


WINDY CITY TIMES

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

VOL 34, NO. 33 **AUG. 21, 2019**

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MONEY TRAIL
LGBT dollars go to Buttigieg, Harris.
Official photo of Mayor Pete Buttigieg



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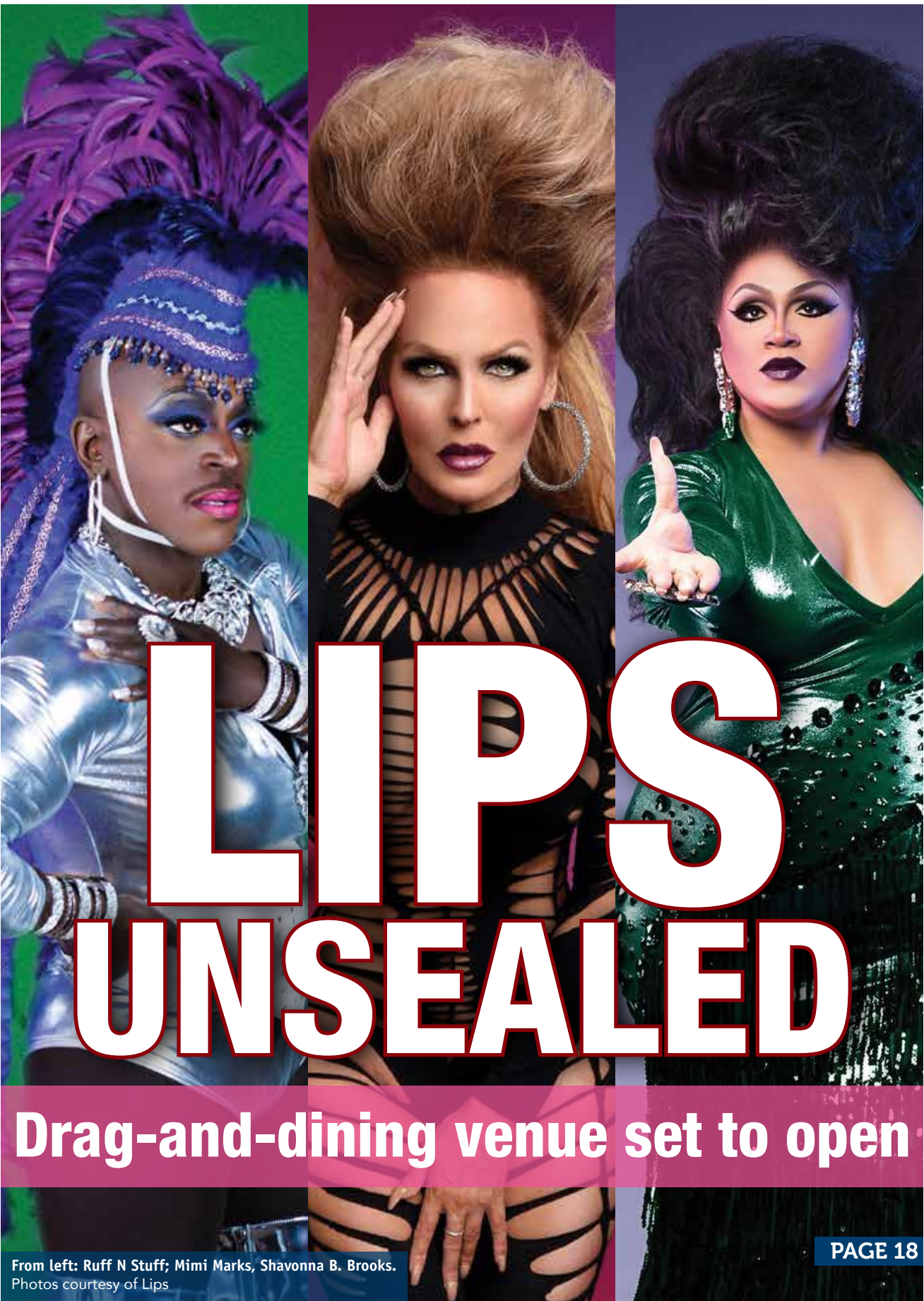
EQUALITY ILLINOIS
Board commits to diversity.
WCT photo of board member Channyn Lynne Parker

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MICHAEL BAUER
Reflects on a life of activism.
Photo by Matt Simonette



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LIPS UNSEALED

Drag-and-dining venue set to open

From left: Ruff N Stuff; Mimi Marks, Shavonna B. Brooks.
Photos courtesy of Lips

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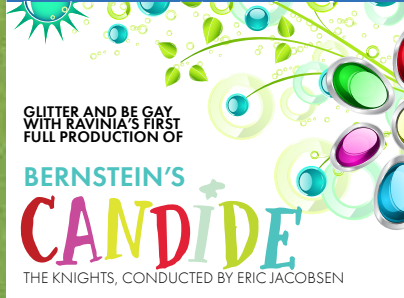
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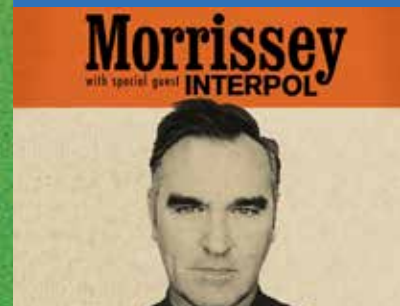
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WINDY CITY TIMES PRINT DATES:

Sep. 4	Dec. 25	April 15
Sep. 18	Jan. 8	April 29
Oct. 2	Jan. 22	May 13
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Oct. 30	Feb. 19	June 10
Nov. 13	March 4	June 24
Nov. 27	March 18	July 8
Dec. 11	April 1	July 22

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



'FUNK' SHOW

There are additional theater reviews of You Can't Fake the Funk (left) and Women of 4G.

Photo of Brandon Lavell by Alan Davis

FLAME ON!



Trans comedian Flame Monroe talks about being part of Tiffany Haddish's new show.

Photo by Beth Dubber

'GHOST' STORY

WCT reviews the book The Ghost Photographer.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Chrissy Metz, Tituss Burgess and Stephen Amell.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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'18 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, P6288	\$15,995
'15 Jeep Renegade Ltd 4x4	Auto., Leather, 1-Owner, Red, 22570A	\$15,995
'14 VW Tiguan SEL AWD/Nav.	Automatic, Moonroof, Silver, P6289A	\$12,995
'18 Nissan Sentra S	Automatic, Full Power, Deep Blue, P6287	\$12,995
'18 Toyota Yaris iA	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, P6253	\$11,995
'11 Nissan Quest 3.5 SL	Automatic, Full Power, Black, 22250A	\$9,995
'15 VW Jetta SE	Automatic, Full Power, Pure White, P6135A	\$8,995
'12 Honda Civic LX	Automatic, Full Power, Polished Metal, 22180A	\$7,995
'13 Hyundai Accent GLS	Automatic, Full Power, White, 22566A	\$7,995
'04 Nissan Pathfinder SE 4x4	Automatic, 57K, Merlot Pearl, 22571A	\$7,995

SUBARU FORESTERS

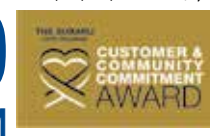
'17 Forester Prem.	Auto., Sunroof, Heated Seats, Silver, P6316	\$19,995
'15 Forester Prem.	Auto., Sunroof, Heated Seats, White, P6136A	\$16,995
'14 Forester Ltd.	Auto., Sunroof, Leather, Black, P6177A	\$15,995
'13 Forester Prem	Automatic, Heated Seats, Red, 20768A	\$13,995
'12 Forester X	Automatic, Full Power, White, 22595A	\$9,995

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'16 Outback Prem.	Auto., Alloys, Heated Seats, Silver, P6251	\$20,995
'16 Legacy Prem.	Automatic, Heated Seats, Grey, P1250	\$16,995
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LGBT neighborhoods favor Buttigieg, then Harris

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

This may not be a surprise, but it is news: Openly gay presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg has outraised his Democratic competitors in most heavily LGBT neighborhoods around the country.

And he is now the third most successful fundraiser among the 22 viable candidates for the Democratic nomination. But the data—and an examination of who has given money—suggests that the LGBT community is keeping significant support behind other major Democratic presidential candidates and that the community's potential has much room for growth.

According to Federal Elections Commission's reports through the second quarter (June 30), Buttigieg had raised \$32 million, behind U.S. Sens. Bernie Sanders (\$46 million) and Elizabeth Warren (\$35 million).

An analysis of dollars to Democratic candidates in 40 zip codes known to have heavily LGBT populations indicates that Buttigieg raked in 38 percent of the total dollars. He was followed by U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris (22 percent), Warren (18 percent), Sanders (13 percent) and former Vice President Joe Biden (9 percent).

Contributions in zip code areas considered heavily lesbian were a little different: 31 percent gave to Warren, 22 percent each to Buttigieg and Sanders, 19 percent to Harris and 5 percent to Biden.

Buttigieg was the top dollar collector in 23 of the 40 heavily gay zip codes.

In heavily LGBT zip codes where another Democratic candidate raised the most money, there was usually a home-state advantage. For instance, Warren, from Massachusetts, raised the most in Northampton and Wellfleet, Massachusetts; Harris took two zip codes around Oakland, California; and former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas) outraised everybody in the LGBT districts of Oaklawn in Dallas and Montrose in Houston.

But there were some surprises.

Warren was the top dollar fundraiser in three New York City zip codes. All three—Park Slope, Prospect Heights and Boerum Hill—have large concentrations of female same-sex households, according to Census records. She also won top dollar in the heavily LGBT neighborhood of Ker-rytown, Michigan, near Ann Arbor.

Buttigieg collected the most small-dollar donations from The Castro area of San Francisco. Of the roughly half-million dollars raised there, 42 percent went to Buttigieg, 29 percent to Harris and 16 percent to Warren.

Provincetown gave only \$95,000 to Democratic candidates, but 86 percent of the small dollars went to Buttigieg (and 9 percent to Warren).

As a state, LGBT zip codes in Florida were more

loyal to Buttigieg, giving 51 percent of their small dollar donations to him. Illinois had the second strongest preference for Buttigieg, giving 50 percent to Buttigieg.

Ah, the caveats!

These numbers do not mean that the LGBT vote is reliably behind Buttigieg.

First, the dollar counts are just that: dollars, not votes.

Second, not all LGBT people live in zip codes with heavily LGBT populations.

Third, some people who gave money to a Democratic candidate gave money to two or more candidates.

Also, the data on contributions by zip code represents only "small-dollar donations." It originated with a Democratic political action committee that runs the fundraising website ActBlue. ActBlue provides a way for people who want to support Democratic candidates and organizations to give small-dollar amounts (less than \$200) quickly and easily. In the first six months of 2019, the PAC raised \$345 million that way.

Several major media organizations, such as the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, have processed the ActBlue raw data from the FEC in ways that illustrate how well each Democrat is doing in getting individual donors and how well each is raising money in each zip code. The New York Times, for instance, discovered that Buttigieg has the third largest number of individual donors through ActBlue (390,000). That puts him behind Sanders (746,000) and Warren (421,000) but ahead of Harris (277,000) and Biden (256,000).

When looking at FEC reports, which count both small-dollar contributions and contributions of



Left: Mayor Pete Buttigieg at the Rainbow PUSH event. Right: Kamala Harris.
Buttigieg photo by Joshua Irvine; official head shot of Harris

\$200 and above, Buttigieg's raised \$32 million, putting him in third behind Sanders (\$46 million) and Warren (\$36 million).

Finally, a search through FEC records for the names of individual LGBT leaders, well-known activists and celebrities found that only 19 out of 100 had made a reportable contribution to any Democratic presidential candidate so far. Given that the FEC records the names of only those donors who give \$200 or more, the other 81 might have given contributions of less than \$200. Barring that, the numbers suggest that LGBT leaders, generally speaking, are not yet ready to go "all in" behind one Democratic frontrunner just yet.

Of the 19 who had given to a Democrat:

—Only five had given the maximum (\$2,800) to any one candidate for the primary. Former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Roberta Achtenberg has given \$2,800 to Harris and four others—celebrity comedian Ellen DeGeneres, film producer David Geffen, former president of the U.S. Export-Import Bank Fred Hochberg and current Fort Lauderdale

Mayor Dean Trantalis—have all given \$2,800 to Buttigieg.

—Six had given to Buttigieg and at least one other of the top tier candidates.

The next round of campaign funding reports is due into the FEC on Monday, Sept. 30. Meanwhile, the latest national polling shows Buttigieg may have slipped in the standings. In mid-June, a Fox News poll of more than 400 Democratic primary voters found the South Bend mayor at 8 percent. In mid-July, the Fox poll found him at 5. And in mid-August, he is tied with U.S. Sen. Cory Booker and businessman Andrew Yang at 3 percent. (The margin of error is plus-or-minus 4.5 percent.)

An averaging of all national polls calculated by RealClearPolitics.com shows Buttigieg still hanging on to fifth place with 5.2 percent of the vote, behind Biden (30.5 percent), Warren (17.3 percent), Sanders (16 percent) and Harris (8 percent).

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SIDEBAR

Heavily LGBT neighborhoods' dollars to Democrats

This list below shows what percentage of dollars given in 40 heavily LGBT zip codes went to each of the five major Democratic candidates for president. The data was reported to the Federal Elections Committee by the political action committee ActBlue.com to cover the first six months of 2019. The Los Angeles Times analyzed the raw data and published a map showing the dollars given to each candidate in each zip code:

—Buttigieg	38 percent
—Harris	22 percent
—Warren	18 percent
—Sanders	13 percent
—Biden	9 percent

Top 10 LGBT zip codes contributing to Buttigieg

The list below shows the 10 heavily LGBT zip codes which gave the most dollars to openly gay Democratic presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg through ActBlue in the first half of 2019:

—Chelsea (NYC 10011)	\$219,457
—Castro (SF 94114)	\$188,518
—W. Hollywood (LA 90069)	\$180,797
—W. Hollywood (LA 90046)	\$137,490
—Boystown (Chicago 60657)	\$119,477
—West Village (NYC 10014)	\$118,338
—Mission Hill (SF 94110)	\$113,527
—Haight-Asbury (SF 94117)	\$101,074
—South End (Boston 02118)	\$83,442
—Provincetown (MA 02657)	\$81,977

Note: The Chicago neighborhood with the zip code 60640 (Andersonville) was not in the top 10 nationally in contributions to Buttigieg, but its breakdown is as follows:

—\$64,371 Buttigieg (45 percent)
—\$13,225 Harris (9 percent)
—\$30,366 Warren (21 percent)
—\$3,877 Biden (3 percent)
—\$31,676 Sanders (22 percent)

Lighthouse plots protest strategies

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Community members, among them stakeholders from several Chicago-area religious organizations, gathered at Lighthouse Church in Lincoln Park the morning of Aug. 10 to discuss community engagement around Center on Halsted.

