

WINDY CITY TIMES

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BILL RYDWELS

HIV/AIDS activist remembered.

Photo courtesy of Lisa Congleton



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SAFE SCHOOLS ALLIANCE

Group advances partnership.

Photo of Alliance co-founder Mary Morten courtesy of Morten

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Talking with gay French director Francois Ozon.

Photo by Matt Simonette



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LIFE HISTORY

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Jeanne Balke on her career, WWII and being a lesbian pre-Stonewall

Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Jesse Jackson Sr.

Photo by by Josh Irvine



PETE BUTTIGIEG

An interview with him concludes LGBTQ History Month

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LGBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

aquafest

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THE REAL DEAL

WCT talks with Counterfeit Madison—who might be one of the most colorful people you'll meet.

Photo (left) by Kate Sweeney

A CARRIE GOOD TIME



Howard Brown Health's "Big Orange Ball" had attendees like Channyn Lynne Parker, who did her best Carrie. Photo courtesy of Parker

FIVE ALIVE

An LGBTQ book for kids and a decadent locally made chocolate-chunk cookie are among Five Worth Finding.

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LGBT HISTORY MONTH

Pete Buttigieg on LGBT history, historic campaign

BY MARK SEGAL

Pete Buttigieg—who has served as mayor of South Bend, Indiana since 2012—came out as a gay man in a self-penned essay published by the South Bend Tribune. This past April, he declared his candidacy for president of the United States, becoming the first openly gay major candidate for the office.

Mark Segal: When you entered the race as an openly gay man, did you realize the historical significance and what the LGBT community expected?

Pete Buttigieg: You know, it's one thing to realize it in theory; it's another to see it play out in practice. Seeing teenagers come up to me and let me know what this campaign means to them, and folks who are of a different generation, who just never thought that they would see this, sometimes coming up with tears in their eyes, really has made me feel a different level of awareness and fulfillment but also responsibility around that fact about this campaign.

MS: What people from our community, historically, do you admire?

PB: Wow. Well, of course, anybody who seeks office and is out owes a lot to Harvey Milk and the tradition that he now represents. It's almost impossible to imagine, I think now looking back, what that would have meant at the time. And then more recently, in my own lifetime, I remember seeing the judiciary hearings, when they were trying to impeach President Clinton, and seeing Barney Frank just run circles intellectually around so many people. Realizing that he was also an out member of Congress I think changed my awareness of what was possible.

I also admire people who have come into the public eye recently—some even later than I have. Danica Roem in Virginia, just extraordinary the way she has been able not just to break barriers and challenge the backwards-looking culture warrior that she beat but also to do it in a way that truly focused on her constituents, and talk about issues like traffic and commuting as well as issues like equality. There's so many really inspiring figures out there, Annise Parker, I could go on and on. And obviously I'm aware that I'm standing on the shoulders of so many who helped pave the way.

MS: It's sort of amazing that in just a few short decades we went from zero candidates running for public office to a man like yourself now running, openly gay, for president of the United States. Have you sought advice from some of those pioneers like Barney Frank or Tammy Baldwin or Elaine Noble?

PB: Yeah, I've had a chance to meet Tammy Baldwin and, again, Annise Parker has been a great source of encouragement and support as

well as advice. I'm not sure what's more amazing, the fact that we're the first to do this or the fact that we can do it at all. Part of just living it seems strange that I'd be the first major candidate to do this, then again you think about where we were just a decade ago.

MS: That's a great point. Many in our community never thought we'd see someone being so open and running for president, and we'd always looked at what that opposition would look like. While you've been running, the largest number of those opposing you have been religious protesters, and you've been very good by saying, "I'm going to be judged by my god, not by you." Is there a time that either on a personal level or on the campaign that you've faced homophobia one-on-one?

PB: Well yeah, somebody will come up on a rope line and have something nasty to say, or you see stuff coming in the mail, although I don't pay too much attention to that. But I gotta say that any homophobia that comes my way is less concerning than what's happening to so many youth and really vulnerable people out there of any age around the country, what's happening to Black trans women endangering their life.

I try not to dwell on the irritation of any of the nonsense that might come my way because I can feel all the support that I have—folks from my own team, and from millions of people out there. I think of all the people who don't know that they have that support, who don't know that we're rooting for them when they're dealing with whatever it is their up against.

