostracized by the lack of LGBTQ+ resources and culture on campus.

At her new school, Simmons University—a women-focused private school in Boston—Sowle found a better fit: a more trans-inclusive environment. As a trans woman, Sowle searched for a school that would be more accepting of her identity and people like her. Simmons prides itself as being one of the first colleges to include transgender students in their women's school.

Before Sowle began college, she worked to amplify those voices that tend to go unheard in schools and create safe spaces for them. As a former member of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance's (ISSA's) youth committee, she planned and organized events for LGBTQ+ youths which included annual sleepaway camps and summits. ISSA works directly with schools on policy and advocacy. The youth committee consists of many LGBTQ+ youths who give other LGBTQ+ youths

space to feel safe, accepted and meet other people like them.

Sowle first got involved with ISSA after the president of her high school's gay-straight alliance asked the club if anyone had interest in joining, and Sowle jumped at the opportunity. Helping kids in similar situations to her was something she looked forward to.

Her experience at ISSA was not only volunteer work—the time she spent with them helped her realize and then understand her trans identity.

"Youth committee meetings, just every other week, really helped me to realize for myself that I am trans," Sowle said. "When I realized it, then I came out to the people at the meetings. Just seeing how happy they were for me for figuring it out and how accepting they just gave me the courage to eventually come out to my family and friends at school."

When she was on her way home for an event with ISSA, she made that decision to come out to her parents after some time talking it over with other youth committee members.

"After my first summit that I helped to plan and even attend, that night I decided to come home and come out to my parents," Sowle said. "Just because I was coming out of such a high of the day and being around similar people and really feeling empowered through the workshops



Zaiden Sowle.

Photo courtesy of Sowle

and all of that."

Once Sowle graduated from high school, her life-changing time on ISSA's youth committee came to an end.

"They gave us [the seniors who were leaving] a round of applause, and I just lost it," Sowle said. "Crying my eyes out. It really was like I have a family with these people, and to think that that was coming to an end was really difficult."

Sowle's time she spent with ISSA is a time that she looks back on with great appreciation and

admiration at not only her personal growth but with the friendships she made. But she knows it's all just a part of growing up and moving onto bigger things.

"But it is a part of growing up when you have to go off to college and try to do your studies and all of that," Sowle said.

Growing up in Evanston and attending Evanston Township High School prepared Sowle with a good education and the liberal ideology that led her to study women and gender studies and sociology at Connecticut College. But her experience there was a mixed bag.

The adviser for the woman and gender-studies department took Sowle under her wing after a difficult first semester. Once the women and gender studies department suggested the department's name to be changed to "gender, sexuality, and intersectionality studies," Sowle felt this was not a department that reflected that name change. His adviser was the only Black woman working in the department, and one of the few working at the school. This controversy was one of many that prompted Sowle's transfer to Simmons.

"It's just amazing," Sowle said of Simmons. "It's very LGBT-friendly, and it's very trans-friendly. It has a very large population [of LGBTQ+ students] relative to other schools."

Sowle enters her second semester at Simmons in the fall. She plans to continue her studies and graduate within the next few years, studying women and gender studies as well as sociology.

"I want to be a social worker, working with LGBT youth, hopefully as part of a nonprofit or something," Sowle said.

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Mark S.
KING

We need to talk about the 'Pose' hospital episode right now

The TV show *Pose*, on FX, is nothing less than astounding to me. So much could have gone wrong, with the era, the themes, the characters, and—the aspect of the show closest to my heart and my critical eye — the disease that looms over it all.

Trans writers and advocates are better qualified to remark, and have, on the show's moving depiction of the ballroom scene in the 1980s and '90s and the trans people of color who populated it. The talent of the leading actors, who are trans, is now a given rather than a novelty. What makes the show so absorbing is its depiction of their lives on the margins and how they redraw societal lines around their chosen family.

HIV has been a leading character, too, playing the villain that kills the partner of ballroom master of ceremonies Pray Tell as it infiltrates the close-knit community of house families. Pray is HIV positive himself, and this season has dealt with his resistance to taking AZT, the only approved HIV medication in 1990, when the season takes place.

Which brings us to "Love's in Need of Love Today"—episode six of season two, the episode that aired on July 23, 2019.

Pray Tell lands in the hospital, and it's a dingy one, folks, which is about all he can afford. The décor consists of weak air conditioning units and pasty walls. It's depressing, but the real horror hasn't even started.

Pray blames Blanca, a house mother, for talking him into taking AZT, because the side effects made him sick. Now Pray will have to go off the AZT and recover from the damage. Their argument in his hospital room over the drug dramatizes the HIV community's complicated history with AZT. Was it approved too quickly because of community and activist pressure for something, anything, to treat HIV? (Note: I grinned at a well-researched prop in an earlier episode, when Blanca takes her AZT. There it was, that unmistakable white pill with the little blue stripe around the middle. No long-term survivor missed the historical accuracy of that capsule.)

Pray suffers from a few hallucinations, which is mostly a great excuse to bring back the recently departed Candy for some shady chatter and another long drag of a cigarette. I do hope she haunts Pray indefinitely.



Billy Porter portrays Pray Tell on *Pose*.
Photo courtesy of FX

But then this thing happens, this surreal blend of sickness and song and blood and jazz, and I'm still trying to process.

Pray's dead lover shows up in another hallucination and urges Pray to make it to the AIDS cabaret fundraising benefit that Blanca has been planning. Suddenly Pray is decked out in silver tails and a train, honey, that is nearly the length of the hospital hallway and festooned with illuminated plastic biohazard bags. A jazz combo starts up and Pray begins singing a rendition of "The Man That Got Away."

And that's not even the part that I can't get out of my mind, not now, not two days later and after midnight, as I sit here writing this.

Pray sashays into a room in the hospital where the event is taking place, and "AIDS Cabaret" could not be a more apt description of the proceedings. A spotlight follows Pray, still singing, as he gently greets the audience members, each and every one of them patients who are clearly dying of AIDS.

I am not talking about pretty death. I'm talking about hospital gowns stained with vomit and gory open wounds and bandages and IV drips. The patients are watching Pray perform, some of them happy to be entertained, even if they can barely express it. They're weak. They have days left.

There is a shot of one of the patients while Pray sings, and above his oxygen mask his eyes are wet

with tears, and it might be because of the physical pain he is in, or it might be because he is overcome, listening to the last beautiful thing he will ever hear.

"Thank you," Pray tells his doomed audience during their applause, although you have to wonder who among them had the strength. "I hope I entertained you."

In this single feverish episode, *Pose* manages to combine activist politics, the inequalities of our healthcare system, the unrelenting mortality of the plague years, and our deep need as gay men to do a little song and dance if it will keep the boogeyman away for a few moments longer.

I have not even mentioned the musical performances in this episode by subversive icon Sandra Bernhard and the greatest living Broadway diva, Patti Lupone. *Pose* creator Ryan Murphy is not fucking around, y'all, and he is clearly being aided enormously by producers Janet Mock and Our Lady J.

Pose might enjoy its surrealism and its glitter, but I've been in those hospital rooms. I've seen those men in the wheelchairs. I've known the confusion and the exhaustion of singing when you could be crying.

Those capsules of AZT aren't the only thing this show gets exactly right.

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PRESIDENT Tracy Baim

(773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609

Editorial: andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

Sales: terri@windycitymediagroup.com

Calendar: calendar@windycitymediagroup.com

Circulation: jean@windycitymediagroup.com

Art/ad copy: kirk@windycitymediagroup.com

Theater: catesullivan25@gmail.com

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ARTS+THEATER

WEEKLY

'A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC' WITH **BERNADETTE PETERS**

PAGE 30

Bernadette Peters.
Photo by Andrew Eccles



THEATER REVIEW

Come From Away

Authors: Book, music & lyrics by

Irene Sankoff and David Hein

At: Cadillac Palace Theatre,

151 W. Randolph St.

Tickets: 800-775-2000;

BroadwayInChicago.com; \$35-\$105

Runs through: Aug. 18

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

With the United States flush with bigotry, mendacity, megalomania and bullying from the White House down, it's ennobling—and chastening—to see a Canadian musical that celebrates generosity, kindness, selflessness, courtesy and good humor. Most reviewers praise *Come From Away* as heartwarming, nurturing or uplifting and I'm

no exception. A true ensemble work with no star roles and little dance (but lots of movement), it's superbly performed by an appealing and gifted national touring company.