Rev. Jamie Frazier of Lighthouse—who also heads up the Lighthouse Foundation, which advocates equity issues on behalf of Black LGBT community members—is leading calls for the Center to fire its longtime security contractor, Walsh Security. The head of Walsh Security, Thomas Walsh, is a Chicago Police Department officer, who has faced allegations of racism.

Frazier emphasized that the key “target” of the protests is Center CEO Modesto Tico Valle.

“The buck stops with him, and [why] he continues to employ a racist, is just unfathomable to me,” Frazier said, adding that the central demands are Walsh’s dismissal and that Lighthouse and community allies be consulted in the hiring of Walsh’s replacement.

For more details on the protests, see <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/EXCLUSIVE-Community-activists-launch-focus-on-Center-on-Halsted/66714.html>.



Lighthouse Church Rev. Jamie Frazier.
Photo by Matt Simonette

HRC releases HEI; 16 Illinois hospitals cited as leaders

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC) released its 12th annual Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), which scores healthcare facilities on policies and practices dedicated to the equitable treatment and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees.

A record 680 healthcare facilities actively participated in this year’s survey—with 406 of them earning a top score of 100, earning HRC’s “Leader in LGBTQ Health Care Equality” designation. In addition, the HRC Foundation researched key policies at 1,000 non-participating hospitals across the nation.

The survey noted 16 Illinois facilities as leaders. Chicago sites included Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Ann & Robert H Lurie Childrens Hospital of Chicago, Howard Brown Health, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, University of Chicago Medical Center and VA Jesse Brown Medical Center.

Facilities were scored in four areas. The first criterion involved the foundational elements of LGBTQ patient-centered care. The three remaining criteria were patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and patient and community engagement. In addition, this year participants had to demonstrate that they offered transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits.

The full index is at HRC.org/hej.

Dorothy Brown not running for re-election

Longtime Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown has announced that she will not be running for re-election next year, The Chicago Tribune reported.

Brown—the subject of a federal probe for years—said she’ll be able to earn a pension next year, when she will mark 20 years of service as a countywide elected official. She told the Tribune that she plans on entering the for-profit sector.

Despite the aforementioned probe, Brown won re-election in 2016 (defeating Ald. Michelle Harris and gay attorney Jacob Meister) and ran for Chicago mayor in the 2019 election, supporting Amara Enyia after withdrawing from the race. (Brown has not been charged with wrongdoing, although the newspaper noted she took thousands of dollars in campaign contributions and gifts from employees, and required employees to pay if they wanted to wearing jeans on Fridays.)

The Tribune item is at <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-cook-county-circuit-court-clerk-dorothy-brown-wont-see-reelection-20190814-tgym4f4c6vca3g6v6hwmnxbgi-story.html>.



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Gold Coast
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506 W. Roscoe St. #401
East Lakeview
\$925,000



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\$649,500



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COMPASS

Equality Illinois looks ahead with more diverse board

BY MATT SIMONETTE

LGBT-rights advocacy Equality Illinois recently began its new fiscal year with a board of directors organization officials say better reflects the diversity of the constituency it serves.

There are 20 persons serving on the Equality Illinois Board, with 50 percent identifying as people of color; 50 percent identifying as women; 25 percent identifying as allies; and 10 percent identifying as transgender, according to CEO Brian C. Johnson.

"It's really important to us that not only do we engage a diverse cross section of our community, but that a diverse cross section of our community is represented in leadership, staff and the board," said Johnson, who added that the organization's reasoning was twofold.

"One, it enables us to make better decisions," he added. "We are able to focus on the right issues and we're able to support the best policies because we have so many different voices from so many communities represented."

"Also, it's important because we want many members of our community to be able to look at Equality Illinois and see their identity reflected in decision-making roles, and therefore deepen their confidence that we can be strong advocates for them."

Many non-profit organizations fall back on boards of directors made up of individuals brought in because of business or political connections, fundraising abilities or generous contributions; quite often, that leads to initiatives that aren't especially informed when engaging an organization's signature issues, said Board Member and Equality Illinois Institute Board Chair Butch Trusty.

With a more diverse board, Trusty added, "We can really engage and bring personal experiences, knowledge and expertise to help staff think about the strategies of the organization, the positions that we take on particular issues, and what issues we should be elevating, rather than being about a board that is just about raising money, seeking contributions or adding things to our resume. Having life experiences or professional experiences matters for board engagement."

Board member Reyna Ortiz, a transgender woman who is beginning her third year, said that she generally prefers the "gritty work" of activism and had turned down previous offers to join various boards—offers, she noted, that usually came via emails or text messages.

But such was not the case with Johnson's overtures to join, Ortiz said. She praised the CEO for speaking with her on several occasions about her work, experiences and concerns, adding, "He was really trying to get a feel for where I was at."

Johnson "felt that my connections to the com-

munity were important to the board—my connections to trans women and the ground work that I have done, all the things that I have done in the community," Ortiz said. "He wanted to bring that ideology and the work to the board, which I thought was super-important. So often, trans women, especially trans women of color, have been left behind and sort of abandoned by the rest of the LGBT community."

Board member Lynne Perryman said that having board members who are relatable to their constituency "helps holistically."

"I'm a lesbian, biracial woman in the community," she added. "It always feels like the donors and the Capital Club members have a higher level of comfort with our decision-making when the board represents diversity that exists within your communities as well. If our communities see a diverse board, they're going to be more inclined to donate, come to our events and support Equality's mission."

Johnson has been with Equality Illinois for three years, and said that diversifying the board "has been a key priority for myself and the board the entire time I've been here. When I came on, the board was only 25 percent people of color and 17 percent female-identified. No trans board members."

When Johnson began his tenure, he participated in numerous fact-finding conversations across the state. He recalled that he was repeatedly told by community members and stakeholders that they didn't think Equality Illinois could adequately represent their viewpoints.

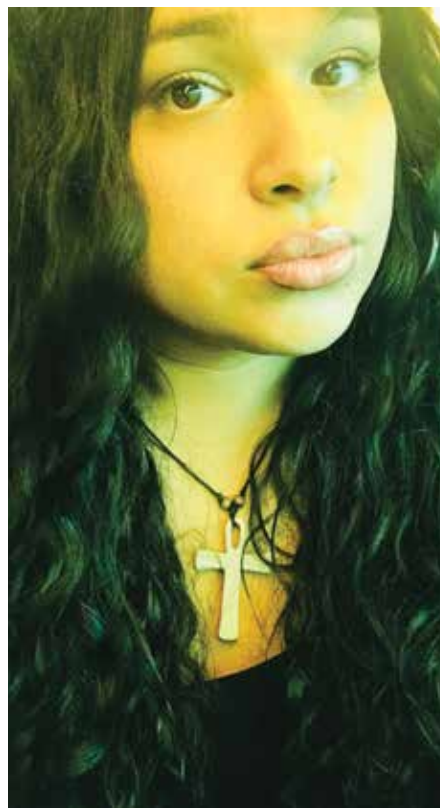
"I can't point to a single-issue that was impeded by a lack of diversity [previously], but I can say that there were communities—communities of color, the trans community, women—who said, 'This is not a place where we feel as represented and that we can really trust that the best decisions are being made for us,'" Johnson said.

Trusty added, "There are other organizations, not just in Illinois, but elsewhere, that want to have legitimacy and credibility on issues ... that don't have those groups reflected in their leadership. For me, as a person of color, it is difficult for me to buy into their legitimacy on those issues."

But with this shift, Equality Illinois "is really making a conscious effort to include the voices that are at the center of the arguments we are trying to fight for," said Myles Brady Davis, the organization's director of communications.

Johnson admitted that he'd like to see more extensive representation from persons in other parts of Illinois; the organization has long grappled with challenges of extending its influence and advocacy to areas outside of Cook County.

Several staffers are originally from other parts of Illinois but, "We have a lot more work to make



Equality Illinois board member Reyna Ortiz.

Photo courtesy of Ortiz

sure that our staff and our board reflect a more diverse cross-section of the state," Johnson said. "Lifting up a diverse cross-section of a community is never done. I'm proud of the leadership that we've assembled, but we have not 'arrived.' We will always have to be working on this."

Ortiz said that she has nonetheless been energized by her time on the Equality Illinois board, and views her tenure not just as beneficial to the organization but a chance to give more to the communities she serves through her community work.

"Part of the trans community benefits when there is a trans woman who is a social service worker fighting for issues in the trans community," she explained. "I'm getting an opportunity to learn about policies and procedures that are

important to my community that I would have never really given so much thought to before."

Board member Channyn Lynne Parker, whose tenure began July 2019, concurred with Ortiz.

"Many individuals outside the realm of service provision and politics don't know the inner workings of how things go on," Parker said. "... For me this is about providing an educational lens to communities to let them know, 'Hey, this is why boards are important. This is the process that happens before decisions are actually made.' This is better, in the long run, for communities and organizational heads."

Fahrenheit award reception Aug. 23

Fahrenheit Chicago and Equality Illinois will co-host the Fahrenheit Chicago Honors Reception on Friday, Aug. 23, 7-10 p.m., at Connect Gallery, 1520 E. Harper Ct.

Howard Brown Health and The Reva & David Logan Foundation are presenting the event.

Among the honors being distributed are:

—the Civic Leadership Award, to Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx and Illinois Deputy Gov. Sol Flores;

—the Lifetime Achievement Award, to Charles Nelson III, of Addodi and the South Side Help Center, as well as Pat McComb and Vera Washington, of Executive Sweet;

—the Rising Leader Award, to Rae Chardonnay and Nick Alder, of Party Noire; and

—the Community Service Award, to Tatyana Moatan and Joel D. Jackson, of House of Balmain and the University of Chicago.

This event is part of a Fahrenheit Chicago 3 weekend that will include the Aug. 24 talk "Beyond The Rhetoric Forum" at Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park Ave. (including state Rep. Lamont J. Robinson, Charlene Carruthers, Channyn Parker, Ty Cratic, Myles Brady Davis and others); a Fahrenheit Chicago Day part at 5-9 p.m.; and "Bronzeville Is Burning" on Sunday, Aug. 25, 1-8 p.m., at the DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 E. 56th Pl., which will include a mini-ball, museum tour and more.

See "Fahrenheit Chicago Honors Reception" on Facebook as well as <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/fahrenheit-chicago-3/>.

Safe Schools Alliance merges with PHIMC

After almost a year of integrating operations, the boards of directors for Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) and Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) have announced a merger.

The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2018, expressing their intent to merge. Since then, PHIMC and the Alliance have worked together to consolidate daily operations, unite strategic goals and create a partnership. Last month, in a unanimous vote, leaders of both organizations approved the merger.

Leigh Gallery closing party Aug. 23

The Boystown business The Leigh Gallery, 3306 N. Halsted St., will end its 15-year run with closing party Friday, Aug. 23, 5-9 p.m.

Owner Jean Leigh said in a goodbye letter, "I will be changing my career path and onto wonderful new adventures! Joe will continue in the arts and is enthusiastic [about] his future endeavors."

In April, Windy City Times reported that Leigh is retiring and planning on moving to Wisconsin with her wife.

The Aug. 23 event will also feature what is being called a "huge sale." See TheLeighGallery.com.

Hamburger Mary's business for sale

The popular Andersonville restaurant Hamburger Mary's is for sale, Eater Chicago reported.

SVN Chicago Commercial presented the exclusive listing for this business, according to Biz-BuySell.com. The listing (with an asking price of \$185,000) says, "The property is located at 5400-5402 N Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois. The 5200 N Clark property consists of a two-story, hard corner space with approximately 2,350sf per floor plus basement. The 5402 N Clark building is a ground floor space with basement."

Hamburger Mary's is a franchise brand with sites in California, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin. A second Illinois Mary's is currently operating in Oak Park and will remain open, according to an employee.

The chain—which first opened in 1972 in San Francisco—has previously closed restaurants in Portland and Berlin. According to ABCActionNews.com, Hamburger Mary's closed two locations in Florida earlier this year following a hepatitis A test and an I-Team investigation. The restaurant had posted on Facebook, "Hamburger Mary's Brandon and St. Petersburg to Close for Good by March 31 Due to the Continuing Damage to Mary's Good Name from the False Reports of the Health Department." Hamburger Mary's owner Kurt King blamed the Hillsborough County Health Department for ruining his business.

However, Hamburger Mary's International co-

a bigger dining space because that's our bread and butter—with 'Dining with Divas'—and we'd like a bigger stage, and for considerably less rent."

Wright also wanted to stress that "the building is not for sale and the name 'Hamburger Mary's' is not for sale. Also, we're not closing tomorrow. We want Hamburger Mary's to stay and have a presence in Chicago; it just won't be at that location [forever]—we know that. We don't want to be in a position where we have to charge \$18 for a burger."

The Eater article is at <https://chicago.eater.com/2019/8/8/20791605/hamburger-marys-attic-andersonville-brewing-co-drag-queens-burgers-for-sale>. The ABC Action News item is at <https://www.abccactionnews.com>.

—Andrew Davis

Gov. Pritzker signs pro-LGBTQ measures

On Aug. 9, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a number of measures—including at least three that are seen as specifically benefiting LGBTQ individuals.

HB 246 ensures the contributions of LGBTQ people are taught in public schools. It becomes effective July 1, 2020.