MS: One of the most amazing similarities I see in your campaign is one I saw in President Obama's campaign. When he was a candidate, being the first major African American running for president, he kept running up to the race issue no matter how many issue papers he put out on certain subjects.

Similarly, you're the first out gay man, and therefore no matter how many issue papers you put out, it still comes up. President Obama, then candidate Obama, did something spectacular. He decided he had to address the issue in a major speech in March 2008, just on race. Do you think if that one issue keeps plaguing you, you're going to have to give the LGBT equality speech, and are you prepared to do that?

PB: Well, I'm not sure my equivalent of that speech will be a speech, although it might be. I think it is important for folks to hear me tell my story, and while I've done it in a number of ways, I may need to find new ways to do it. I think not only about President Obama's example, but also the steps that President Kennedy had to take to reassure voters that they could vote for the first Catholic President. So often it comes into form,

Presidential candidate
Pete Buttigieg.
Photo by Josh Irvine



and I remember this from 2008, is people saying 'This is not an obstacle for me but I'm just not sure about everybody else,' and finding a way to speak to that and stay ahead of it. I think we'll continue seeking the right ways to do that, true to who I am and true to what we need to convey as well.

MS: There's this old political saying—"politics is a dime and a day," meaning politics can change on any given issue, and you can't stay in politics unless you raise funds. You've had an incredible success at raising funds—in fact, so well, that you are basically one of the only candidates who can stay in the entire game if they wish, up to the convention. You have an enormity of support from the LGBT community, which would like you to stay in through the convention. Do you feel an obligation that regardless of where the polls go or where the votes go that you need to stay in just to be front and center on this issue?

PB: Well, you know, I think there's so many things that motivate this campaign. We're certainly conscious of the historic nature of it, and at the same time, there are many reasons why we're in this and why I'm going to stay in it. We want to know that I've got the resources to go the distance. And if you say not knowing how things may evolve even from week to week, I'm glad that we do, because the very same things that can be a disadvantage in terms of an issue that's visible or something that's in the news, sometimes what's making things harder for you politically can turn around and be an asset a few months or weeks later. So we're definitely in this to go the distance and feeling increasingly bullish about how this is going to unfold.

MS: Some of the candidates who will be appearing with you at this week's CNN Town Hall meeting on LGBT equality [on Oct. 10] have longstanding positions; Elizabeth Warren, Joe Biden, and have evolved on our issues long before most others. How do you differ from them on LGBT issues?

PB: I think we all have different areas of emphasis. I'm certainly proud of my record, not just in terms of my identity but what we've done because I think it's important not to take for granted or assume that, just because I'm out, LGBTQ

voters are going to automatically decide I'm the best person to make a difference in their lives. I think that what's really important is to have a robust and strong plan. And to me, the Equality Act is very important, but I hope it's also understood that that's table stakes, that there's a lot more that we need to do proactively around issues like conversion therapy, protecting LGBTQ youth, attacking the AIDS epidemic, diplomacy around human rights including the way we think about how we treat refugees, work for community based programs. There's so many things that we need to do that I think each of us has an obligation to put forward a robust plan and not simply make it seem as though we think that the struggle was won when marriage equality came to the land or that the equality act is all we've got to do.

MS: One of the most important things you do is the fact that you've become a role model for LGBT youth. That's a heavy responsibility. How does that weigh on you?

PB: You know, I liken it to a moment of growth that happened to me, around what's now been a very small thing when I was mayor, which was, when I was a candidate I used to think, when I was riding a bike, a little bit of irritation, oh I better wear a helmet because if somebody sees me without one they're going to say something. And somewhere along the line I realized my responsibility was different, and I started thinking I better wear a helmet because somebody might see me without one and decide not to, and I'd be responsible for their safety. And I think it's the same now on a much bigger stage. When people are looking to you, and people see in you so much more than one person can really be, you realize that it's not just you but what you're building.

And to me, the best way to make good on that is not only to seek to act with integrity and do the right thing, but also to make sure that our campaign organization shows the values that we're trying to promote, including the idea of belonging. It's part of what I'm trying to build for the whole country. And I'm very mindful of the obligation to live up to the need to model and support those values, knowing just how many people have pinned their hopes on the conduct of this campaign as well as its outcome.

HIV/AIDS activist Bill Rydwels remembered

BY MATT SIMONETTE

The ashes of longtime HIV/AIDS activist Bill Rydwels, who passed away Oct. 3, were scattered from Belmont Rocks Oct. 27.