On Sept. 11, 2001, 38 international flights headed for the United States were diverted to Gander, about 40 miles from the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland. In the pre-jet era, Gander was a major refueling stop for planes to/from Europe. By 2001 it was a semi-rural town of 9,000 which found itself forced to host 6,600 people and 19 animals for five days. *Come From Away* tells that story to the driving rhythms of Irish tabors and pipes.

Come From Away runs 95 fast and engaging minutes. It's energetic, but pleasantly without the phony pumped pizzazz of many Broadway shows. Perhaps that's because it's based on real people and real micro stories of both Newfoundlanders and passengers, which are honestly—if

oh-so-rapidly—presented in checkerboard fashion.

Six men and six women play all the townsfolk and airplane folk. The story centers on Gander's mayor, cop, bus driver and teacher among other locals, emphasizing their independent spirit (Newfoundland joined Canada only in 1949). Among the stranded strangers are American Airline's first female pilot, a couple who fall in love, another couple (gay, as it happens) who break up, a woman whose son is a New York City firefighter and a Muslim chef. Curiously, there are no children, yet kids must have been part of this story.

Nearly through-scored with few applause breaks, *Come From Away* honors the Irish heritage of many Newfoundlanders with a rousing, mostly up tempo folkloric score (with light rock elements), featuring chiefly acoustic guitars, fiddle, Irish flute and pipe and percussion played

by eight onstage musicians conducted by Cynthia Kortman Westphal. The handsome unit set is by Beowulf Boritt with Howell Binkley's lovely in-plain-sight lighting.

Despite its congeniality, *Come From Away* left me saddened or at least deeply reflective, as noted at the top. Your see, it isn't really about people acting in extraordinary ways. Although triggered by exceptional circumstances, it's about people acting as people should act at all times. It's about fundamental human concern and decency. Ironically, some will contend that America's churlish now descends directly from the then of 9/11. *Come From Away* isn't religious, but it displays Western Judeo-Christian values as they still may be in Canada but no longer are in our nation. It beats no drum but reminds us nonetheless.

THEATER REVIEW

Much Ado About Nothing

Playwright: William Shakespeare

At: Oak Park Festival Theatre,

167 N. Forest Ave, Oak Park

Tickets: OakParkFestival.com

Price: \$15-35

Runs through: Aug. 31

BY KAREN TOPHAM

It's Shakespeare versus an army of cicadas at Oak Park Festival's *Much Ado About Nothing* and, at least for the first half hour or so, the insects clearly have the upper hand.

As the expository scenes of the play set up the comedy and the conflicts, the audience

strains to hear the actors over the cacophony from the trees. Once darkness falls and the bugs go to sleep, though, things clear up and everyone can settle into enjoying an evening with Beatrice and Benedick and the rest of the denizens of Messina in a play both rife with hilarious verbal banter and burdened by seriously outmoded gender politics.

Director Melanie Keller shares my concerns about the play's treatment of its young heroine Hero (Tina El Gamal), the victim of an evil trick by Don John (Bret Tuomi, who also shines as Dogberry, one of the Bard's most iconic clowns). John convinces the men in Hero's life, including her fiancé Claudio (Ian Michael Minh), that she is unfaithful, rendering her unworthy of marriage. One can't blame a 16th Century playwright for adhering to a 16th Century perspective about women, though Claudio's decision to "shame her" in public at their would-be wedding has always

struck me as especially harsh. It certainly feels that way here, as Minh goes off on her like a rocket while poor Hero, who doesn't even know what is going on, crumbles in pain and even her father Leonato (Patrick Blashill) doesn't know what to think.

At least Keller is careful to empower the women here as much as it is possible to do so. Ursula, Leonato's sister (Noelle Klyce) fiercely advocates for her niece. Margaret, Hero's lady in waiting (Lizzy Bourne), is given the full breadth of her witty rejoinders. And of course Beatrice herself (Eunice Woods) is easily a match for Benedick's (Bryan Wakefield) often caustic but always piquant and amusing put-downs.

Although the story of Claudio and Hero takes up considerably more space in the play, it is Benedick and Beatrice that everyone remembers most. Done well, the banter between these two, as well as the jovial game played by the others

that gets them to fall in love, makes for a perfect distraction and counter to the other subplot. Wakefield and Woods work well in these roles, more than capable of delivering their characters' biting lines and likable enough that it's easy to want them to get together. In addition, Wakefield's comic mannerisms add physical humor to Benedick's droll tongue, and Keller creates some very funny blocking as each of them tries to keep hidden to listen to people talking about them. Between them and the malaprop-ridden Dogberry, Shakespeare keeps the audience laughing despite the play's darker center.

Oak Park's *Much Ado*, despite the cicadas and other occasional issues with lighting and sound, is a very enjoyable evening under the August stars. Bring a blanket, a picnic, and maybe a bottle of wine; you'll have a great time.

THEATER REVIEW

The Spitfire Grill

Playwright: James Valcq and Fred Alley,

based on the film by Lee David Zlotoff

At: American Blues Theatre at

Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: \$19-49;

stage773.com/show/spitfiregrill

Runs through: Aug. 17

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Female-driven musicals are still a rarity. The climate is changing with the successes of shows like *Waitress*, *The Prom* and *Six* (the latter is now headed to Broadway in 2020), but the demand for rich female characters and stories remains.

The *Spitfire Grill* is not driven by one woman, but three—each with her own demons and triumphs and eventually, a shared goal. American Blues Theater's production tends to rush the dramatic moments in the name of tight pacing, but the stunning vocals and complex storyline make for a pleasant yet empowering night at

the theater.

Based on the 1996 film of the same name, *The Spitfire Grill* opens with Percy Talbott (Jacquelyne Jones) arriving in Gilead, Wisconsin after five years of incarceration. Sheriff Joe Sutter (Donterrio Johnson), also Percy's parole officer, is confused as to why anyone would willingly move to such a tiny town. Percy quickly finds a job at the *Spitfire Grill*—the only restaurant in town—and a boss/landlady in tough-as-nails Hannah Ferguson (Catherine Smitko), as well as a friend in Hannah's niece-in-law Shelby (Dara Cameron). The three cook up a scheme to unload the restaurant that's been on the market for 10 years, but soon enough, each woman will be forced to confront her past, present and future.

In the world of Gilead (thankfully very different from the Gilead of *The Handmaid's Tale*), men are almost inconsequential, relegated to good guys or buffoons (the latter is Hannah's nephew and Shelby's husband Caleb, played by Karl Hamilton). There's a romantic subplot, but it pales in comparison to the three women's journeys, both individual and collective. Percy is running away from a troubled, violent fam-

ily dynamic, while Shelby struggles to find her voice in a controlling marriage. Meanwhile, Hannah must contend with a broken leg and the memories of a son who disappeared long ago. James Valcq and Fred Alley's country-western score deftly conveys every complex emotion, from longstanding grief to pure and unadulterated joy, and illustrates both major and minor characters with nuance.

Where this *Spitfire Grill* falls down is in the pacing. Director Tammy Mader keeps the production moving at exactly two hours counting intermission, but at the expense of the dramatic reveals, many of which occur in the show's second half. Mader is skilled in characterization but seems afraid to let actors and audience alike take a breath and absorb the characters' words and actions. It's a shame, because the seven-member ensemble bring their best work to the stage, especially Jones as ex-con Percy. Her range is astounding, her lyrical interpretation intelligent and down-home, and her struggles real. If it weren't for *The Spitfire Grill*'s somewhat hasty delivery, American Blues Theatre would have a gem on its hands. Instead, it's just this shy of perfect.

CRITICS' PICKS

Ghost Quartet, Black Button Eyes Productions @ Stage 773, through Aug. 17—Dazzling vocal and instrumental musicianship in the town's most unique musical; a mash-up of fantasy, gothic horror and fairytale with Dave Malloy's melodic and diverse score. JA

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Lookingglass Theatre, through Aug. 18. David Catlin's richly-textured multi-dimensional adaptation of the classic horror story employs every item in the catalogue of this endlessly creative Chicago company. MSB

The Music Man, Goodman Theatre, through Aug. 18—Mary Zimmerman's buoyant, festive staging of one of America's most festive musicals celebrates a more optimistic and big-hearted USA; a perfect summer show and antidote for today's inglorious bastards. JA

Heroes (We Can Be Us Just For One Day), Shakespeare's Motley Crew at Winnemac Park, through Aug. 25. The Bard meets Bowie (David, that is) in the SMC's seventh Midsummer Madness mashup of cross-generic Greatest Hits. MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge
and Jonathan Abarbanel

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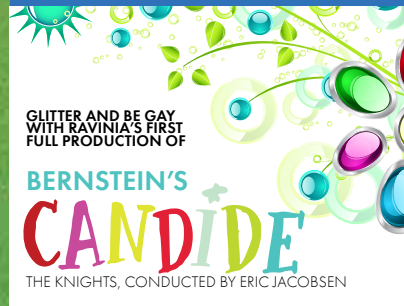
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NUNN ON ONE

Alex Newell:

Living outside the box



Alex Newell.
Photo by Ricky Middleswirth

BY JERRY NUNN

Performer Alex Newell refuses to be put in a box. Best known for playing the character Unique Adams in the Fox series *Glee*, Newell competed on Oxygen's *The Glee Project* beforehand to eventually earn a two-episode spot on the hit show.