With state Rep. Anna Moeller (D-Elgin) and state Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago) as sponsors, the Inclusive Curriculum Law is an initiative of Equality Illinois, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and the Legacy Project, and is supported by more than 40 state education, healthcare and civil-rights organizations, Equality Illinois stated in a press release.

Also, under another measure (SB 1378), LGBTQ Illinoisans are protected from discrimination in jury service. The legislation, which was sponsored by State Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-Chicago Heights) and State Rep. Daniel Didech (D-Buffalo Grove),

passed the Illinois General Assembly unanimously, according to a separate Equality Illinois press release. Other states have similar LGBTQ-inclusive jury service non-discrimination laws, including California, Colorado, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin.

In addition, SB 1379 makes LGBTQ older adults and people living with HIV target populations in aging programs funded through the federal Older Americans Act. The bill also protects all Illinoisans from discrimination in assisted living and shared housing facilities. State Sen. Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago) and state Rep. Theresa Mah (D-Chicago) are the sponsors.

This measure also takes effect July 1, 2020.



@windycitytimes

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Hamburger Mary's logo.

Image courtesy of Hamburger Mary's

owner Ashley Wright told Windy City Times that the issue with the Andersonville location is rent.

"We have about a year and a half left on our lease," Wright said. "We do not own the business, and the rent in Andersonville is really high."

"For a burger place, we feel that we can only charge so much. The writing's on the wall and we know that we have to move so, as an exploratory option, we thought we'd put the space on the market. We'd love to be in a space with a bigger dining room because our whole complex [which includes Mary's Attic and Andersonville Brewing] is large, but our dining space is small. We'd love

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Michael Bauer reflects on a life of activism

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Activist Michael Bauer, originally an attorney and executive who has been active in fundraising in local LGBT, Jewish and womens' communities since the mid-'90s, recalls vividly sitting through the inauguration of Mayor Lori Lightfoot this past May.

"We were seated with the Lightfoot and Eshleman families in the middle section of the front row," he recalled of being with the relatives of the mayor and her wife, Amy Eshleman. At one point, Roger [Simon, Bauer's husband of 37 years] noticed that the mayor was looking straight at me because I was crying. What a phenomenal accomplishment for the mayor."

Bauer got on board Lightfoot's campaign in April 2018, when he became her finance chair.

"People thought I was crazy when I talked about her becoming the next mayor of Chicago," he said. "Part of that was, people were asking, 'Who is she?' The campaign was like like a roller-coaster. It was going great until Rahm [Emanuel] made the announcement that he would not run again. Then, all the big guys got in the race."

But Lightfoot, Bauer said, "was smart, thoughtful and determined to see this through, and I told her I was committed to seeing it through by her side."

Bauer has known Lightfoot for about 15 years but admitted he cannot remember where he first met her. Laughing, he added, "I must say, that's true of most people I know. I do at least remember how I met my husband."

Lightfoot was the latest in a number of prominent political candidates Bauer has put his money and support behind over the years.

"The common theme is they've all really been smart people," he explained. "I really like smart people in politics. They've all really been smart

on policy issues, and I'd be the first to tell you that I'm not. If you ask me about city issues—what should we do about economic development, transportation or pensions, for example—I'm going to look at you and have no clue."

Bauer added that he is, first and foremost, interested in issues facing the federal government, but he recognized in Lightfoot "one of the smartest people I have ever met, so that attracted me to her campaign. ... I was swept away with the notion of her being mayor of Chicago."

Among those he has supported were Judges Tom Chiola and Sebastian Patti; U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Dick Durbin; and Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward). At some point he and Durbin "just clicked," Bauer said, leading to his own activism "just getting a life of its own." His work has centered around LGBT rights, the U.S.-Israel relationship, reproductive rights and HIV/AIDS funding.

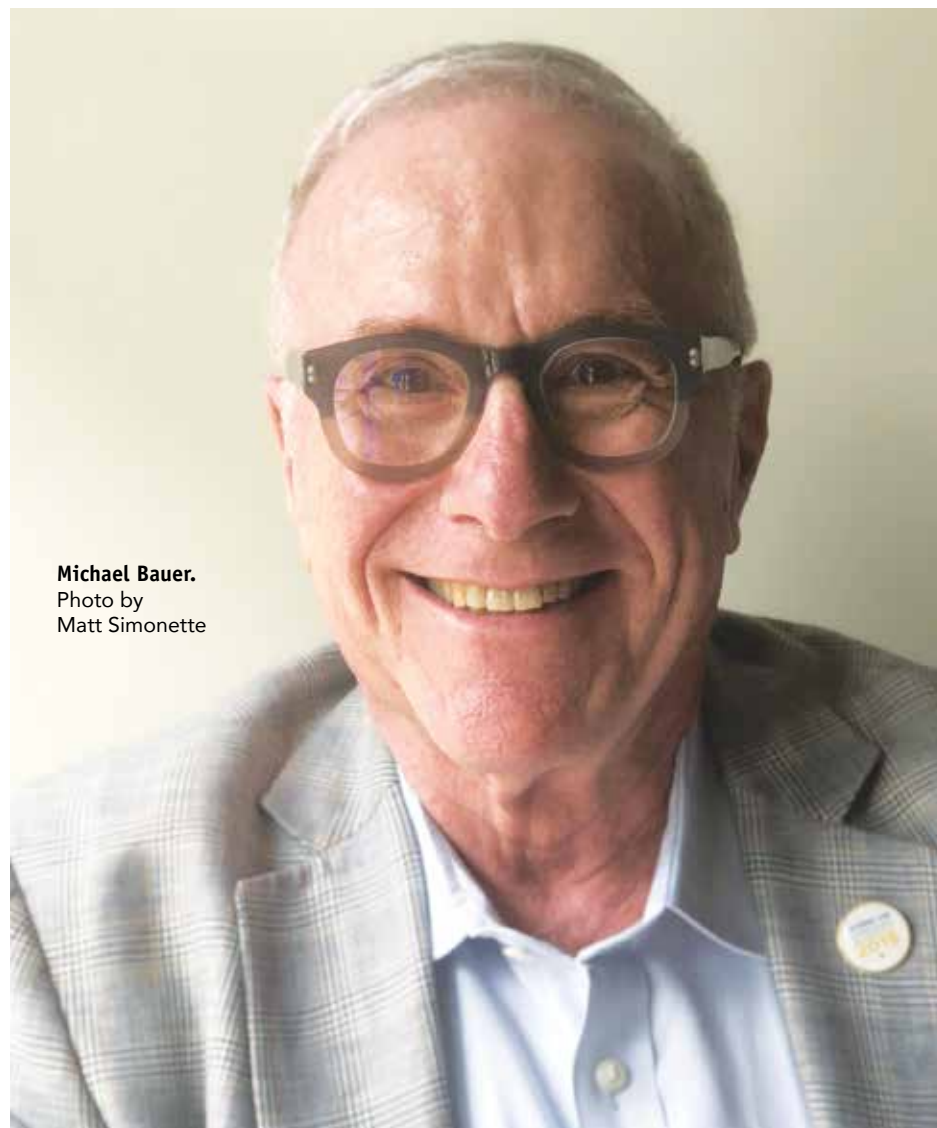
Bauer is most proud of taking part in a campaign aimed at bringing down U.S. Rep. Phil Crane, who represented the Northwest suburbs from 1969-2005. Crane, whom Bauer described as "bitterly anti-choice and anti-gay," was notoriously removed from his constituents and was ultimately defeated by Melissa Bean, who served 2005-11.

Bean lost once in 2002 before defeating Crane in 2004. Bauer was her finance chair in her second go-round.

"Melissa was not a member of our community in any way, but taking out [Crane] was really important," Bauer said. "It's like rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies."

Bauer said that his activism was inspired by the late activist and physician Ron Sable, who ran to be the 44th Ward alderman in 1987 and 1991.

"Here was Ron, a medical doctor, and we were going through the AIDS crisis at the time," Bauer recalled. "No matter what we could raise in re-



Michael Bauer.
Photo by
Matt Simonette

sources for healthcare, housing, food and social services, it just wasn't enough. We had no entree into government—the city, county, state and federal government had no interest in helping. Ron took the Harvey Milk approach and said, 'We have to elect our own. When they close their doors, he have to be behind them.'"

Sable lost both those bids, but his candidacy "cleared the way for Chiola, Patti and [state Rep. Larry] McKeon," Bauer added.

Another inspiration to Bauer was the late Tom Stoddard, who was executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund during 1986-92 and who brought Bauer onto that organization's national board.

"I was suddenly on two paths, getting involved with nonprofits and getting involved with political campaigns, and they actually fit together," he said.

Many advocates decry activism such as Bauer's, which is dependent on raising money and forging connections with political and financial centers of power. But he said, "If we want to play the political game, where we are listened to and have access, then we need to understand the rules—and master those rules. I'm sorry to say it, but money comes into politics."

He added, "An elected official gets many calls a day. With all those calls, whose calls do you think

that elected official is going to take first? It's just a reality in that situation."

Transgender members of the LGBT community need to be a key focus for the community, Bauer said.

"The trans community has come a long way in an incredibly short time, but there is so much hatred—I think that's the right word—towards people who are trans," he said. "The hatred displays itself in everything from murders to sexual assaults to discrimination. ... I'm not sure how committed the rest of the LGBT community is to understand the issues involved with that community and their rights."

Bauer has been in poor health for the last several months. But his mother—a Holocaust survivor who recently turned 103—still offers him inspiration.

She first had difficulty coming to terms with Bauer being gay, but Bauer said his mother, who's now accepting of him and his marriage, exemplifies how a person evolves over time. He speaks to her several times a day.

"She tells Roger all the time how much she loves us," Bauer said. "I think it's important to understand that, just because someone has the views they do today, doesn't mean that we should ultimately give up on them. I think a lot of people do evolve, and will evolve."



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Gay Chicago resident alleges discrimination by city employee

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

During the morning hours of April 25, Andersonville resident Leo Meere allegedly heard anti-LGBTQ comments from a Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) employee when he was walking home from the grocery store.

Meere's neighborhood was having the water and sewer lines replaced at the time. But that morning, one of the DWM employees' cars turned the wrong way down a one way street and nearly

plate had the person's initials and last name on it. Meere said the DWM employee got out of his car and started following him down the alley toward his apartment. Meere hurried to his door because he did not feel safe anymore.

The first thing Meere did was call former 40th Ward Ald. Patrick O'Connor's office to report the alleged incident. They asked that he email the details to them.

"It became obvious that no one in O'Connor's office was genuinely concerned in addressing the situation," said Meere.

"Although this happened after he lost the election but before his successor, Andre Vazquez, was sworn in, O'Connor was still being paid by the city to do his job. It was very frustrating to be dismissed when I reached out to my elected official for help."

Meere also contacted the DWM on April 25 and left a voicemail message, but said the department never called back. It was only after posting about the alleged incident on an Andersonville neighborhood Facebook page the same day that Meere was reportedly able to speak to Vazquez (whom he tagged in the post) via direct message. According to Meere, Vazquez gave DWM Deputy Commissioner Julie Hernandez his contact number; he said she called him that afternoon.

"Julie left me a voice message saying she was sorry this happened, that she would look into this for me, and I would hear back from her the next day," said Meere. "She never called back, and did not return any of my calls over the course of the next two weeks."

Meere said nothing more

happened until he posted about the lack of a response when someone asked him for an update on the original Facebook message. He said another concerned 40th Ward citizen called Hernandez to inquire about the DWM response after the update was posted. Meere said Hernandez left him an angry voicemail message for having people "harass her" at work, and that she had already turned the matter over to DWM Director of Administration Jackie Toledo—which Meere said was a surprise to him.

When Meere called Hernandez back, he said, she never apologized and continued to yell at

him. Meere then contacted Toledo, and she told him to send her the narrative and picture. He did so immediately, and Toledo said she would phone him if she had further questions.

Meere emailed Toledo back when he did not hear from her, and said she told him the matter would be sent to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). She later gave him the name of a contact there, who he said never returned his call.

When WCT contacted Toledo's office, the department responded that the incident was escalated to City of Chicago Inspector General Joseph Ferguson's office for further review. City of Chicago OIG Director of Communications and Outreach Natalie A. Kuriata told Windy City Times that complaints are reviewed and assessed according to several factors to see if they will open an investigation, refer the matter to the appropriate city department or decline to investigate. These factors include the complaints' credibility and investigative and office resources availability, among others.

"After reviewing the complaint, OIG referred it back to the DWM, where it could be more expeditiously handled," Kuriata emailed WCT. "In addition, given the nature of the complainant's allegation, OIG recommended that DWM counsel its employees on the City's Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy."

"The DWM takes very seriously any allegations of discriminatory behavior on the part of our employees," DWM Media Affairs Director Megan Vidis emailed WCT. "The OIG referred this matter back to the DWM and recommended EEO counseling for the employee in question, which he has received. EEO training is mandatory for all DWM employees

and addresses eliminating harassment and other types of discrimination in the workplace."

Following responses from the DWM and OIG offices, WCT reached out to Vazquez, who responded since the article initially ran. "In looking at the steps that were taken and the status of it currently, I think it is absolutely fair and important to ask what accountability there is in place for our city departments," he said. "Language and vitriol like the type that was described have no place in our city or coming from our city workers. We want a government that is transparent, accessible and accountable. The neighbors in our city deserve that much, and we will continue to work toward that end."

"I did not deserve to be intimidated and verbally harassed by someone who was on the clock and being paid by my tax dollars to do a city job," said Meere. "Chicago specifically lists sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes of people, but this government employee chose to use anti-LGBTQ slurs against me and that is not right."

What disturbed Meere most was the way he was "brushed off every time I inquired about the matter. All I wanted was for them to do their jobs and they did not seem to want to help me. In the end, that was worse than what happened to me when that city employee hurled those anti-LGBTQ comments at me."

Meere said that he has only lived in Chicago for two years, and that the first time he had to directly engage with city employees he was met with hostility—which is not what he thought would happen in a "supposedly pro-LGBTQ place to live."



Leo Meere (above) has alleged discrimination by a city employee. Photo courtesy of Meere

hit Meere, he alleges.