Afterward, Newell became a series regular on the fifth season of *Glee* and went on to record several singles finally touring with singer Adam Lambert around the world.

As a representative of the rideshare company Lyft at the 2019 Chicago Pride parade, Newell sat down to discuss music and current projects.

Windy City Times: How was performing at Chicago Pride Fest?

Alex Newell: So good! I love coming to Chicago. Everyone knew my music when I got here and they were singing along. I didn't have to actually sing. They sang it for me!

WCT: You have done Pride Fest a few times in the past.

AN: I did Pride Fest a few years ago, then Market Days. I did Pride Fest as a headliner this last time—and she's back again!

WCT: As part of the parade...

AN: Listen, they said they would put me on a float and I was all for it.

WCT: How did you start working with Lyft?

AN: When I was young, Lyft was the mustache car in West Hollywood and I wondered what it was. As I got older and moved to New York, I started using it more and more.

I was at a dinner for Lyft and they used the hashtag Two is Too Few. The story was behind it that there should be more than male or female gender options to pick on their profiles. Being a non-gender conforming and non-binary person, my picture would show up for the driver to pick up, but they didn't know how to gender me. I don't want to be male or female. I want to be something other than that. Having that option was something I was inclined to support.

I love that they are going for it and I'm happy to be a part of it.

WCT: Why aren't more companies doing it?

AN: It's a social construct of what gender is and trying to put people in boxes. If someone is male it's easy for some people to understand them. That's terrible because if someone is male or female or non-binary or trans, that doesn't define them as a person.

WCT: What pronouns do you want used?

AN: So at that dinner they asked about pronouns on a form. Mine was not listed, but I checked every box. My pronouns are a paycheck, so here we are!

My gender transcends all of genders because I don't want to be defined by my gender. As an actor, why would I? I might be out in a box because I have the highest singing voice known to man and my face is actually gorgeous. [These] high

[cheekbones aren't] here for no reason!

WCT: Lyft is helping people by partnering with the National Center for Transgender Equality to help with the name-change process.

AN: They are paying for it. It is hard out in these streets. People that are transitioning and trying to live authentically don't always have the means to do all of that.

WCT: You are described as an LGBT activist. What does that entail?

AN: I get my inspiration from one of my good friends, Laverne Cox. She's always spreading positivity. I am living my life and showing people it's okay to be unabashedly yourself. You don't have to worry about what other people say because at the end of the day only you pay the bills. We come into the world alone and we go out of this world alone. You have to live your own truth. If you are not happy, what's the point?

WCT: You've come a long way since we talked during The Glee Project.

AN: Honey, I was 18 then. She's damn near 28 now!

WCT: Do you miss Glee or still talk to anyone from the cast?

AN: I was just talking to Amber Riley last night. That's my mother and I came out of her womb. I was always considered a hybrid of Chris Colfer and Amber Riley. I will allow it. One has a Golden Globe!

I miss it sometimes. It was nice to come to work and see so many familiar faces. They were my family. I also loved singing all the time. It was a hardship, but I loved it.

No matter what I do in my life that show is the staple. Everyone knows me from that show. It's nice to know I impacted people with it.

WCT: Why doesn't Ryan Murphy get you on Pose?

AN: We can't do Pose, honey! I went in for Pose as the character Blanca, who Mj Rodriguez is playing. I looked at it and said, "This isn't for me," threw the script down and walked out.

I love the show to this day, but I knew someone would portray it better than me.

Read the entire interview online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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We love the title, **Violent Surprise, A Femslash Parody Festival**, at Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark Street, Aug. 9-11 only. Other-



world specializes in science fiction and fantasy theater so director Iris Sowlat—who has a self-proclaimed "passion for queering the cannon"—has produced a festival of 11 parodies that give a "What if?" queer twist to such popular culture icons as *I Love Lucy* and *The Color Purple* and *The Avengers*. Until recently, she says, "there wasn't much representation of queer relationships in pop culture at all. We never had a gay equivalent of *I Love Lucy*." Now we do. Among the 11 offerings are *I Really Love Lucy* by E. Mitchel (rehearsal photo above), *The Avengers* (rehearsal photo left) and *Purple Is the Warmest Color* by Naomi Phoenix Victoria. Details: otherworldtheatre.org

Photos courtesy of Iris Sowlat



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Ann Christophersen and Linda Bubon ribbon-cutting ceremony to add more storefront space at Andersonville location. Courtesy of Christophersen

Women & Children First: Forty years of book-selling history

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

To celebrate Women & Children First's 40th anniversary, the store will be hosting a summer block party with a feminist slant Saturday, Aug. 24 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Honorary Women & Children First Way (Farragut Ave at Clark Street).

The celebration will feature a variety of entertainment options, children's activities and games, feminist crafts and free food and drinks from a number of Andersonville restaurants.

"When we began thinking about how we wanted to mark our anniversary, we realized very quickly that it should be a festive free thank you to our community instead of a ticketed fundraiser," said Women & Children First co-owner Sarah Hollenbeck. "The store is currently healthy and thriving because of our loyal neighbors and supporters.

Our friends at Kaye Publicity, Dana Kaye and Julia Borcherts, were the ones who suggested we take it into the street."

"We did not want there to be any obstacles to everyone coming to celebrate with us and that it be family-friendly" said Women & Children First co-owner Lynn Mooney.

Hollenbeck, a bookseller at the store, and Mooney, who was then store manager, took ownership of the store in Oct. 2013 when the founders and then-owners Linda Bubon and Ann Christophersen decided to retire.

In November 1979, Bubon and Christophersen joined forces to create a space where women could find books, magazines and music that spoke to them; it was also intended to be welcoming place for families, especially those with children. The store's first location was in Lincoln

Lynn Mooney and Sarah Hollenbeck outside the store in 2019. Photo by Laura Austin



Park at 922 W. Armitage Ave.; five years later they moved three blocks away to 1967 N. Halsted St. before settling at their current Andersonville location in 1990.

"We also wanted to be a gathering place where all kinds of women felt welcome, comfortable, and able to talk openly and safely about their ideas, experiences, love, pain and the changes they wanted to see and make in the world," said Christophersen. "We also wanted it to be a place where women and feminist men could discover or sharpen their politics and find the issues and organizations best-suited to their activism."

"We wanted a place where we could be in charge of what we wanted to sell," said Bubon. "Nurturing women writers and finding and supporting women writers was a key thing for us. If we were to grow, more women had to write and get published."

Bubon and Christophersen have hosted thousands of events for authors including Maya Angelou, Dorothy Allison, Adrienne Rich, Gloria Steinem, Alice Munro, Alison Bechdel, Margaret Atwood, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sapphire, Jhumpa Lahiri, Carol Anshaw, Dorothy Roberts and Sara Paretsky, among others.

When asked what her favorite moments were, Christophersen said there were many but one that stands out was their friends helping them put the bookstore together before it opened, a shared community endeavor that has characterized the store ever since.

"They pounded nails into bookshelves, constructed the sales counter, hung the vertical sign projecting out from over our front door, and, in the eleventh hour, brought us a cash register to use for making sales," said Christophersen. "The LGBTQ, literary, feminist and broader political community then carried us forward."

Both Bubon and Christophersen praised their staff members, whom they call brilliant and talented, and the supportive customers who kept them in business.

"It has never been just about the owners, but all the great readers who have shared their love of books throughout the years," said Bubon. "Our sales representatives have also been amazing, educating us and listening to our demands for more diversity in kids' books and better representation for marginalized writers."

When Christophersen and Bubon started the store, they never imagined it would be one of the largest feminist bookstores in the United States. They were a part of an international endeavor

called The Women in Print Movement, which included women's bookstores, publishing houses, printing presses and writers. Christophersen said the movement was focused on expressing women's lives and providing children's books that pushed beyond the gender, racial and traditional family stereotypes of the time.

"Women's bookstores across the country—indeed, around the world—varied in terms of size and the materials we carried, but we all shared essentially the same mission: supporting women in all their diversity and adding our voices to an all-inclusive feminist movement," said Christophersen.