"I yelled out, 'Hey buddy, it is a one-way street,'" Meere told Windy City Times (WCT). "The driver responded, 'Fuck off, homo. I am working here.' As the car got closer, I could see the driver was wearing a yellow vest like the other city employees doing sewer line work on my block. I said, 'You still have to follow the law. You almost hit me.' He said, 'Who are you to tell me what to do? It is people like you who are what's wrong with this country.'"

Meere took a picture of the DWM employee's car, which was parked in the wrong direction, to document the alleged incident. The vanity license

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Paxton Pride organizer didn't give up on hometown

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

When the first hateful comments against Paxton's planned Pride parade appeared on the Ford County Record's Facebook page, organizer Tyger McClure had a new problem: talking his octogenarian father out of carrying a rifle at the celebration.

Paxton—about 110 miles south of Chicago—may seem like the sort of town where one has a better chance of banning dancing than hosting a Pride parade. Its 4,400 residents are overwhelmingly white. Carhartt and camo are perpetually in vogue, and Republican primaries decide elections. Less than a decade ago, a teenager was beaten within an inch of his life for being gay.

"Anybody that's different is harshly treated," McClure told Windy City Times, going on to describe racist and sexist behavior inherent to the town's culture.

And yet McClure—who has been openly gay since his early 20s—keeps coming back to Paxton. He'd visit every other weekend after he first moved to Chicago in the late '80s, and he moved back full-time in 2010 to care for his mother, who passed in 2011.

His family moved to the town in 1969, when McClure, the fourth of five kids, was four years old. He knew he was different by the time he was seven, though he didn't know he was gay yet. He also knew that there was no way he could talk about it to anybody.

The bullying started in high school, initially because McClure hit puberty late and looked it, but continued because of a rumor he was gay. McClure recalled an incident in his drivers' ed class where multiple male students groped him as part of their torment.

"There were many times I wish I'd been able

to be raised in even Champaign-Urbana," McClure said.

McClure saw his first taste of a different life when he moved with a gay peer to Schaumburg in 1987. This "trial run" was his first exposure to the larger LGBTQ community; he found a job and his own place to live, and after a few months back in Paxton he moved to the city in 1988.

"I can't imagine what it's like for people who never left," McClure said.

A year later, he visited home with his partner at the time and came out to his family.

Well, almost all of his family: His mother told McClure he would never be able to talk to his father about it and, 30 years later, he never has.

And even in Chicago, McClure wasn't entirely comfortable. He recalled bringing female friends to work functions in the '90s, even though he had a partner, because of an "unwritten rule" within the company.

Things got better for McClure in Chicago as time went on; he settled in Edgewater, and went on to march and perform in Pride and the Gay Games. But Paxton was stuck in the same spot.

"It still seems like a community that wants to maintain some kind of 'Paxton purity,' unfortunately," McClure said.

This year, McClure decided to tackle Paxton purity.

Organizing began only 10 days before the June 30 parade, but the makings of the parade went back to a few years before McClure moved back to Paxton, when he partook in "guerilla gay bars" that would take over a straight bar for a night. He and his Chicago friends had considered for years bringing the idea to the small towns in which many of them had grown up.

McClure obtained a permit from the mayor's office, put the event on Facebook and bought



Tyger McClure.

Photo courtesy of McClure

supplies, including 150 handheld Pride flags his family helped him assemble—and one six-by-10-foot flag.

And, despite the hateful comments and an armed senior citizen, the date of the parade came.

More than 200 people ultimately marched; the Ford County Record described the community as "overwhelmingly supportive." McClure's lesbian niece carried the flag in the honor guard.

"This resonates a lot further than Paxton, Illinois," McClure said.

McClure said he was overwhelmed only twice: when the editor of the Ford County Record

showed him the proofs for the next day's front page, with the Pride parade front and center; and when his dad showed up.

"It was something you wanna bottle up and just have with you," McClure said.

The giant flag now hangs in McClure's house, signed by the marchers. He's planning for a follow-up march next year, although he doesn't know how much longer he'll continue to live in Paxton. But he'll undoubtedly be back.

"It'll always be home, even if I'm physically living somewhere else," McClure said.

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Goldie Goldbloom on new book, being a queer Chasidic Jew

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Chicago author and queer Chasidic Jew Goldie Goldbloom's newest book is *On Division*. It centers on the life of Surie Eckstein in Brooklyn, New York and what happens to her when she becomes pregnant but decides to keep it a secret from her family. This secret becomes tangled up with another, earlier secret—the identity of Surie's son, Lipa, who is gay.

Goldbloom told *Windy City Times* that she wanted to write *On Division* because it focuses on the difficulties LGBTQ children face in religious communities.

"I never thought I would write anything about something so close to home—but once I started, I realized I had a lot to say," she said.

This past June, Goldbloom's publisher—Farrar, Straus and Giroux—hosted a luncheon at her Chicago home to promote the book. Guests noshed on Goldbloom's homemade kosher delicacies and took home cookies from Emma's Bagel Cafe.

"We decided to hold this pre-publication lunch as an opportunity for local booksellers and media to meet Goldie in person and hear her speak about the book in an intimate setting," said Farrar,

Straus and Giroux publicist Chloe Texier-Rose.

"I have never hosted so many booksellers in my home before," said Goldbloom. "It was fun, intimate and a warm, enjoyable time."

This is not Goldbloom's first foray into writing. She has also written the award-winning books *Gwen, You Lose These and Other Stories* as well as *The Paperbark Shoe*, currently on the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read list.

Goldbloom was raised in Western Australia in a farming family. Her earliest memories involve her family's farm north of Perth, where they would sleep in old-fashioned hospital beds.

"I had to climb up on a box to get into bed," said Goldbloom. "I used to love jumping from bed to bed and making the spring's crash. I loved putting my cold feet up on the door of the wood burning stove and getting them all toasty. It was a fantastic place and I loved it."

"When I was not north of Perth, I was south, way down in Albany, fishing with my other grandmother, who was a writer ... I have always felt that the best fun can be had with your own family, and even today, my best times are spent with my family, whether born to me or chosen."

After college, Goldbloom embarked on a career



Goldie Goldbloom.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

that included being an editor, contributing editor and freelance writer for a number of magazines and newspapers before becoming a published author in her 40s.

Goldbloom said what drives her to write is her innate curiosity about the world around her, "especially when there are deep problems in the world, as there are now, my mind keeps on making strange connections between the issues and possible solutions. I am a polymath, and I read widely about all kinds of unconnected things, which then become connected in my stories."

Goldbloom lives on Chicago's North Side near Skokie, and has eight children, most of whom are now adults.

"My kids swore me to secrecy about their lives when I became a writer," said Goldbloom. "They said that I cannot write stories about them or speak about them to the newspapers and I think that is fair. What I can tell you is this—they are a wildly eclectic, brilliant mob and I am ridiculously proud of every single one of them."

Goldbloom added that she stayed in Chicago because she likes Lake Michigan and the "wonderfully kind and funny and real Midwesterners."

Outside of writing her books, Goldbloom works for queer visibility in the Chicago Chasidic community.

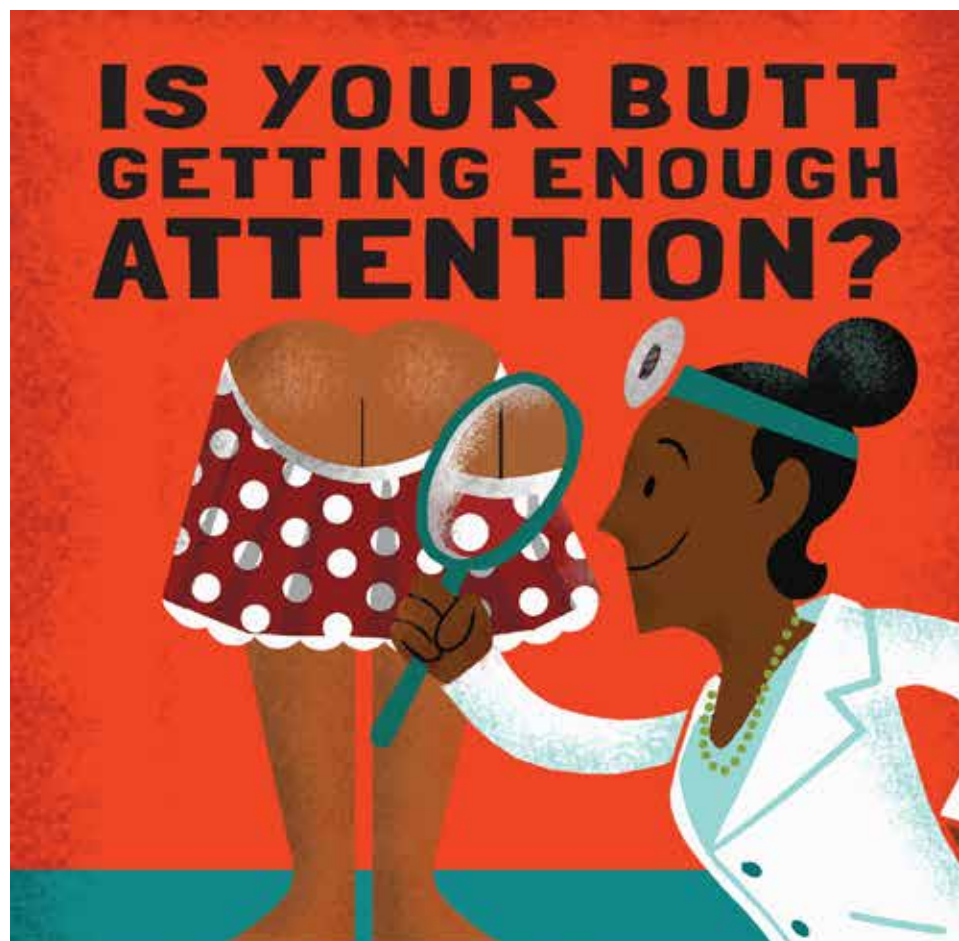
"I am the only out queer person that I know who is still living a Chasidic life in the community," said Goldbloom. "Queer Orthodox Jews with unaccepting families face a loss of God, hope and community."

Goldbloom calls herself a left-wing religious person who observes all 613 mitzvos (commandments), including the way she dresses, eats and is mindful of everything she does, says and writes.

Goldbloom nevertheless enjoys very ordinary pleasures.

"My idea of a fun day might be a swim in the ocean followed by a long read, and then salad on the beach with the kids as we watch the sun go down and the stars come out," said Goldbloom.

On Tuesday, Sept. 17, Goldbloom is set to release her latest fiction book, *On Division*, and will hold a book launch event at 7 p.m. at Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St. To RSVP, visit <https://www.womenandchildren-first.com/event/book-launch-party-division-goldie-goldbloom>.



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Pushing for inclusivity in children's books: One publisher shows how

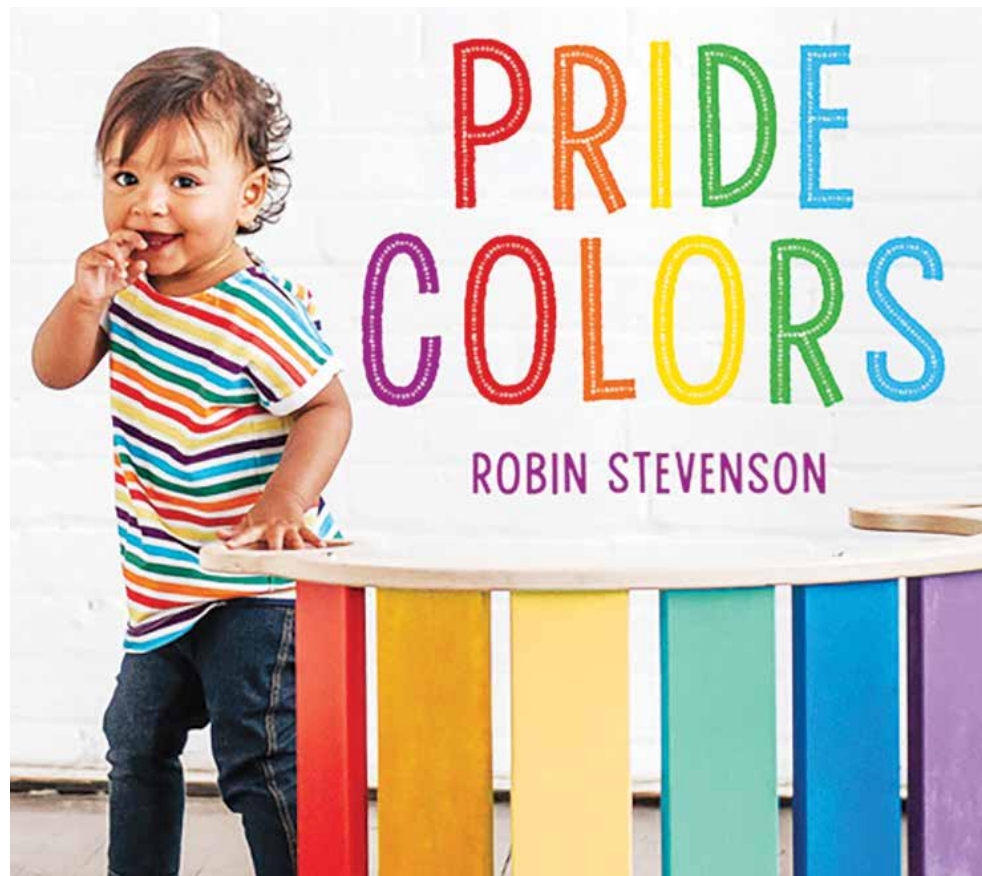
Orca Book Publishers of British Columbia, Canada, is an independent publisher with the goal of offering "reading material that represents the diversity of human experience to readers of all ages." Among other titles, they have produced two of my recent favorite LGBTQ-inclusive children's books: *Pride Colors*, by Robin Stevenson, a bright board book for the youngest tots, and *A Plan for Pops*, by Heather Smith and Brooke Kerrigan, a poignant story about a two-grandfather couple and their gender-ambiguous grandchild. Publisher and owner Andrew Wooldridge was kind enough to speak with me recently about the 35-year-old company and its commitment to diverse books.

Orca had started actively looking for more inclusive stories nearly two decades ago when they launched several series geared for struggling readers, Wooldridge said. Finding authors to create diverse content "happened pretty organically," he explained, "which is, I think, why it's been successful." As authors such as Stevenson and Carrie Mac (both queer parents) approached Orca, the company began "figuring out what was important" to these writers.

"Our focus has slowly become more and more about diversity and compassion and indigenous stories as well," he said. Much of their success, he feels, comes from finding authors who can write from their own experiences. "It really is about helping them tell their stories," he believes. When it comes to nonfiction, he said, books about subjects like Ramadan or Passover, for example, should reflect "somebody who isn't just knowledgeable about it, but actually has lived these things. I think the same thing goes for LGBTQ content."

For their LGBTQ-inclusive books, Wooldridge explained, they sought to include characters who would be broadly appealing and tried to avoid "really basic" coming out stories. Another important factor, he said, was offering "stories across the spectrum that present issues without banging people over the head with them." With *A Plan for Pops*, for example, "We could easily have done that book about a heterosexual married couple and it would have been a similar kind of story, but I think it's much more effective [as an LGBTQ-inclusive story] when it doesn't have a big billboard on it. It just lets people read it and treat it as 'This is who we are.' We see the same thing with presenting stories with a multicultural cast of characters without making it about somebody's race."

In addition to their diverse fiction books, Orca



this year launched Orca Issues, a series of "critical-thinking nonfiction for teens," tackling sometimes contentious topics such as feminism, abortion rights, and (in September) assisted dying. This didn't mean offering a platform for bigotry, however. "It became clear pretty quickly that there aren't two sides to a lot of these issues," he said. "You don't present a balanced view of something like reproductive rights or feminism because as far as I'm concerned, the way we publish, there's only one side to these things, really."

This approach has occasionally given rise to backlash. Stevenson had a few events cancelled over her middle-grade nonfiction book *Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community*. And after her Orca Issues book about abortion rights, *My Body, My Choice*, came out, Wooldridge said, "I've seen pushback from schools who've said, 'We've bought every other book that you've published, but we never will again because of what you've done,' which I think means that we must be doing our job right. But in some ways, that's why we're doing it, to get people to actually pay attention."

"I welcome a little bit of controversy about what we're doing," he asserted. "There's this saying in publishing: There's nothing better than having somebody attempt to ban a book, because it just gets the book talked about." He added, "We have the luxury in some ways in that we have a successful publishing program and can take chances on things if we're not sure what the market looks like or what the reaction will be."

He contrasts this with some educational publishers who "publish safely so that you don't offend

anybody." The publishers making a difference, he asserts, "are those ones who are independent and able to take the risk." At times, he said, "You do see major publishers, some of the multinationals, taking chances on some of the things they publish, but they have to answer to somebody. I'm lucky that I don't have to answer to anybody. So we can take a risk on some things, doing it just because we believe it's a story that needs to be out there."

That need remains strong, especially given the recent political climate in the U.S., where Orca sees most of its sales. Nor is Canada immune. "I see the same pressures here as well," he asserted.

Wooldridge finds a silver lining, however. "I think one of the benefits of the current political situation in the U.S. is that it's forcing change faster than it would have happened otherwise. We're seeing it in the way we publish and the media we read," he said. "Many more people are engaged now than they were four years ago and many more people are thinking about things that they never would have before."

Wooldridge has also been motivated by his own experience helping his own three sons find diverse content and "realizing we need to be doing more of it for everybody," he said. "The focus has really become on being as inclusive as possible, but also trying to push that as far as we can."

For more on Orca and its upcoming titles, visit orcabook.com (Canada) or us.orcabook.com (U.S.)

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (Mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.



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The combined forces of Windy City Times,
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WEEKLY

NUNN ON ONE

Michael
Feinstein:
The legend
returns to
Ravinia

BY JERRY NUNN

Cabaret king Michael Feinstein returns to Ravinia Festival this month with singer Haley Reinhart in her Ravinia debut. Songs will span over decades of the music Feinstein is known for playing.

As the ambassador of the Great American Songbook, Feinstein has earned many accolades over the years including five Grammy nominations and two Emmy nominations. He won a Drama Desk Special Award in 1988. He's performed at The White House, Hollywood Bowl and Buckingham Palace in the past.

In 2008, Feinstein made Carmel, Indiana the headquarters of The Great American Songbook Foundation. Its mission is to preserve, research and exhibit the physical artifacts of music in an archive and reference library. The Great American Songbook refers to the standards from the 20th century in popular music and jazz. He brought the Songbook to the Pasadena POPS in 2012 where he was named principal POPS conductor, with his contract ending this year.

His memoir *The Gershwins and Me: A Personal History in Twelve Songs* was about him working with Ira Gershwin and he's appeared multiple times as a host on Turner Classic Movies over the years.

Feinstein called to discuss his upcoming concert and projects that are just on the horizon.

Windy City Times: It's been a while since we talked. You are a New Yorker these days?

Michael Feinstein: I'm originally from Ohio, but I divide my time between New York, LA and Indiana where I have The Great American Songbook Foundation.

WCT: How do you decide on a set list for Ravinia?

MF: The first thing we decided on was using a big band for this gig, because it's so much fun to work with a big band. It's justified with the setting for Ravinia, the size of the place and it's acoustically spectacular. I started working on a repertoire that's a combination of Great American Songbook and Broadway. There will be some contemporary music, meaning dipping into the catalogue of Carole King and James Taylor. There was a second wave of classic American songs with these artists.

We have the incredible addition of Haley Reinhart. Christine Ebersole was supposed

to do the engagement, but she got a television series and had to cancel. I was flummoxed by that. Christine is a dear friend and she was upset by that. She is from Winnetka and was looking forward to a reunion with friends.

It occurred to me that maybe Haley would be interested. I have admired her work from afar with videos of Postmodern Jukebox. She performed with Jeff Goldblum down the street from me in L.A. I was thrilled when she said yes. She can sing anything from pop songs to standards.

WCT: I just talked to her a few days ago. She's sweet. How many times have you played Ravinia?

MF: I don't know. Last year was with Kristin Chenoweth, then before that it was with Pink Martini. Back in the day, I can't count the number times I have played Ravinia.

WCT: Did Kristin bring her dog Thunder with her?

MF: No. She brought her boyfriend, but not her dog!

WCT: How do you create a song for such a big space like Ravinia?

MF: Microphones! It's funny, I started my career playing piano bars. A year after my success in New York, I got an offer to play at the Hollywood Bowl and I learned to do the same things that I did in a smaller venue. You fill up the space mentally and spiritually. There's a way to make your aura larger. I went from playing intimate spaces to 17,000 people.

From that point on, I have played large venues. The only clubs I play are the ones I own, because I still like those intimate settings. To play a large space doesn't require fundamental change because singing a song is still intimate communication. It's connecting to the audience that makes them feel you are singing to them. I'm blessed with the gift to be able to do that.

WCT: Is there a new Broadway show that you like?

MF: I have not seen *Hadestown*, but everyone says that's the one to see. The last thing I saw was *My Fair Lady* with Laura Benanti. That was fantastic.

WCT: How was working with Cheyenne Jackson in a nightclub act?

MF: Cheyenne is one of the most talented people I know. He has a God given voice that has a range that's multi-octave. He's part of a generation that can sing anything. He can sing traditional songs and

Michael Feinstein.
Photo courtesy of
Guttman PR

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THEATER REVIEW

All Quiet on the Western Front

Playwright: adapted by Matt Foss, from the novel by Erich Maria Remarque

At: Red Tape Theatre at the Greenhouse, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.

Tickets: RedTapeTheatre.org; free

Runs through: Sept. 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

World War I might not have been truly the “war to end all wars,” but it was the war that banished attrition as a viable method of conducting armed combat. The ballistic equivalent of a staring contest, the hardships associated with stationary readiness made for more casualties on both sides resulting from disease, privation, anomie and psychological disorders than ever fell to hostile fire.

Their discomforts encompass such familiar GI blues as the lack of food, female company and news of home, along with corruption among the higher-ups, malingerers in the ranks, and the willful ignorance of civilians. Matt Foss’ adaptation shuns overt proclamations of partisanship (“I never SAW a Frenchman until I was aiming a gun at them!” declares a farmer’s son) to instead convey the universality of life—and death—on the front lines so vividly that we almost forget that these forlorn frightened lads are—according to our governments—our enemies.

Our empathy is escalated by Foss’ directive to producing companies recommending noncompliance with literal visual/aural representation in casting. Thus, while Remarque’s characters retain their designated identities, the Red Tape Theatre’s ensemble reflects fluidity regarding ethnic, gender and other physical restrictions. Our narrator, the sensitive Private Baumer, for example, is played by cis-female Elena Victoria Feliz, while

Brenda Scott Wlazlo’s sadistic Corporal Himmels-toss barks orders in treble range and Joel Rodriguez’s sly Private Westhus stalks the latter in a wheelchair.

The walls of the bunkers where most of the action transpires are constructed from a row of pianos—objects well-suited to patrolling with silent step, scrambling atop in frenzied attack, or sheltering beneath from artillery shells exploding in bursts of spray-bottle dust. Their metaphor is extended by a soundscape incorporating evocative martial riffs from “Gimme Shelter” “Volunteers” and “Masters of War.” Visual spectacle also includes choreographed blackout creeps lit solely by flashlights and harrowing glimpses of field surgery.

The performance time may only be a fraction over 90 minutes, but by the final moments before a deceptively gentle tune plays us out of the Greenhouse, we are as emotionally exhausted as if we ourselves had marched in the much-handed-down boots of weary veterans.



All Quiet on the Western Front.

Photo by Austin Oie

THEATER REVIEW

The Fly Honey Show

Authors: Erin Killmurray (concept), Mary Williamson and Shannon Matesky

At: The Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets:

<http://www.theflyhoneyshow.com/events>;

\$22.50-\$45, \$100 VIP

Runs through: Sept. 7

BY JULIA HALE

Last week at The Den Theatre in Wicker Park, The Fly Honey Show debuted its 10th season celebrating bodies, sex and queerness with a classic burlesque twist. Even the lobby was part of the

celebration, featuring a set-up by Emma Alamo, a local woman who makes leather harnesses “and other hot accessories” (according to her business card) for all body types. Upon arrival, the lobby was packed with audience members waiting for the show to start.

The Fly Honey Show is a revue complete with singing, dancing and spoken acts. With witty, sexual jokes sprinkled throughout the performance and a focus on racial and social issues, there’s a little something for everyone. The songs performed included originals as well as covers of well-known songs, contemporary and classic alike. Behind the hexagon-shaped center stage was a stage with a live band.

The show was hosted by three women: Molly Brennan, Shannon Matesky (an understudy who

filled in for Sydney Charles) and Mary Williamson—the “Host Trifecta.” The Host Trifecta introduced the show, the acts and performed some numbers as a trio, including Frank Sinatra’s “My Way.”

The non-burlesque acts included a stand-up routine from queer comedian Shannon Noll, a performance from transgender dancer Laksha Dantran, a poem by McKenzie Chinn and a performance from Chicago’s first all-female mariachi band, Mariachi Sirenas. Chinn’s poem, “First You Need a Body That Can Turn Into Light,” was a one-night-only act that changes for each show.

The cast is divided into The Fly Honeys (femmes and non-binary people) and The Hive (mascs and allies). The Fly Honeys danced to original songs and covers as well. The Hive only had one act in which they danced, clad in denim, to a mashup of the songs “Drop It Like It’s Hot,” by Snoop Dogg, and “Hot Boyz,” by Missy Elliott. My favorite act was a trio of women who danced to Def Leppard’s “Pour Some Sugar On Me” and other songs using cakes as props.

The Fly Honey Show, while educational, is very much an adult show. The show is also well-balanced; I laughed at the fun, crude sex jokes, but things also got real. Chinn’s poem had to do with racial-justice issues and consent was discussed numerous times, with the hosts reminding audience members to obtain it before touching performers (and anyone else).

Erin Killmurray created The Fly Honey Show in 2009 by Erin Killmurray in an attempt to advance gender equality. Using an intersectional feminist lens, the 2019 version of The Fly Honey Show highlights body positivity and celebrates all gender identities—specifically uplifting femme, non-binary and transgender identities. It was pleasing to see all body types and a range of skin tones on stage. “We are different kinds of bodies with different kinds of experiences,” said the hosts. “But together our hive is mighty.”

CRITICS’ PICKS

The Band’s Visit, Cadillac Palace, Sept. 3-15—Critics’ Picks rarely promotes shows not yet open, but this disarming, tender, compassionate and entertaining musical must be seen despite its short run. Splurge on the close-up seats for this intimate show. JA

Pomona, Steep theatre, extended through Sept. 14. Alistair McDowall’s RPG fantasy gamers and biotechnical crime—will they escape, and is this really make-believe? MSB

You Can’t Fake the Funk, Black Ensemble through Sept. 22—Two dozen ‘60s, ‘70s and early ‘80s songs exceptionally well sung and played in this Funk music tribute, complete with towering platform shoes, billowing Afros and multitudinous spangles! JA

The Recommendation, Windy City Playhouse, through Sept. 22—Three socially-dissimilar young men pursue their ambitions in ten rooms of promenade staging, while we, literally, follow in their footsteps. MSB

—by Mary Shen Barnidge
and Jonathan Abarbanel

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THEATER REVIEW

The Hunchback of Notre Dame**Music:** Alan Menken;**Lyrics:** Stephen Schwartz;**Book:** Peter Parnell**At:** Music Theater Works at Cahn Auditorium,
600 Emerson St., Evanston**Tickets:** 847-920-5360 or**MusicTheaterWorks.com;** \$34-\$96**Runs through:** Aug. 25

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The Hunchback of Notre Dame is not the final production of Music Theater Works artistic director Rudy Hogenmiller and founder/general manager Bridget McDonough. There's still a Lerner & Loewe revue and a ubiquitous Andrew Lloyd Webber musical yet to come before the two officially retire.