Upon Christophersen and Bubon's retirement, they announced the store would be sold. Hollenbeck and Mooney put a proposal together with the hopes that they would be chosen to purchase it. Mooney said there were proposals from other people so it was never a given that they would become the owners.

"We knew we likely did not have the deepest pockets of those in the running, but Ann and Linda knew us and knew we were committed to the store and to its mission," said Mooney. "Between [the two of] us we had a lot of relevant experience, but we also brought fresh perspectives, especially about the direction that feminism was moving and how to renew its relevance."

Since taking ownership, Hollenbeck and Mooney have continued having author events and other activities at the store.

"I'm still a little in shock that only a handful of months after buying the store, I was standing next to Linda in front of 1,200 people introducing Gloria Steinem and Roxane Gay," said Hollenbeck.

"I strongly believe that the Andersonville neighborhood is one of our most important communities in Chicago," added Mooney, who sits on the board of the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce. "There are so many smart, creative, entrepreneurial business owners in Andersonville and I learn something every time I attend a meeting or training. We are extremely lucky to be part of this neighborhood—we benefit from the vibrant mix of businesses and the strong foot traffic."

Hollenbeck said the most important thing for her was to make the store more visible both in the neighborhood and across Chicago.

"When Lynn and I bought the store, we talked to a lot of different audiences and were dismayed to hear how the store was still shrouded in mystery

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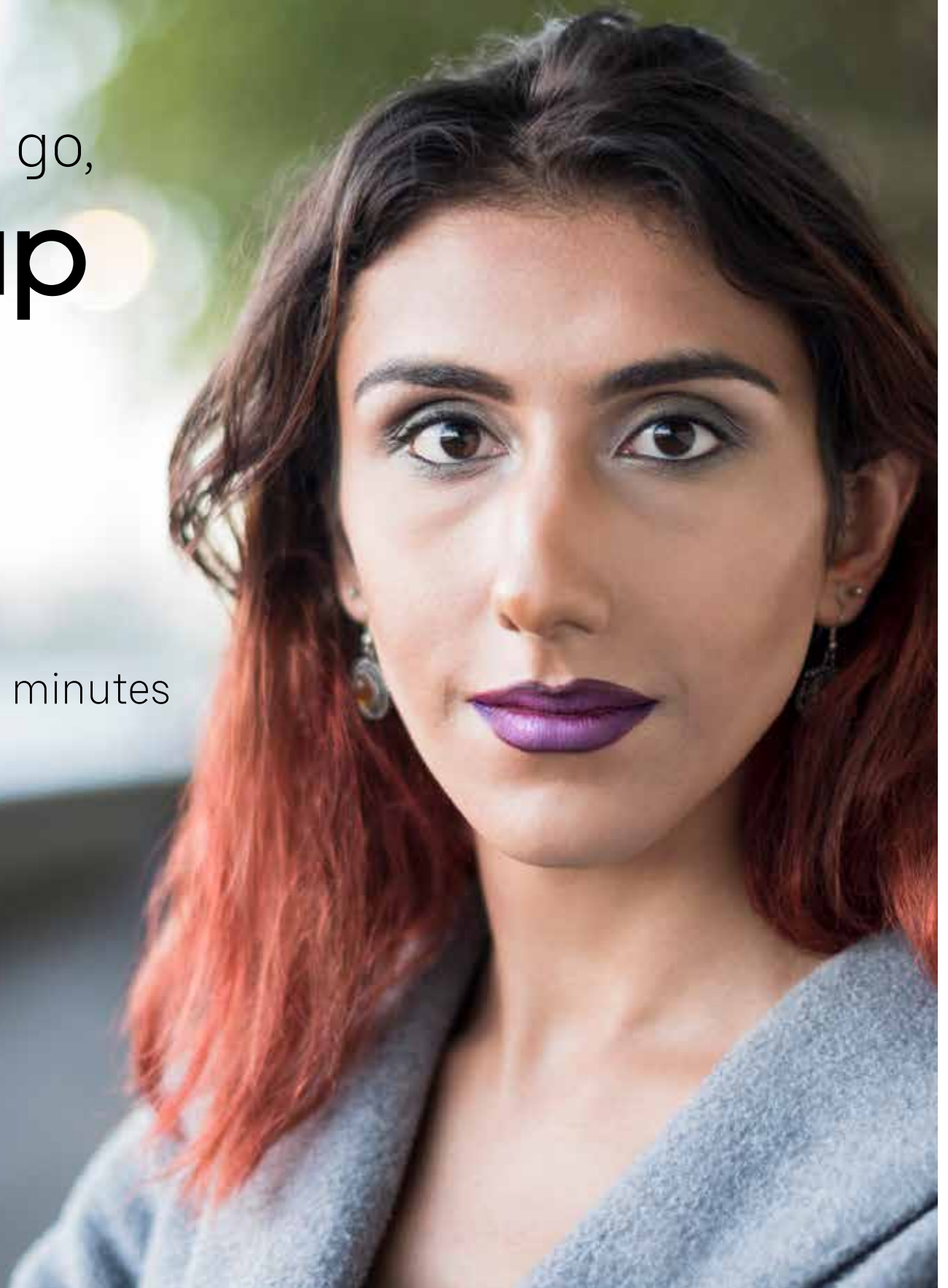
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Bernadette Peters.
Photo by Andrew Eccles



NUNN ON ONE

'A Little Night Music' with Bernadette Peters

BY JERRY NUNN

The legendary Bernadette Peters has a career that has spanned decades thanks to her theater, television and film work over the years. She has taken home trophies along the way, including multiple Tony Awards, three Drama Desk Awards, several lifetime achievement awards and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Her iconic work in musicals includes *Into the Woods*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Gypsy* and, most recently, when she took over from Bette Midler in *Hello, Dolly* last year. She will be forever remembered in films like *Silent Movie*, *The Jerk* and *Pennies from Heaven*. Peters had unforgettable television appearances starting early with *The Carol Burnett Show*, continuing with many television movies and leading into a major role in Amazon's *Mozart in the Jungle* recently. Her latest project, *The Good Fight*, a spinoff of *The Good Wife*, has her playing Lenore Rindell, the mother of a lesbian attorney portrayed by Rose Leslie (who was on *Game of Thrones*).

Her solo music includes six albums, with several Grammy nominations for recordings of Stephen Sondheim as well as Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Peters puts her money where her mouth is by

throwing benefits for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and Broadway Barks to support her love for both the LGBT community and her pets. She even writes children's books involving her dogs with proceeds going to help Broadway Barks as part of the deal.

Windy City Times: Hi, Bernadette. You are coming to the Paramount Theatre this month.

Bernadette Peters: Yes, I will be in Aurora.

WCT: Do you bring a band or just an accompanist?

BP: We have a 10-piece band. I will have my lighting designer and sound. The Bob Mackie dress will be there too!

WCT: I love some Bob Mackie! Do you have a favorite memory from *The Carol Burnett Show*?

BP: It's so funny, I will see a clip now and again and think, "How lucky was I?" I got to work with Carol Burnett and play Raven in *The Exorcist* sketch. It was so much fun.

I'm in awe more of Carol now than then! Back then, I was just in the moment and doing the work. I look at it now and go, "Wow!"

WCT: Do you like all the traveling when on tour?

BP: When I am traveling, I am so focused on work. I don't like to distract myself with seeing

all the sights. I like to come in and do my job. My routine is vocalizing and going to the gym, then vocalize again, go to rehearsal and do the show. It's all about the show.

WCT: How do you protect your voice after all this time?

BP: I take singing lessons and I vocalize. You have to keep it up. It's a muscle. I'm always learning how to preserve it.

WCT: Is there one thing you require in your dressing room on tour?

BP: I try not to get attached to anything, but I always have to have the hot water for my tea. I like a hot kettle! [Laughs]

WCT: Is there one Broadway show that you want to do, but haven't?

BP: I have been so lucky to have done most of the great ones. I originated Sunday in the Park with George and *Into the Woods*, but then I got to do *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Gypsy*. I loved the role in *A Little Night Music*. I never knew how well-constructed the show *Hello, Dolly* was until I did it.

WCT: Did you feel competition from Bette Midler when you took over the lead in *Hello, Dolly*?

BP: No. I actually like her very much and she's my friend.

WCT: What led you to being involved with the LGBT community?