But The Hunchback of Notre Dame feels like a grand finale to the Music Theater Works tenure of Hogenmiller and McDonough. Hogenmiller directs a majestic and gloriously sung production that is remarkable for many reasons.

Music Theater Works' Hunchback marks the musical's professional Chicago-area premiere. And that's amazing considering that a stage musical version of Disney's 1996 animated feature debuted in 1999 (a German-language Berlin production ran for three years).

Yet other Disney Hunchback productions didn't

proliferate. It's likely due to the global success of the rival 1998 French pop/rock Hunchback musical called Notre Dame de Paris.

Disney finally fashioned an English-language Hunchback for two regional tryouts in 2014 at California's La Jolla Playhouse and in 2015 at New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse. Yet Disney ultimately opted not to transfer Hunchback to Broadway.

So Music Theater Works jumped at the opportunity to lavish attention on Hunchback's local debut. The expanded Alan Menken/Stephen Schwartz score calls for huge choral forces, and Music Theater Works obliges with a full orchestra and a powerful onstage chorus stored in a grand gothic unit set borrowed from Front Row Theatrical Rental.

Hunchback also vocally soars with a 40-plus cast. The leading standouts include Billy Dawson as the bell ringer Quasimodo, Kent Joseph as the repressed archdeacon Dom Claude Frolo, Erik Dohner as the cathedral guard captain Phoebus de Martin and Anna Marie Abbate as the vivacious Esmeralda.

Peter Parnell's script features loads of narrators to get across Victor Hugo's 1482-set drama of religious hypocrisy and repression of the minority Roma travelers (an element that makes Hunchback so disturbingly relevant). So Hogenmiller's production aptly creates a storytelling ensemble who rotate in and out of small roles (including the stone gargoyles that offer advice to Quasimodo, who get downplayed compared to the huge comic relief they play in the animated film).

My only issues really with Music Theater Works'

Hunchback is that some of the performers don't plumb the full emotional depths of their characters in their acting. And I still have qualms about the show's origins of taking a Victor Hugo tragic novel and forcing it to fit into the mold of a Disney animated musical.

ney animated musical.

But otherwise Music Theater Works' Hunchback is an impressive and theatrical marvel. It's also a fitting early sendoff to both Hogenmiller and McDonough.

SPOTLIGHT

Joanna Furnans may be the only dancer on view in *Doing Fine*, Aug. 22-Sept. 8 at the grey space, but the world premiere work is the result of a year-long collaboration between a half-dozen artists, while Furnans was Chicago Dancemakers' Forum Lab Artist, a Schonberg Fellow, and a High Concepts Labs Incubation artist. *Doing Fine* transforms Furnans' autobiographical writing into performance exploring memory, anxiety, injury, isolation, dedication, love, community and the contradictions of a dancing woman's presence in performance. The movement material was developed with dance artists Lu Yim (Portland), Deborah Goffe (Holyoke), Morgan Thorson (Minneapolis), and Molly Shanahan (Philadelphia/ Chicago). The writing was edited by Chicago author Barrie Jean Borich. *Doing Fine* features Erica Ricketts' original sound score and a dynamic site-specific installation by visual artist Christine Wallers. Audiences are limited to 20 per performance at the grey space, 1803 W. Byron Ave., #104.

Photo of Furnans by Sally Cohn



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Rizo.
Photo by Kevin Kauer

BY JERRY NUNN

Teatro Zinzanni's Love, Chaos & Dinner is currently playing at the newly opened Cambria Hotel Chicago, 32 W. Randolph St., on the 14th floor in The Spiegeltent ZaZou—a Belgian mirror tent

created to showcase singers, acrobats, jugglers and comedians. Guests are entertained through live music and spectacle with a coursed out meal in the process.

Amelia Zirin-Brown, also known as Rizo, brings a bawdy cabaret act to the table with astounding

vocals and humor that will delight audiences during the Zinzanni experience. The New York based artist is a Grammy winner for her collaboration with Yo-Yo Ma. She has also won the Time Out London and Soho Theatre awards as well as the 2013 London Cabaret Award. Rizo has performed for my years as Lady Rizo, but is currently dropping the name and explains why with this exclusive interview.

Windy City Times: You are based in New York now, but have you always been there?

Rizo: No. I was born in Oregon in an intentional artist community, or some say hippies. My mom was a Brooklyn Jew and my second mother was a New York Jew also. I say second mother because it was more than my primary parents that raised me.

It was a community based around theater, dance and music. It wasn't a stage mom situation with a lot of pressure, but it was always creative and based around performance.

WCT: You went to school for performing?

R: Yes. This school in Seattle called Cornish College of Arts gave me a full ride—[a] merit-based scholarship. I studied playwriting, directing and produced my own shows. That helped me have my own one-woman shows, which I did in New York and Edinburgh[, Scotland].

WCT: Talk about your experience with Lady Gaga.

R: So, Our Lady J, who is an incredible piano player and a trans woman, played for me in New York early on. When "Poker Face" came out, Our Lady J recognized her from our shows at The Cutting Room when Gaga would be in the audience and J used to teach her at NYU. We had a joke about how this NYU student created an alter ego...

WCT: So you called yourself Lady Rizo from Our Lady J?

R: No; I was doing it before her, but Lady Chat-terley was doing it before me!

WCT: There's also Lady Fairchild, on Mister Rogers.

R: We can't forget Lady Bunny. The important thing is that I am not doing a tribute to Lady Gaga. We happen to look alike. I'm Jewish and she's Italian. We both have big voices and personalities.

After my shows, people ask me if I am trying to be her, so I am dropping the Lady. Rizo is what I am going forward as.

WCT: Is your character in Teatro Zinzanni based on someone?

R: No. It's an amalgamation of so many strong women. It's an offshoot of a character I've been developing since 2003.

Rizo is the version of myself that has no humility and is an echo of the feminine divine that's within everyone. She embraces this imagery that we have had forever. She's a chanteuse in a gown with full glamor and full power.

WCT: How is Rizo different than the Zinzanni character?

R: She's the madam that's in charge of a lot of people. She's in a strange place where momma meets seductress.

WCT: I saw at the show that you interacted with women and men.

R: I'm an out bisexual. We are the unicorns of the world!

WCT: What do you think about [pansexual-ity]?

R: Pansexuality is the true nature of everyone, but since we can't say we are all on the Kinsey scale, to protect ourselves we have to make boxes.

The new revolution of our time is about gender. That's the true freedom of our future. It's hard for people that were raised in a gendered world to even see that.

WCT: How was it working with Moby?

R: He was a fan of my show Lady Rizo and the Asstettes, which was a burlesque show with amazing dancers. He came to the show and asked to record with me. We became friends and this was before he became sober, so it was a little debauchorous

WCT: How did you get involved with Teatro Zinzanni in the first place?

R: I was doing shows at Joe's Pub and Reenie Duff, who is the artistic director, came to the show. Reenie stood in the merch line and asked me to be in the show. I then asked, "Do you want to buy a T-shirt?" [Laughs]

WCT: What do you like about being in the show?

R: I love working in one place for a while, because I was getting road weary before this. The regular schedule lets me know what nights I will have off. It's the closest version to a nine to five job that I will have. I get to have coworkers and clowns that I watch and admire. These people do amazing things with their bodies.

WCT: With all the improv you have with the audience, has there been a particular moment that stood out?

R: Last night was hilarious. I asked a man his name and he said, "boob" while he was looking at my chest. He meant Bob!

I get to have a sensual moment with a woman in the audience every night. The director thought it was too long and that I should move on to the man, but I said no because I wanted it to be a moment that is not salacious or made for male gaze. I wanted to connect with a woman and I always try to pick one that I feel attracted to. They might not be my age or type, but I find something that I respond to or have a connection with in them.

That is my philosophy in life, to expand flirtation towards every person that you see. Flirtation is not about sex, but instead is about what the other person resonates with me. If you look at everyone like that, you will have a much better time in the world.

WCT: What would you tell people about Teatro Zinzanni that haven't seen it yet?

R: It's a smorgasbord of food and delights. It's an alternate universe. I feel like we are bombarded with so much negativity in the news. This show is an actual escape and audiences enter another world, a world where the freaks are kings and queens.

It's a place where priorities are flipped and music, love, dinner and chaos reign.

Tickets for Love, Chaos & Dinner are currently available through Sept. 29 at Zinzanni.com/Chicago. Rizo sings for Boystown at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., on Monday, Aug. 26, at 10:30 p.m. See more about Rizo at LadyRizo.com.

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Kinley Preston previews upscale drag spot 'Lips'

BY JULIA HALE

Lips, billed as "the ultimate in drag dining," is locating its fifth location in Chicago. The South Loop venue, opening to the public Aug. 23, includes acts such as lip-synching, live vocals, choreographed numbers, bawdy humor and campy comedy, according to a July 24 press release.

Kinley Preston, the Chicago activist, transgender showgirl and entrepreneur, is one of the Lips Chicago performers. Originally from Nebraska, Preston has been doing drag since 2011.

"[Lips] is considered a 'drag bar,' [but] it's definitely on the more upscale side of drag," she said.

With locations in New York City, Atlanta, San Diego and Fort Lauderdale, the Lips brand has become increasingly prominent over the past two decades. "A lot of the [Lips] girls have gone into movies, or gone onto RuPaul," said Preston. "[Lips] can open so many doors."

Preston emphasized that Lips is a dinner theater and that reservations are required, explaining, "It's not just another night at the bar; it's a ticketed event. It's produced and treated just like any other show that comes to town."

Little Goat Diner's Tom J. Schmitt is the executive chef. "All of the items on the menu are named after cast members," Preston added.

Lips also has interactive elements to the shows as well. "From the hostess to the bartender, they're all queens," said Preston. "The performers are interacting with the tables, greeting them and helping take food and drink orders."

Preston had been in contact with Lips owner Yvonne Lame (Mark Zschiesche) since 2016, before Lame came to see her perform in March 2019. "I was performing at Hydrate one night, and [Lame] came to see me and hired me the next day," said Preston. "The visions been in the making for a while."

The July 24 press release calls Lips Chicago "the

grandest location yet," mentioning eight-foot crystal chandeliers, pink leopard walls, velvet curtains and an onstage throne. In a 2018 Windy City Times article, Lips co-owner Ed LaFaye said, "The whole idea behind the Lips decor was that it should look like a drag queen's jewelry box had exploded all over the room."

Preston said she assisted designer Robert Tabar with the decor of the Chicago location, adding, "Along with [performer] Tori Sass, we helped create his vision—sewing, rhinestoning, putting all the chairs and tables together. It was cool being there from the beginning, to see the transformation of it."

The Lips Chicago building was previously a Ford dealership, with reinforced steel beams on the ceiling, allowing for a big, open space to perform. All the decor was made in-house, according to Preston.

"It's like a doll house you'd see at Disney World," she said, acknowledging that the extravagant de-

cor is gaudy, but in a luxurious, well-thought out and detailed way. "It's very grand. I've traveled all over the country, and there's very few stages that can compare to it, as far as the grandioseness of it. [The owners] put a lot of time and thought and detail into it."

Lips is different from other drag venues, according to Preston, in that the owners "care about their staff. I think that's very rare in the industry—bar/club owners that give a shit about their girls," she said. "[The owners] definitely put a lot of thought and time into the girls and making sure that they're comfortable and respected, and not exploited."

Lips Chicago will be open Wednesday through Sunday, with a different theme each night. Wednesdays are "Twisted Broadway"; Thursdays are "Dinner With The Divas"; Fridays and Saturdays are "Glitz & Glam"; Sunday afternoons are "Dragalicious Gospel Brunch," hosted by performer Ruff N' Stuff; and Sunday evenings are "Showstopper Sundays," hosted by MiMi Marks.

"Thursday night's more of their illusion night, where you're gonna see Cher, Madonna, JLo, Taylor Swift," said Preston, though she thinks the gospel brunch will be an audience favorite. "It's a lot of fun. There's gospel numbers mixed in with some high energy hits that people are familiar with."

The restaurant will initially have two back-to-back shows on Fridays and Saturdays.

Along with Chicago queens, Lips also brought some performers from other locations to feature in shows here, among them Shavonna Brooks and Aria Cassadine from Atlanta, Delilah Brooks from New York City and Gemma Stone from Fort Lauderdale.

"Entertainers have been with them for upwards of 20-plus years," said Preston. "People don't leave them, and that says a lot. [It's] not just another gig."

Call 312-815-2662 or visit LipsChicago.com for more information.

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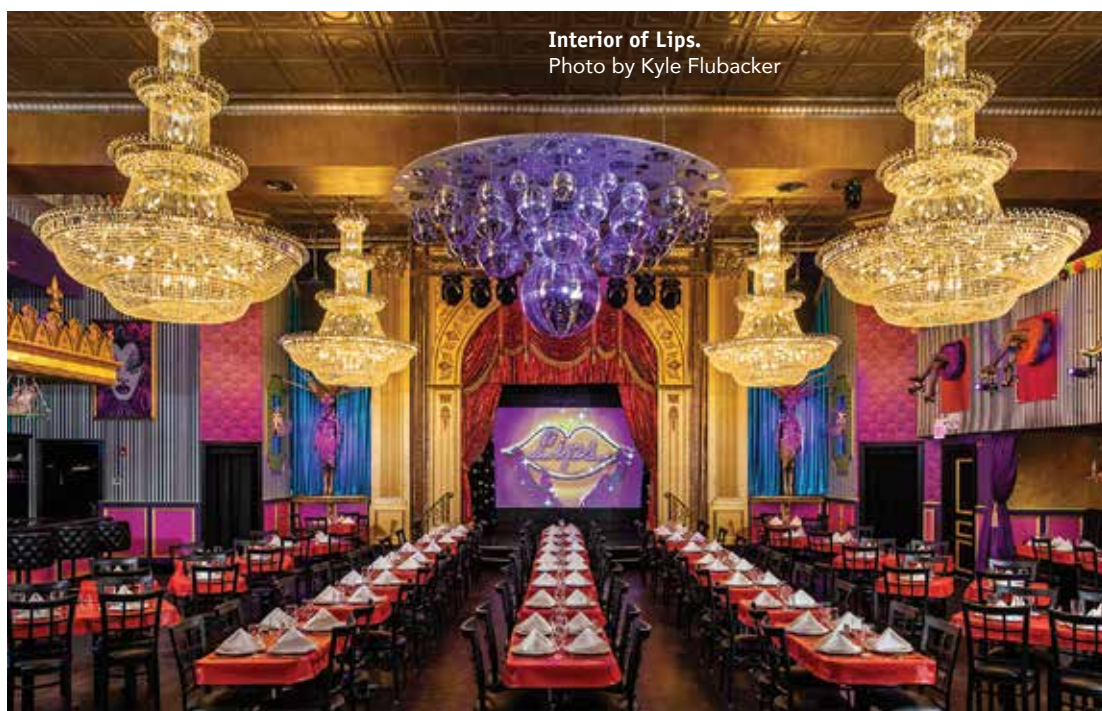
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Interior of Lips.
Photo by Kyle Flubacker



BILLY Masters

"I don't know if you noticed or not, but there's a bit of an age difference between the two of us. But on this cruise, nobody gives a shit."—**Katharine McPhee's** quip about her marriage to **David Foster** while performing on the inaugural VACAYA cruise to Provincetown. The second night, she had a message to critics—"Go fuck yourself." Message received.

Tom Brady is known for being pretty fit and not particularly bright. In the September issue of *Men's Health*, he reveals his disappointment when one of his sons showed no interest in sports: "When Benny came along, I thought he'd be just like Jack [his older son]. So I was like, 'C'mon, let's do this.' And he was like, 'Nope.' And I was like, 'What? No, do this!'"—which gives you an idea of the scintillating banter going on in the Brady household. He continued: "And Gisele kept saying to me, 'Would you effing understand that your son is different?' It was hard for me. I was like, 'What do you mean? He's a boy; he should just do all these things that I do.' The reality is that Benny just likes different things. And it's great because now I just have to go do what he wants to do. When we do that, we have the best time. He's like, 'OMG, Dad, you're so funny.'" Yeah, that Tom Brady is a laugh riot!

What's not funny is sexual assault. But in the current climate where career-ending accusations come fast and furious, where does due process fit in? Whatever happened to innocent until proven guilty? Case in point—**Don Lemon**. According to reports, he was in Sag Harbor last July and had an encounter with bartender Dustin Hice, who is suing for unspecified damages stemming from emotional pain and loss of earnings. Hice was working at a bar called Murf's. According to his statement, Hice "tried to get Mr. Lemon's attention and offered to buy Mr. Lemon a drink." Don apparently declined. Later, Hice claims that Lemon "put his hand down the front of his own shorts, and vigorously rubbed his genitalia, removed his hand and shoved his index and middle finger in Plaintiff's moustache and under Plaintiff's nose." He then asked Hice, "Do you like pussy or dick?" The "attack" has left Mr. Hice with "feelings of shame, humiliation, anxiety, anger, and guilt."

Reports indicate that Hice asked Lemon for \$1.5 million not to file the suit. Lemon (again) declined. Hice then posted a photo standing in front of CNN headquarters with the caption, "touring the #CNN center today...or as #Trump would say, 'the home of Fake News' lol." As for the network, CNN is standing by Don Lemon, stating, "The plaintiff in this lawsuit has previously displayed a pattern of contempt for CNN on his social media accounts. This claim follows his un-



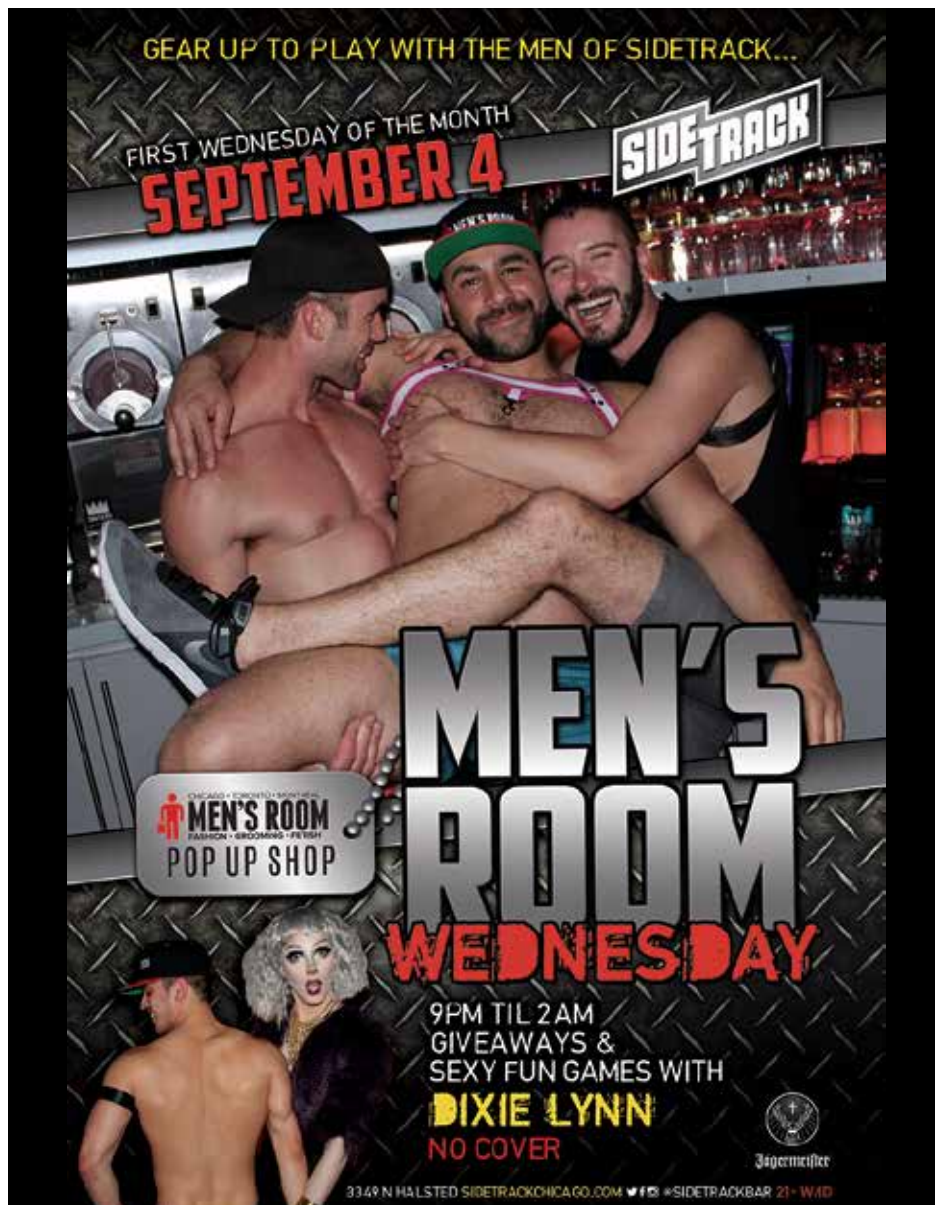
Don Lemon is battling possible legal woes, according to Billy.

Photo courtesy of Farrah Gray Publishing

successful threats and demands for an exorbitant amount of money from Don Lemon. Don categorically denies these claims and this matter does not merit any further comment at this time."

This leads into yet another **Fayewatch** which, of course, is connected with Dunaway's disastrous Boston run of the play *Tea at Five*. This story isn't about Faye being fired; it's about Faye firing her assistant. According to documents filed in Manhattan Supreme Court, Michael Rocha began working as Faye's personal assistant April 5 and was paid \$1,500/week. He would do her shopping, remind her to take her meds, plan her schedule and get her to places on time—so now we know who to blame. He claims that Faye called him "a little homosexual boy" and referred to people around her as "little gay people." We don't have to take his word for it—the little one recorded Faye making the offensive comments. He went to the general manager and production's lawyer. In short order he was fired, being told that Faye "is not comfortable with you anymore." He is suing for unspecified damages. Faye Dunaway—the gift that keeps on giving.

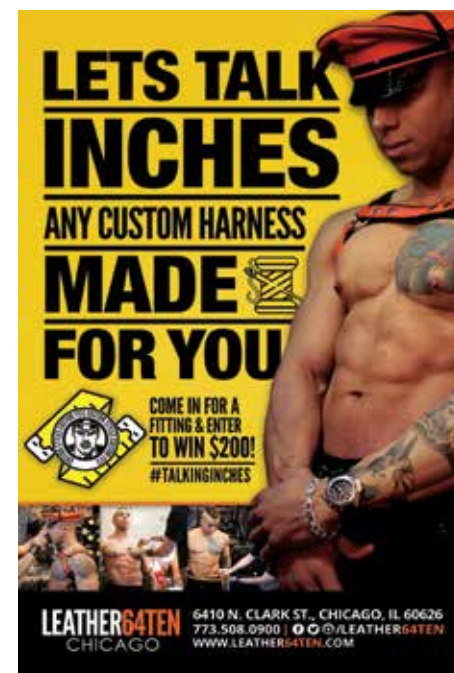
During my latest trip to Provincetown, I spent some time at the Ptown Art House with my pals, **Well-Strung**. Unlike previous years when they've been in town for the whole season, this was a



one-week run. The show was kinda like their greatest hits, which was okay with me. My favorite boys playing all my favorites. What's not to like?

Also at the Art House was the luminous **Liz Callaway**—who has seemingly stopped time. Beyond the brilliant sheen of her voice, there is a winsome, urgent quality which draws you in. And then there's her brilliant way of connecting with lyrics and touching your soul. All in all, it may have been one of the most perfect shows I've seen in eons. Catch her whenever you have the chance and check out PtownArtHouse.com for other concerts and events.

It's definitely time for me to take a nap and end yet another column. This week, I had more stories than I could include in print. Happily, you can read all the latest dish at BillyMasters.com—the site that'll have you coming back for seconds. We didn't have room for an "Ask Billy" question, but you can ask me anything you want. Just send an e-mail to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Faye plays Ptown. 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

GT Fish & Oyster

BY JOSHUA IRVINE

Led by Michelin-starred Giuseppe Tentorri, the River North spot **GT Fish & Oyster** (531 N. Wells St.; GTOyster.com) offers a diverse set of seafood at an emphasized mid-range price.

The restaurant's offerings were solidly consistent in quality, and there were standout



Swordfish tacos at GT Fish & Oyster.

Photo by Joshua Irvine

selections, although a couple had flaws. Regarding the appetizers, the tuna poke offered plump and fresh meat, but the artfully placed pickled mango provided some needed flavor. Of the crudo trio, the tuna, paired with watermelon,

lacked flavor, while the hamachi improved on the effort with the inclusion of a more flavorful cantaloupe and briny flavor. The best was the salmon, in both flavor and texture.

A fried oyster slider, however, proved to be the true standout. A smooth transition from the toasted brioche bun to the fried shellfish was accented by a spicy bite of kimchee and just the right hint of peanut.

Moving to entrees, roasted swordfish contributed unique flavor to the fish tacos, which offered mild but lasting heat with a satisfying late-stage crunch via pork chicharron.

Briny and flaky, the bass deserves note if only for the unusual set of gastronomic additions to the fish—most notably, smoked grape. It tasted like smoke, with a hint of fruit. The miso-cauliflower puree worked well with the fish.

The lobster macaroni and cheese had clearer reasoning behind it; the lobster added a salty

touch and unique texture to a decent mac that was further bolstered by the inclusion of steamed peas.

Of the entrees, the salmon offered the most flavor, with tangy saffron sauce and almond tortellini. It was bold, original and excellent in every regard.

The duck confit, by contrast, seemed to be a safe dish, with flavorful and juicy meat accented by slices of spiced apple. It's an appreciable effort by the restaurant to accommodate those more accustomed to land-based dishes.

The last dish of the night came from the dessert menu. Regarding the creamy strawberry key-lime pie with sorbet, both components were excellent, but the restaurant could consider a smaller sorbet scoop or, preferably, a larger slice of pie.

Middling aside, GT Fish and Oyster offers a more than satisfactory dining experience for seafood enthusiasts and casual diners.

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



The Illinois Gay Rodeo Association presents **Rodeo Round Town**, a three-day series of events throughout Chicago, continuing the tradition of the annual Windy City Rodeo, which drew rodeo fans from all across the nation.

The rootin'-tootin' weekend kicks off Friday, August 23, with the Rodeo Kickoff Hoe Down at **Charlie's**, 3726 N. Broadway, at 8 p.m.

The Rodeo Games Competition, the main event of the Western-themed weekend, takes place at Charlie's on Saturday, August 24, starting at 1 p.m. Expect a variety of games based on traditional rodeo events, such as flag racing, calf roping, cow pie toss, goat dressing and the Mini Miss Rodeo event. The competition is open to all and features prizes for winners of each event, plus one for overall Rodeo Champion. Country & western music, raffles and a chuck wagon buffet will also be a part of the fun.

Later on Saturday, come on down to **Touche**, 6412 N. Clark St., for this year's installment of the Cowboy Eye for the Leather Guy makeover contest. The winner will receive a complete makeover worth \$500, courtesy of Alcalá's Western Wear. The contest starts at 10 p.m.; stop in a bit earlier to sign up. The event will benefit the Groceryland Pantry, which this month marks 25 years of serving those affected with HIV/AIDS.

The weekend culminates in the Trail's End Dance, Sunday, August 25 at 4 p.m. at **The Call**, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

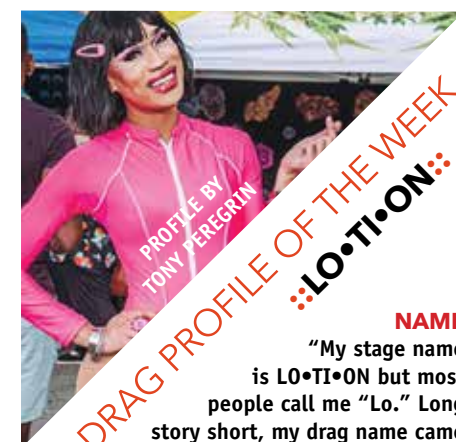
Admission to all events is free and open to anyone 21 and over.