BP: In the beginning, I was doing summer stock and was asked to be in a show at the Caffe Cino. I did *Dames at Sea*. The audience was hysterically laughing there. They got every joke and

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Brian Justin Crum.
Photo by Mark Mendoza



NUNN ON ONE

The talented Brian Justin Crum coming for Market Days

BY JERRY NUNN

America's Got Talent finalist Brian Justin Crum came out to audiences on national TV during season 11. He told personal stories in between classic cover songs and returned for America's Got Talent: The Champions to sing Elton John's "Your Song."

His background includes being in various Broadway musicals, including Wicked, Altar Boyz and Grease. He toured with productions of The Addams Family and We Will Rock You.

Crum just released new music with the song "I & U" and has plans for playing live in Chicago at Market Days.

Windy City Times: Hi, Brian. You have a lot of musicals on your resume.

Brian Justin Crum: I do. I actually got my start in professional musical theater in Chicago. I debuted in Wicked in Chicago when I was 18 years old.

WCT: That's when I met your fellow cast member Telly Leung, who was later in Glee.

BJC: I love Telly!

WCT: Is Wicked your favorite musical?

BJC: My favorite musical in general is Next to Normal, which I did a while ago.

WCT: Do you plan on doing more musicals?

BJC: I am focusing on my music now, but I would dive back into the world of musicals when the right opportunity comes along.

WCT: What do you have planned for Market Days?

BJC: Market Days is going to be my all-out show. I'm bringing dancers and costumes. It's a whole new setlist. I'm debuting new music and singing "I & U" and "Circles." It's really going to be a 40 minute party with some hot boys behind me. It's going to be a good time and I'm keeping it light hearted. The Chicago audience is going to have a good time.

WCT: How was Pride Month and what does that mean to you?

BJC: It means so much right now. It was the 50th anniversary of Stonewall

so it's important that we pay respect and honor our history as queer people. I have spent a lot of time watching documentaries and reading up on where we have come from. It has brought me so much pride to know that I have come from a long line of fighters. I have benefitted so much from what they went through. I'm grateful and indebted to them.

WCT: You must have heard from so many LGBT folk after your appearances on America's Got Talent.

BJC: I have. I knew that the show was very popular, but I didn't grasp how worldwide the reach was. I got messages from kids who were living in the Philippines and Africa, places from all over the world, where going gay is punishable by death. I even got a message just yesterday from a kid in Morocco.

Whether we agree on how large corporations may possibly use gay people at least we live in a country where we can be who we are and be proud.

It's amazing the reach and visibility AGT has brought.

WCT: How was returning to the show for America's Got Talent: The Champions?

BJC: It was cool! When you are doing these reality shows you can feel like a number. You are in a holding room with tons of people. It is a lot. Champions felt like a gathering of a small group of people that they were very passionate about. They took very good care of us. It was very nice to be back under different circumstances.

WCT: People wanted you to win.

BJC: It wasn't America voting this time. They selected people to vote. It felt like a practice run for them. They didn't quite have it all down, but it went great. I felt the support online.

WCT: Was covering the song "Creep" a daunting task?

BJC: It's the one song I still perform live from all the songs at AGT. It's a part of me now. When I chose that song I knew what it was going to do. I knew what talking about my mom raising me was going to do. I had a feeling it was going to touch people. There wasn't really another option. I knew that was going to be my song.

WCT: How do you make a cover song your own and connect to it?

BJC: For me, it's about putting my own experience onto it. I don't think too much about changing it because these songs are classic songs. They are amazing songs because they are already amazing. You don't have to do too much. It's about putting yourself into it and seeing what they brings out.

WCT: Talk about your new single "I & U."

BJC: I have to say that I am beyond excited. I just posted about it this

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Clandestina organizers on relaunching event, future plans

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

After an almost three-year hiatus, Clandestina Chicago (Clandestina) co-promoters City Winery Chicago Riverwalk Manager Brooke Webster and Chicago PD Makeup Department Head Alma Izquierdo have announced a re-launch event Saturday, Aug. 24, 8 p.m.-12 a.m., at SX Sky Bar, 808 S. Michigan Ave.

A second event will take place Sunday, Sept. 22, 3-8 p.m., at City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph St.

Clandestina started in early 2015, when Webster and then Chicago Fire star Monica Raymund joined forces to create a new space for queer women and their allies in Chicago. Shortly af-

ter their first meeting, Webster and Raymund brought Izquierdo onboard as a co-promoter.

"Brooke and Monica had a conversation about the queer women's scene here in Chicago," said Izquierdo. "Having both lived in New York City, they were surprised that Chicago, despite being such a great cosmopolitan city with a large queer community, did not have more options than it did at the time."

"I had moved back to my hometown of Chicago after a successful career on the East Coast that included ownership of Meow Mix Bar in Manhattan and Cattyshack in Brooklyn," said Webster. "Monica and I knew each other from New York City and decided we needed fun, diverse, experiential events for our community. She met Alma on the set of the Chicago shows and Clandestina was born."

Raymund has since moved away from Chicago after departing from her role on Chicago Fire, so Webster and Izquierdo decided to team with Legacy Project and Coalition for the Homeless board member and revenue auditor Renauda Riddle to resume these events. (In addition to their day jobs, Webster has raised funds for a variety of non-profits, while Izquierdo is a Center on Halsted Women's Action Council member.)

Riddle told Windy City Times that she came on-



Renauda Riddle, Brooke Webster and Alma Izquierdo.

Photo by Ben Douglas

board because she has wanted to curate events with Webster and Izquierdo for quite some time. She said this opportunity came at the right moment for her since she is in the process of restructuring her event company.

"Our mission has always been to create a safe

space, cultural creativity, networking and new experiences for our community while raising money for the projects that really need grassroots funding," said Webster.

Izquierdo said Clandestina's goal is "to provide unique and creative experiences in a safe and supportive environment."

Izquierdo cited the event's hiatus at the end of 2016 on increasing work commitments; also, with Raymund leaving Chicago to pursue other film/TV opportunities, they did not have time to plan new events. Politics also became a factor.

"The November 2016 election results sent us all reeling," said Izquierdo. "I think at the time we were all stunned and worried about the future of the country and the LGBTQ+ community. We were focused on efforts to support our community and all the non-profit organizations that were being threatened by the new administration."

"Monica suggested we bring Clandestina to L.A., but Alma and I are committed to Chicago," said Webster. "Both of us also have extremely busy full-time jobs so we need to be a trio for this to work."

Bringing back these parties was serendipitous, according to Izquierdo.

"Brooke and I had been talking for a few

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TRAVEL

Driftless and daring: Mineral Point, Wisconsin

BY KIRK WILLIAMSON

Thousands of years ago when the glaciers razed the Midwest and flattened the landscape, they left certain areas untouched, unmarred. These areas—known as the “driftless” areas—abound with lush, green, rolling hills and timeless natural splendor. Meander through these ancient hills in southwestern Wisconsin and you’ll find Mineral Point, a community of artists and lovers of beauty, with an intriguing queer history.

Founded by Cornish settlers in the mid 1800s, Mineral Point got its start as a bustling zinc mining town, many of the settlers having mined tin back in Cornwall, England. But when the industry changed, the town fell into decline and was in danger of extinction. Enter Robert Neal, lifelong resident of Mineral Point, who met a man named Edgar Hellum in 1935 when Hellum came to town to buy building supplies.

The two men formed not only a loving relationship, but also a commitment to preserving the limestone structures and brilliant charm of the town. Their most important effort, the Pendarvis House (114 Shake Rag St., www.pendarvishistoricsite.org), stands today and is a vital touchstone to the past of the area. The preservation of many other remaining structures soon followed and signalled the revitalization of Mineral Point. About 500 structures in the town are on the National Registry and Neal and Hellum are regarded as the gay godfathers of the town.

Today, the streets of Mineral Point are lined with galleries and shops, appealing to everyone from the casual art lover to the devotee of fine, international art. Boyoyoboy Contemporary Art

Gallery (22 High St., www.boyoyoboy.com) is an African art collective, displaying works by some of the continent’s most thought-provoking young artists, including paintings, textiles, sculpture and more. Owners Michel Metford Platt and Henk



Artwork on display at Boyoyoboy.

Klijn are committed to “shifting perceptions, while engendering social transformation,” according to their website. Elsewhere in town you’ll find Stonewall Art Studio/Gallery (231 High St., www.stonewallartstudio.com), offering fine photography from co-owner Kirk Williams, practical ceramics and other housewares and surreal, hyperspace paintings by artist Madison Hawley. For

ganizers raised money for Project Fierce and Project Vote and will continue to donate a part of the proceeds from each event to Chicagoland LGBTQ organizations.

Events will take place in both Chicago and the neighboring suburbs and will range from “free” location takeovers to higher priced sit down meals with most events ranging from \$10 to \$25 that will include a beverage or food item.

“We are putting our efforts into offering as many unique experiences to appeal to people across the spectrum,” said Izquierdo. “We know you cannot please everyone. However, we want to be intentional in keeping everyone in mind when we design each event.”

Izquierdo, Riddle and Webster’s goals for these events include adding to the vibrancy of the LGBTQ social scene and that guests make friends, network, discover volunteer opportunities, create amazing memories and find new love connections.

To RSVP for the Aug. 24 event, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/clandestina-tickets-65946125637>.

See <https://www.facebook.com/clandestina-chi/>.

CLANDESTINA from page 32

months about all the ideas we had been coming up with since our last event,” said Izquierdo. “We knew it was going to take a little more effort with just the two of us but we were really psyched. We missed doing what we love; organizing events that brought our community and friends together for a phenomenal time.

“Then I found out Renauda was not going to continue with the Brunch Remix events. She is an remarkably talented organizer. We have worked together for years on the Women’s Action Council and I knew she would be the perfect fit as a co-promoter. When I asked Brooke, she was all for it.”

“We wanted to resume because we had many requests from members of the community to bring it back; and the fact that we had a chance to have a great partner come onboard like Renauda was icing on the cake,” said Webster. “We are blessed that this is a trio mightier than Charlie’s Angels and fiercer than 007 with the class of Michelle Obama to bring fun important events for LGBTQ community in these dark times in our nation’s history.”

During Clandestina’s first year of operation, or-



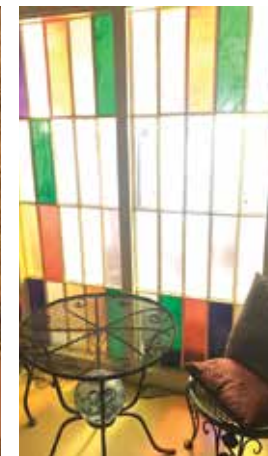
Left: The historic Pendarvis House with a postcard of Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum. Above: Mike Zupke of Brewery Creek Brewpub & Inn.

All photos by Kirk Williamson

a more more, folksy feel, check out Longbranch Gallery (203 Commerce St., www.longbranchgallery.com). Co-owners and artists Judy Sutcliffe and Sandra Scott have been running Longbranch since its founding in 2002. Sutcliffe’s prints and mosaics and Scott’s figurative sculpture are all available, amongst a dizzying display of works by many of Mineral Point’s favorite creators.

Mineral Point’s devotion to art education is exemplified in the Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts (www.shakeragalley.com), which bills itself as a nonprofit center for the visual, literary and performing arts. Over 200 classes and workshops in any imaginable artistic discipline are offered from late winter through mid-November.

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Above: Details from The Tuckpoint at Shake Rag Alley. Right: Stonewall Gallery

Mineral Point will celebrate its third annual Pride this weekend, August 8-10. The highlight of this year’s Mineral Point Pride will be the display of six 12’ by 6’ panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Accompanying the quilt display, Mineral Point Pride will host a reception at Boyoyoboy on August 8, and events at Tequila Point (43 High St.) and L&L Public House (52 High St.) on August 9 and 10, including live music, games, and two drag show performances by Illusions Midwest (including a family-friendly show). The documentary “Common Threads” will be streaming throughout the weekend.

Photo courtesy of the NAMES Project





BILLY Masters

"But at the same time, my God, if you're 3 years old and you're saying you're feeling a certain way, or you think you're a boy or a girl or whatever the case may be, I just think it's dangerous as a parent to make that determination then, OK, well then you're gonna be a boy or a girl, whatever the case may be."—**Mario Lopez** shares his thoughts on transgender children during a podcast with pro-Trump conservative Candace Owens. BTW, he later apologized, saying, "The comments I made were ignorant and insensitive, and I now have a deeper understanding of how hurtful they were."

Remember when summer used to be filled with reruns? That's how I'm feeling about this week's column. Not that the stories are old, but many of them relate to days gone by. Take our opening quote from Mario Lopez, where he incoherently babbles about trans children. Of course, Lopez has been a longstanding ally of the LGBTQ community and has since apologized. But his rambling reminded me of Miss South Carolina's answer when Mario hosted the 2007 Miss Teen USA pageant—a moment touted by most as epic in pageant history. Back then, Mario tried to stifle a laugh. Watch both clips on BillyMasters.com and see if you can do the same.

Tituss Burgess has been flying high on Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt and is currently promoting his new CD, Saint Tituss. But everyone is talking about his feud with **Andy Cohen**. Tituss was on What Watch Happens Live and Cohen asked a viewer question about the film Burgess just made with Eddie Murphy. Tituss was effusive in his praise for Murphy.

Then Andy asked, "Did you get to chat with him at all?" Tituss said, "Of course I did. Why wouldn't I?" Cohen added, "I just wondered if you got close at all because he was very problematic for the gays at one point when I was coming up." Burgess responded, "Oh, I see. He wasn't problematic for Tituss; he was great and any troubles he may have had with gay people I guess are gone because he loved me." Fellow panelist Laverne Cox (wearing blue eye shadow) interjected, "It was a long time ago—people evolve." Meanwhile, Tituss batted his eyelashes while mouthing and gesturing something to the audience. "What was that?" Andy asked. "Keep going, girl—do your show," said Tituss. We're told that when the live telecast was over, Tituss quickly left the set and refused to sign the guest book, saying, "He knows I was here." Cohen was later asked if Tituss would be invited back. Cohen said, "He's been on four times. He can do whatever he wants. I just don't want to offend him."

Kathy Griffin has been everywhere promoting her movie, Kathy Griffin: A Hell of a Story. In People magazine, she again talks about Cohen, saying during her time at Bravo, "He treated me like a dog. He was one of the worst bosses I ever had." I'm sure she'll have a whole lot more to say when she hits Provincetown on Aug. 16 for a pair of shows she's calling "Sweatin' For The Gays" at Town Hall. Well, so much for not having any



Mario Lopez (above) has had some backtracking to do.

Photo by Tommaso Boddi/Getty Images

paying gigs on the books! BTW, as of when we wrote this, I'm breaking news of this gig BEFORE Kathy's own website.

This week, **Lil Nas X's** song "Old Town Road" broke the Billboard Hot 100 record by remaining #1 for 17 weeks. Making this more historic is that he's an openly gay singer. And I wouldn't be Billy Masters if I didn't remind you that you can see every inch of Lil Nas X on BillyMasters.com.

Despite numerous break-ups, **The Go-Go's** will be back in a big way next year. First off, Showtime will air an extensive, no-holds-barred documentary about the band that was shot by Alison Ellwood, who helmed a two-part documentary about the Eagles. For The Go-Go's project, she reportedly tracked down everyone who was ever involved with the band and left no stone unturned. Coinciding with that release, the band will play Washington, D.C., on July 4, 2020. Belinda Carlisle hints that there may be more gigs: "Because we don't go out that often, there's always a big demand for the band in the States. ... With the documentary coming out, I'm sure we'll do a little bit of work."

Remember when I told you that the upcoming "Arrowverse" will have two Supermen? Well, there could be a third. We hear that **Tom Welling** is in talks to appear. And he's not the only one—**Lynda Carter** may also turn up. Although she previously played the president on Supergirl, the powers that be are trying to convince Lynda to once again play Wonder Woman. Interestingly enough, Carter also once appeared on Smallville.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Terrence in New York: "Is it true that **Chace Crawford** shows all in some new movie he's in?"

It's not a movie. It's a new series from Amazon Prime called The Boys, which is based on the comic book of the same name. The main characters are superheroes, many of whom are disgruntled with the company they work for. Crawford plays The Deep, who rules the oceans—which means he's not wearing a helluva lot of clothing. From what I can see, his most prominent feature is a tan line which, yes, I will show on BillyMasters.com.

I was struck by an interesting anecdote shared by the show's creator, Eric Kripke: "There was one scene that Amazon said, 'Fuck, no—you have to cut it.' I couldn't quite understand why consider-

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ing everything else we have in the show, but: Homelander [played by Antony Starr], after being dressed down by Stilwell in episode two, was standing on one of the Chrysler building eagles. He pulled his pants down and started jerking off, mumbling, "I can do whatever I want" over and over again until he climaxed all over New York City." I can't imagine why Amazon had a problem with that!