For more info on the Rodeo Round Town weekend, see www.ilgra.com or find Illinois Gay Rodeo Association on Facebook.



Rock stars and mayors and butts, oh my! That's Northalsted Market Days 2019.

Photos by Jerry Nunn



PROFILE BY
TONY PEREGRIN
DRAG PROFILE OF THE WEEK
LO•TI•ON

NAME

"My stage name is **LO•TI•ON** but most people call me "Lo." Long story short, my drag name came from an alter ego I had when I had to be a tough RA in college and it kind of stuck and transformed into a drag persona!"

FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

"My first performance was in college at an amateur show during Pride, and I did a mix of Beyoncé and Keri Hilson. I didn't start taking drag that seriously until maybe a few years ago here in Chicago."

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY A CROWD

"My go-to is my Christina Aguilera mix where the whole last half of the song is a medley of her belting out a ton of runs—I'll never get sick of it."

FAVORITE PIECE IN YOUR CLOSET

"For my birthday, my friend @junkmaille made me a pair of chainmaille pants that I've been dreaming about for the longest time and I'm in love with the piece."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

"You can usually catch me at Berlin for either Plot Twist, which happens on the third Monday of the month, or you can find me in a rare appearance at Drag Matinee on Saturdays — both shows hosted by T-Rex."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Photo by
DS Chin

Instagram: @lotionsideb
Twitter: @misslubriderm

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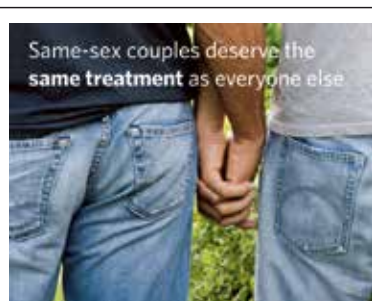
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SPIRITUALITY

DIGNITY/CHICAGO Supporting LGBTQIA Catholics, their committed relationships, families, friends + allies. Mass Sunday at 5pm, 3344 N Broadway, Chicago. Visit **www.dignity-chicago.org** for more info. (10/30/19-13)

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SIDETRACK

Legal Council for Health Justice's Grecian Holiday, August 15, honors Rep. Fred Crespo, D. Matt Feldhaus and Sinai Health System.
Joseph Stevens Photography

FEINSTEIN from page 13

can croon. He has the flexibility vocally to sing any kind of pop stuff.

To me, he's one of the most versatile and talented people on the planet. He's a very nice and easy to work with. Unfortunately, he's very unattractive, but other than that he's got a lot going for him...

WCT: [Laughs] Poor thing.

MF: Yeah, my heart bleeds for him.

WCT: Tell me one fun fact about the person [who] married you and Terrence Flannery—Judge Judy!

MF: Judge Judy celebrates life. She takes nothing for granted, because this major shift in her career didn't happen until she was 50 years old. She's a kind person. Some people might be surprised by that because she lays it on for the television show.

One day, Terrence and I were driving to Judy and Jerry's house in Connecticut for Thanksgiving. On the car radio, the announcer gave a list of top 10 people to not spend Thanksgiving with

and Judge Judy was number two. I told her about it when I got there and she asked, "Who's number one? I don't want to be number two!"

WCT: I didn't realize her husband is named Jerry also.

MF: Yes, but it's actually Gerald. He's a judge too and one of the first authors to write a book about DNA evidence in trials. They are a brilliant couple together and their kids are all wonderful. I just performed in Wyoming and Judy's eldest son Adam has a gorgeous house there and he threw a big party for us.

She's also very quietly philanthropic. It's all under the radar.

WCT: How are you friends with all these people? I mean Barry Manilow is your bestie...

MF: I was just with Barry last night. We connect because of the music. Barry, like me, cares about the history of American song. When we met we had that connection.

I just forge relationships with people that come from the heart. I have been very lucky to connect with people that I admire.

WCT: Is there one thing you would like your

career to be remembered by?

MF: I think it's folly to want to be remembered, because everything in life is so ephemeral. The only thing that matters is what we do when we are here.

I just try to keep the heritage that I embrace going. I try to keep classic American music alive, because if there weren't advocates for it then it could get lost. I'm so proud of The American Songbook Foundation because we have our annual high school Songbook Vocal Academy where we have kids from all over the country come and are coached about American popular music. It's like planting little seeds. These young people share it with others and it helps to keep it alive.

Helping to keep the art form alive of something that I care about is where I hope to leave my mark. Performing the material is important to me, but keeping it alive for the next generation is most important.

WCT: What are your plans for the rest of the year?

MF: I'm finishing a new album with duets with country stars such as Dolly Parton, Brad Paisley

and Lyle Lovett. That will probably come out next year or late this year.

I will be conducting the orchestra at the Pasadena Symphony and POPS in September and going to Australia in November. I'm working on a book that's due early next year, so I have to up my game.

Oh, Terrence and I will be moving into a new house in Pasadena in the fall. We have been renovating it for a year and a half. It will give me space to store my music collections, which have been all over the place!

We just opened a new Feinstein's at Vitello's in LA. So now he have a Feinstein's in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and one opening in Indiana soon. We are announcing an international one, so continuing the nightclubs. I hope we find a space in Chicago eventually.

Tickets for the upcoming Feinstein gig on Thursday, Aug. 29, at Ravinia Festival, 418 Sheridan Rd, Highland Park, can be found at Ravinia.org.

More about Feinstein can be found at MichaelFeinstein.com.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Aug. 22

Wizard World Comic Con Chicago Through Aug. 25. Iated guests include John Travolta, Ben McKenzie (Gotham; Batman: Year One), Morena Baccarin (Gotham; Deadpool; Firefly), Henry Winkler (Happy Days; Barry), Matt Ryan (Constantine; DC's Legends of Tomorrow), Melissa Joan Hart (Sabrina, The Teenage Witch) and David Giuntoli (Grimm) and dozens of illustrators and vendors. 4:00pm - 9:00pm Rosemont's Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Rd. <http://wizardworld.com/comiccon/chicago>

LGBTQ+ Biz Bootcamp open house LG-BTQ+ Biz Bootcamp. Learn about this upcoming program of the LGBT Chamber of Commerce 5:30pm - 7:30pm Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce 3179 N Clark Chicago <http://lgbtcc.com/biz-bootcamp/>.

'Doing Fine' dance event Culminating a year-long research process Joanna Furnans will premiere a new full-length dance performance over three weekends through Sept. 8. \$20. Reservations required at DoingFinePerformance@gmail.com 6:00pm the grey space, 1803 W. Byron St., #104

Music Box 90th anniversary with Parton and Poppins First anniversary night, full 1929 theater program with Innocents of Paris, the first English-language film to feature chanteur Maurice Chevalier. To come as part of anniversary celebration, an all-night Dolly Parton film festival and a Mary Poppins sing-a-long screening 7:00pm Music Box Theatre 3733



'HEAD' STRONG Through Sept. 8

The production **Head Over Heels**, at Theater Wit, pairs an LGBTQ storyline with songs from **The Go-Go's**.
Photo by Michael Brosilow

N Southport Chicago <http://musicbox-theatre.com>

Head Over Heels: The Musical from Kandy Productions Sir Philip Sidney's gender-bending pastoral romance The Arcadia from the 1590s, paired with the 1980s song hits of The Go-Go's in a unabashed and joyous LGBTQ fairytale. Extended through Sept. 8. \$35-\$40 8:00pm Theater Wit 1229 W Belmont

Ave. Chicago 773-975-8150 Tickets: <http://KokandyProductions.com>

Friday, Aug. 23

Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am About the celebrated Black author and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, who died Aug. 5. \$12/\$7/\$6/\$5. Through Aug. 29 4:00pm Gene Siskel Film Center 164 N State Chicago <http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/toni-morrison-the-pieces-i-am>

Lips, new drag show and dining, grand opening weekend LaCage Drag Show Palace experience. Dining and new nightly drag queen shows, celebrity impersonators in Dinner with the Divas, Twisted Broadway, Celebrity Divas and Dragalicious Gospel Brunch on Sunday. Full bar. 6:00pm Lips, 2229 S Michigan Ave 312-815-2662 <http://www.lipschicago.com/>

Fahrenheit Chicago kick off cocktail reception State's Attorney Kim Foxx and Illinois Deputy Governor Sol Flores will be honored. Fahrenheit Chicago is a free end-of-summer LGBTQ festival that is a party with a purpose produced by the Equality Illinois Institute with presenting sponsors Howard Brown Health and The Reva and David Logan Foundation. Featuring Dominique Jackson, of POSE; Charlene Carruthers, founding national director of BYP 100; Illinois State Rep. Lamont J. Robinson; and other LGBTQ community leaders. Chicago DJ favorites Roy Kinsey, Rae Chardonnay, Kidd Kenn, Superman and Darryl Garcon; music by Mikey Everything, Kidd Kenn, and Chantelle Truvillion. 7:00pm Connect+ Gallery, 1520 E. Harper Court; <http://eqil.org>

Saturday, Aug. 24

Women & Children First Block Party, 40 Years Strong Celebrating 40 years of

Ann's and Linda's dream of opening a feminist bookstore. With Drag Queen Story Hour with Muffy Fishbasket, ShaZah, She's Crafty, Chicago's All-Female Beastie Boys Tribute Band, The Clamor & Lace Noise Brigade, a mini "Taste of Andersonville" with free refreshments from a variety of neighborhood restaurants, kids games, a feminist crafting station. Free and open to all. Share memories at #40withWCF 11:00am - 5:00pm Farragut Ave. at Clark St. <http://womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Rodeo Round Town: Rodeo Games Competition Main event of ILGRA weekend. A variety of games based on traditional rodeo events, like flag racing, calf roping, cow pie eating contest, goat dressing and Mini Miss Rodeo contest. Country/western music, raffles, prizes and a chuck wagon buffet. 1 p.m., Charlie's Chicago, 3726 N. Broadway, www.ilgra.com

Rodeo Round Town: Cowboy Eye For the Leather Guy Annual makeover contest to transform one lucky leatherman into a cowboy with new Western duds from Alcala's Western Wear. 10 p.m., Touche, 6412 N. Clark St., www.ilgra.com

Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles, London Gay Symphonic Winds Bands Across the Water. International collaboration with London's only LGBTQ symphonic wind band. \$15. <http://www.windcitymediagroup.com/lgbt/London-Gay-Symphonic-Lakeside-Pride-Joint-in-concert-Aug-24-/66793.html> 7:00pm - 9:00pm Studebaker Theater, 410 S. Michigan Ave. <http://www.lakesidepride.org/london> Tickets: <http://OvationTix.com>

Sunday, Aug. 25

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/>

Rodeo Round Town: Trail's End Dance Culmination of the big rodeo weekend from Illinois Gay Rodeo Assn. 4 p.m., The Call, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., www.ilgra.com

Monday, Aug. 26

2019 Annual Chamber Boat Cruise Pre-networking event (arrive early), signature cocktails, games, silent auction, dinner, and the chance to build hundreds of connections. Members \$95. Guests - \$115 6:30pm - 9:30pm Navy Pier 600 E Grand Ave Chicago <http://business.lgbtcc.com>

Harvey Fierstein's Casa Valentina Chicago premiere. Set in 1962, in an inconspicuous bungalow colony in the Catskill Mountains caters to a special clientele: white-collar professionals heterosexual men who delight in dressing and acting as women. Based on real events and infused with Fierstein's trademark wit. Thru Sept. 29 7:30pm Broadway Theatre at 4139 N. Broadway <http://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe.c/10422832>

Thursday, Aug. 29

Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus: Caucus Corps The Little Black Pearl the Caucus officially launches a new membership program, the Caucus Corps. Learn more about our new initiative, celebrates and encourages community. Sign up for free tickets with brandonw@chiblackgaycaucus.org 6:00pm - 9:00pm Little Black Pearl, 1060 E 47th St. <http://chiblackgaycaucus.org>

First Pride Summit held in West Hollywood

The publications The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard hosted their first-ever Pride Summit (#PrideSummit) at The 1 Hotel West Hollywood on Aug. 8.

The event—in conjunction with Billboard's annual Pride issue—featured panels and conversations: bringing LGBTQ+ voices into the songwriters room; emerging queer artists; eradicating homophobia; and best practices in hiring and fostering welcoming and safe workplaces for queer and gender non-conforming individuals.

Among those who attended were the Pose cast (MJ Rodriguez, Indya Moore, Hailie Sahar, Dyllon Burnside and Angel Curiel); pop icons and authors Tegan and Sara; singer/activist Hayley Kiyoko; New Orleans bounce artist and TV star Big Freedia; rapper ILOVEMAKONNEN; Grammy-nominated songwriters Justin Tranter and Teddy Geiger; Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Daya; NBC's Songland star Shane McAnally; RuPaul's Drag Race alumni Trixie Mattel, Alaska, Manila Luzon, Peppermint and Blair St. Clair; YouTube celebrity Gigi Gorgeous; and more.

The summit was part of Billboard's "Summer of Pride," which also includes special editorial coverage of concerts and events across the globe; well-known and up-and-coming LGBTQ+ artists and allies; playlists curated by artists, executives and influencers; and a pride chart recognizing LGBTQ+ artists of the past and present. Sponsors were Cadillac and Verizon Media.

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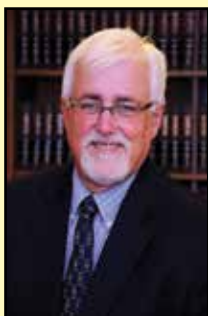


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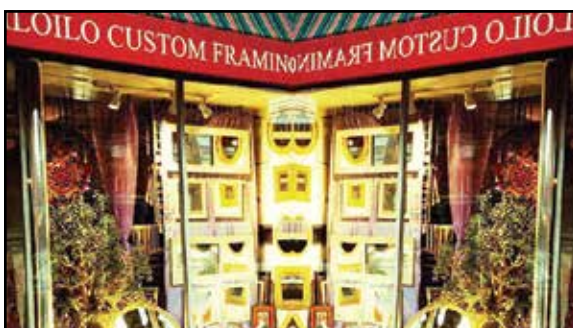


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