When there's something wrong with masturbating all over a city, it's definitely time to end yet another column. This week, we mourn the passing of a real legend—Harold Prince. As a producer and director, Hal revolutionized Broadway and won 21 Tony Awards along the way (more than anyone else, by the by). He will be missed. What you definitely shouldn't miss is a single week on BillyMasters.com—the site where I can do whatever I want. If you have a question, dash it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before we remind you that Mario Lopez identified as male during his infamous Nip/Tuck shower scene. 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 Asadito

BY JULIA HALE

"F*k Me, I'll Have Another," reads the electric blue neon sign that hangs on the white wall behind the bar at Asadito (30 N. Clinton St.; <https://slightlytoasted.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/food-menu-mock.pdf>), the new authentic yet modern taqueria and tequila bar in the West Loop. The sign is surrounded by white metal baskets filled with Jarritos soft drink, plastic fruit, cans of beans and coconut cream, Mexican Cokes and Topo Chico water. The wall to the left of the bar is filled with religious and cultural art and photos.

It's not your typical taqueria.

Asadito—"little roasted" in Spanish—is owned and operated by Barrel Aged Hospitality, the father-son duo that also runs Slightly Toasted



Asadito al pastor tacos, churros and Margarita.

Meghan Leigh Photography

and Little Toasted. (The restaurant is right next door to Slightly Roasted.) Tyler Mendoza, the "son" in "father-son," explained what makes the tacos at Asadito different from the "corporate" tacos you can find throughout Chicago.

He said, "Tortillas are made fresh to order, from masa sourced locally. We make it in-house every day." The restaurant gets its masa from Pilsen. "We use actual trompos [vertical rotisseries] for the pastor, which means that all the meat, all the proteins including the mushrooms, take at least four days [to cook]. We make everything, literally everything, from scratch—and a lot of it takes

time."

Mendoza led our meal, starting us with elote (roasted corn, lime aioli, guajillo chili, queso and cilantro), pozole (a Mexican pork and hominy soup) and guacamole with tortilla chips. Shortly after, we were served six tacos, of which I ate three: the chicken tinga, the al pastor and the mushroom. The al pastor was my favorite, featuring pork shoulder and pineapple. The mushroom was a close second; the sole vegetarian taco option tasted like I had bit right into a vegetable garden. Following the tacos, we were served churro bites, with spiced chocolate and caramel dipping sauces. I have to say that the uber-sugary churros were my favorite part of the meal.

With 85 agave-based spirits, Asadito offers guests more than 2,000 margarita options. After trying its roasted pineapple margarita, I can understand why the sign behind the bar is there. In addition to vast margarita options, Asadito also offers cocktails, including the Hyper Snyder, which has espresso and milk; and the Buddah Monk, with green chili vodka and aloe liquor. The beer list features Mexican and American lagers, in addition to categories like "Boozy Soda," "Sours," "Apples," "Hops" and "Dessert Beer," with two beers on tap.

According to Mendoza, Asadito will be adding

one or two more mainstays to the menu as well as a rotating meal of the month. "We are 85-percent authentic Mexican," he said. "There are techniques that we use that are more fine dining, [but] the flavors are all as traditional as [possible]. This isn't Tex-Mex," he said. "It's a real taco."

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



SIDETRACK

The 'Dog Days' of summer are upon us.
Joseph Stevens Photography



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Happy fifth anniversary!
Joseph Stevens Photography

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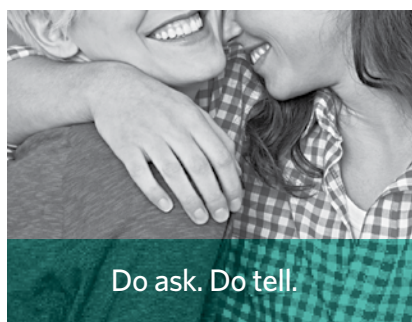
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morning and it's already getting so much love. I am getting emails and messages about how it's a great song. I am happy it's being well received. I recorded it a while ago and we have been waiting to put it out. It felt like the perfect time to share it with the world.

It's a continuation on "Circles," and that was all about being in a toxic relationship. "I & U" is about the ending of that relationship and the confusion we have about the longing for it to have it back. We have a way of fantasizing and remembering only the good when relationships end. The song is about still wanting someone after all they went through, with all the lack of something why is that person still thought about all the time?

It's a human emotion that everyone can relate to and put themselves in. I'm so glad that people are feeling it.

WCT: You decided to have a dance vibe to the song?

BJC: Yes. It's got a groove.

WCT: Talk about the video for it.

BJC: People are going to freak when they see the video. It's the first time that I have really felt strong in my queerness and being able to express myself through fashion. The video is a nod to George Michael and we feature a number of really incredible models. I think people will have a

sense of nostalgia about it, but it's very modern. I am pushing boundaries with the clothing I am wearing in it. I am very excited for people to see it.

WCT: Do you feel fashion is moving into men being more feminine with their clothing?

BJC: Absolutely. Gender is dead. I think it's time that this heteronormative "masc4masc" bullshit goes away. I grew up gay in musical theater. From the time I was 6 years old, I was told to butch it up and be more masculine. I want to express myself however I want to express myself. If someone has a problem with it then it's on them.

I love that Billy Porter is out in the world and living his fullest fantasy. I grew up with Adam Lambert who was the first person to really do that. We did musicals as kids together. We took from the same voice coach. I have known him since he was young and was always compared to him. He's an incredible vocalist and human. I am happy to call him friend.

Again, I am so grateful for the people that have come before and have given us permission to play.

Look for Crum Sunday, Aug. 11, at 4:15 p.m. at the Nissan Partners of Progress Stage, on Halsted and Roscoe streets.

For more on this artist visit BrianJustinCrum.com. Details about Market Days are at NorthHalsted.com.

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every line. They were mostly gay guys. I couldn't wait to change my clothes and run back onstage to meet them. That was the first show, and then we took it off-Broadway and it had a following.

The LGBTQ community are sensitive people and always into the arts. They would tell their friends about my shows and then I started having a wonderful audience. They understand people that sing. If I am singing something with real emotion, they get it. People have asked me about the following before and I would say, "Because they are smart!"

WCT: You have done a lot for the community by raising money over the years.

BP: Well, I am on the board for Broadway Cares and Tom Viola, who is the executive director, helps with the event Broadway Barks. He's so generous and caring.

WCT: How many dogs do you have now?

BP: I have two—one for each hand!

WCT: Are you bringing them with you to Aurora?

BP: No. They are big. Someone keeps them at home, where they are comfy. When I would first leave and come back, the male would howl at me. He's used to it now and not so heartbroken.

WCT: Kristin Chenoweth brought her dog, Thunder, with her on this last tour and it kept barking at me backstage.

BP: Her little cockapoo?

WCT: Yes. I love that you know her dog. Are you planning on writing more books?

BP: I haven't written any more, but really need to. I wrote about two past dogs, but have a new one that I don't have a book about, so I need to write about her.

I like to sell all the books and CDs because all the money that I raise goes to Broadway Barks and helping the animals.

WCT: There is such a nostalgia for movies like The Jerk. Do fans still ask you about it?

BP: Yes, they will quote a line from it or ask if I really played the trumpet. A trumpet player once said, "Thanks for the learning the fingering," which I did. That film really is a classic now, isn't it?

WCT: Yes, definitely. So, The Good Fight was picked up for a fourth season. Are you on that again?

BP: I did that the beginning last year. I play her mother, so hopefully I will be back on. The first season is on CBS right now instead of Access. I caught it Sunday night. It's such a good show. The writing is so good!

WCT: It's about the "First Family of Chicago," but not actually filmed in Chicago?

BP: Right. It's filmed in New York. [Laughs]

WCT: Is there one thing in your career that you still want to accomplish?

BP: I love singing, but maybe more plays. I am loving doing television because it's all acting. I am about to do another little film.

I keep learning and growing. I love that. I like figuring out how to get better and surprise myself. That's why I love doing these concerts. I go on a journey with the audience and we are all in this room together to have an experience.

Peters takes the stage for one night only at Aurora's Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd., on Saturday, Aug. 17. Tickets can be found at ParamountAurora.com or by calling 630-896-6666.

Visit BernadettePeters.com for more on the legendary singer.

WOMEN from page 28

for a lot of folks who could be customers if they only walked through our door," said Hollenbeck.

One of the first things they did was rearrange the store to make it more inviting. They also did outreach to a new generation of feminists to tell them the store had an intersectional feminist mission that was transgender-inclusive and gender expansive.

"We made an effort to reach out and support communities of color through expanded events, programming, activism and fundraising," said Hollenbeck. "Ann and Linda were already doing this work, but we were able to 'demystify' our name and amplify our mission through our re-design and renovation, our use of social media, [and] expanded outreach and programming."

Both Bubon and Christophersen told Windy City Times that it means everything to them that Women & Children First is still thriving and celebrating 40 years in business.

"I cannot imagine two women better suited to own and manage Women & Children First and take her—with great vitality, enthusiasm and skill—into the future," said Christophersen. "I am grateful for what they have kept, awed by what they have added, and have taken my rest in seeing their strong and ongoing commitment to the bookstore."

"I have continued to work at the store for the

past 5 years, and I am thrilled at its growth, its commitments and its vision for the future," said Bubon. "Ann and I could not have chosen better people to be at the helm."

In addition to the block party, the store is set to host a midnight release party for The Testaments by Margaret Atwood Monday, Sept. 9; a conversation and book signing with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on Wed., Sept. 11, at Senn High School Auditorium; Ann Patchett on Monday, Oct. 21; Jeanette Winterson on Thursday, Oct. 24; Carmen Maria Machado on Friday, Nov. 8; Rebecca Traister on Sunday, Nov. 10; and Lindy West on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

For more information, see WomenAndChildrenFirst.com.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Aug. 7

About Face: Stonewall, Revolt and New Queer Art Global slate of queer art by emerging and established artists who help us better understand each other in an increasingly non-binary world. Curated by Jonathan David Katz, Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at The University of Pennsylvania and chair of the doctoral program in Visual Studies at the University at Buffalo. Through Saturday, Aug. 10. 12:00pm - 5:00pm Wrightwood659, 659 W. Wrightwood Ave. <http://Wrightwood659.org>



ROSS OVER Sunday, Aug. 11

Ross Mathews (who's not guaranteed to be present) is hosting a drag brunch at City Winery.

PR photo, courtesy of Silverman Group

Thursday, Aug. 8

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. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Friday, Aug. 9

Lyz Lenz in conversation with Kate Harding, God Land In the wake of the 2016 election, Lyz Lenz watched as her country and her marriage were torn apart. Part journalism, part memoir, a journey into the heart of a deeply divided America. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

EXPLODE! Queer dance: Midwest (Aug. 9-10) Focuses on queer dance of the Midwest across four sites--three on

Northwestern's campus and one at Chicago dance center Links Hall. Featuring work by Ayodele Dance & Drum, J'Sun Howard, Murda Mommy. 8:00pm Links Hall 3111 N. Western Ave Chicago 773-281-0824 <http://www.LinksHall.org>

FIYAH Fridays Every Friday Adult LGNTQ event. DJ SuperMan blends House, R&B, Hip-Hop, Pop Musicology. Free all night. Reserve VIP at RAILSCHI@AOL.COM

11:00pm - 4:00am Estate Ultra Bar, 1177 N. Elston Ave.

Saturday, Aug. 10

Northalsted Market Days Weekend-long festival celebrating life & community in Chicago's historic Boystown/Lakeview district with all-day lineups of live music on 5 stages, 200+ unique vendors, arts, crafts, food and drink, DJ's and dancing, sponsor booths 12:00pm From Belmont to Addison on North Halsted St. <http://northalsted.com/marketdays/>

Wrong Way Journey One-hour solo show about a young woman who grapples with family and world expectations regarding race, sexuality, and faith. Begin with a reception in the on the rooftop deck and end with panel discussion. RSVP 6:00pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago; <http://community.centeronhalsted.org>

Sunday, Aug. 11

Rampage Market Days A night of music, drag kings and dance. DJs Betsy Aoe and Sushi Lor. Hosted by Kat Sass. 18+. Gorgeous go-go women all night long. Drag king superstars Tenderoni, Switch the Boi Wonder, Leo Long and Cash Johnson. Doors open at 8:30pm. Party until 3am. Tickets available online at www.circuitmom.com, at the box office or at Cowboys and Astronauts in Andersonville. House of Blues Chicago, 329 N. Dearborn St.

Dragtastic Bubbly Brunch "RuPaul's Drag Race" judge Ross Mathews presents a fun, fabulous & delicious drag brunch. "Drag Race" queens and local queens will show off their talents as the audience sips mimosas and enjoy a City Winery brunch. 12:00pm City Winery Chicago 1200 W Randolph St Chicago <http://citywinery.com/chicago/>

Monday, Aug. 12

Broadway In Chicago Summer Concert Sponsored by ABC 7 Chicago and hosted by Janet Davies. Free 6:15pm - 7:45pm Pritzker Pavilion Millennium Pk 201 E Randolph St Chicago <http://www.broadwayinchicago.com>

Gay Fathers of Greater Chicago Network of gay men who have children living with us or apart from us. Some of us are divorced, some separated, and some still married. Scott Takacs, gfgchi@yahoo.com 7:30pm - 9:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15601>

Tuesday, Aug. 13

Storytelling Workshop with Ada Cheng Basic tenets of the art form of storytelling, such as detailed descriptions, basic story arc, emotions, vulnerability, meanings, relationships with the audience, and purpose of storytelling. 6:00pm - 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=16951>

Thursday, Aug. 15

Taste of Diversity 2019 Chefs, alumni and students of the Center on Halsted's Silver Fork culinary arts and job readiness program as they present tasting samples from a diverse cultural landscape as well as tasty bites from community partner restaurants. Event will have food stations and wine pairings. \$30 includes complimentary wine, beer and soda. Cash bar available 5:30pm - 9:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://community.centeronhalsted.org>

Legal Council for Health Justice Summer

Soiree: Grecian Holiday Explore the sights, sounds and culinary traditions of Greece, while celebrating the life-changing mission of Legal Council for Health Justice, which operates free legal clinics at a dozen sites and will provide free legal assistance to more than 2,400 individuals this year. 6-9pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., <https://www.face-book.com/events/659086004562470/>

Women in Translation Reading and panel discussion. in response to Radzinski's observation that so few books published in translation were by women. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Saturday, Aug. 17

Dance For Life Chicago 2019 Chicago Dance Crash, Chicago Human Rhythm Project's Stone Soup Rhythms, Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance Theater, Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, and Robyn Mineko Williams, Randy Duncan. Supports dance professionals facing critical health issues and AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Followed by gala with dancers at Hilton Chicago, included in \$300/\$650 ticket. 6:00pm Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University 50 E Congress Pkwy Chicago <http://tickets.auditoriumtheatre.org/production/2431/18-19-dance-for-life/>

Beckie Menzie & Tom Michael reimagine The Beatles in summer concert Celebrating their 20th anniversary as a duo, the award-winning Chicago-based concert artists explore the songs of the The Fab Four 8:00pm The Acorn Theatre 107 Generations Dr. Three Oaks, MI 49107 269-756-3879 <http://www.acornlive.org>

MINERAL POINT from page 34

Shake Rag Alley also offers unique lodging choices. The Tuckpoint (223 Commerce St., www.shakeragalley.com) features towering sandstone walls and a lofted master suite which looks out over the living area through spectacular colored glass. Every detail and every object in The Tuckpoint tells its own part of the story of the evolution of the community. It's a gallery all it's own.

On the more posh side, book a stay at The Brewery Creek Brewpub & Inn (23 Commerce St., <http://brewerycreek.com>). New owner Mike Zupke has made some important changes to the site, which started out as a warehouse used by miners in the 1850s. Today, you can sample beers brewed on site and then retire to one of the rooms upstairs, each of which is outfitted with a sizable Jacuzzi-style tub, perfect for relaxing after a day of hiking the steep hills of the town. Among the many accolades given to Brewery Creek, it was hailed as one of CNN's Top Luxury Beer Vacation spots and as booking.com's "Coolest place to rest your head" in Wisconsin for 2018.

Other dining musts include Popolo's Pizzeria (20 Commerce St.)—with its hand-tossed and wood-fired artisan pizzas and flatbreads—and Red Rooster Cafe, where you can take a bite of history with their traditional "pasty," a Cornish delicacy.

There are surprises to discover around every corner and up every hill in Mineral Point. Get your start at www.mineralpoint.com.

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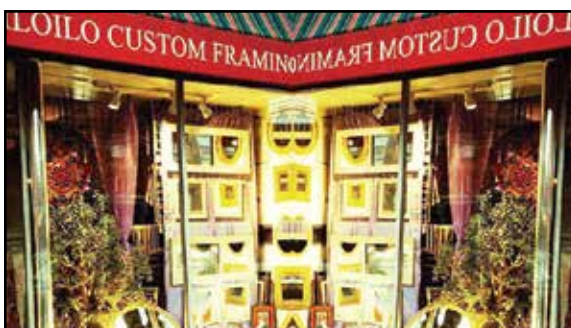


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