Rydwels, 87, who was diagnosed with HIV in 1985, was an early participant with Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) and was long active in Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE). He was especially committed to working on behalf of rights for seniors with HIV/AIDS.

Rydwels' friend Lisa Congleton knew him since the '80s, when both regularly attended TPA meetings.

"Bill was one of those guys who was always at the TPA meetings, twice a week, as was I," Congleton recalled. "Bill went to everything, and Bill parlayed that knowledge" into his other activities.

"From the time we started with 19 people [in June 1987], we ended up, in a few months, with over 200 people," recalled Rydwels in a 2017 TPAN promotional video.

As Congleton cleaned out Rydwels's personal effects, she was consistently surprised by items that pointed to his community commitment.

"He just didn't stop when it came to being involved, and that didn't stop at the international level either," she added.

"Bill was one of the first people I met when I started attending TPAN support groups in 1990," said Positively Aware Editor-in-Chief Jeff Berry in a Facebook post shortly after his death. "Bill always had a big smile, an open heart, and a generous spirit. His strength and resilience over the years was, and will always be, an inspiration to others."

Berry later told Windy City Times about the myriad contributions of time and energy Rydwels made to TPAN over the years, including leading a support group for older persons living with HIV/AIDS, and helping to send out the new issues of Positively Aware.

"He was a big part of the organization over the years—and a big part of its success," Berry said. "He was happy to lend his support where he could."

In 2013, Rydwels told Windy City Times that older persons with HIV were "the pariah [years ago], but one of the great things to come out of TPA was that I wasn't the pariah any more than any other sick person. Slowly, over time, people began to see us and respect us."

NBC News included Rydwels in a 2011 profile of persons who were aging and living with HIV. He said that he never celebrated his birthday anymore. His partner of 17 years passed away on that day in 1985. When Rydwels himself was di-



Bill Rydwels.

Photo courtesy of Lisa Congleton

agnosed with HIV, he recalled in the TPAN video, he was told he would probably live only another 18-24 months. He lived another 34 years.

Rydwels achieved numerous accolades for his work, especially his work on behalf of seniors. In 2001, he was inducted into the Chicago Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. In a letter to Rydwels, then-Mayor Richard M. Daley said, "This is a special achievement of which you should be quite proud. As a senior citizen, you are one of Chicago's most valuable resources, and you provide your fellow citizens with invaluable knowledge, experience and wisdom. ... Your fine efforts have helped make Chicago a finer place for all."

Congleton remembered Rydwels as being especially thoughtful about his prayers. Indeed, in one interview, Rydwels said that he prayed for about 70 people daily.

"He was always keeping people in his prayers and in his thoughts," Congleton said. "He was very, very generous. There were times when I would ask him about someone, and he would say, 'I'll tell you about them tomorrow after I pray for for them tonight.' It became [routine]—his point was, 'I can't remember them in this context, but I can remember their name when I pray for them, because I have it written down for if I forget.' It really struck me."

Berry said that Rydwels recently brought in to the TPAN offices a hat that Rydwels had worn to the 1992 March on Washington. It was inscribed with the names of friends Rydwels had lost to AIDS.

"I have that here in my office, and I look at that every day and think of Bill," Berry said.

PASSAGES

George Haas

George Robert Haas, formerly of Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, passed away unexpectedly but peacefully at his new home in Las Vegas on Oct. 14. He was 91.

A Chicago native, George graduated from Schurz High School and attended North Park University. After serving in both the Army and Navy, George worked as a sales rep for Lufthansa Airlines.

George participated in and enjoyed his life as a leather man since 1948. Attending the International Mr. Leather competition with three generations of his family was a highlight for him and his loved ones.

A recent crowning achievement was calling President Donald J. Trump an "asshole" while being interviewed about his life as a gay veteran for a podcast: http://sunnymegatron.com/gay-1940s-chicago/?fbclid=IwAR0kj11WH3JzUxwvAkz0QQCAXtDnFP8KogykrPLN-GFw0zz4_bYzagkLv8

Vodka O' Clock (5:30 p.m.) was his favorite time of day, when he enjoyed a pre-dinner Cape Cod on the rocks with a slice of lime.

George's greatest passion was travel, and he journeyed to more than 30 countries.

He was the beloved son of the late George Haas and Elizabeth Balogh Haas; and the cherished cousin ("Uncle George") of Sunshine (Kenneth Berg) Lehmann and their children,

Sydney Lehmann-Secor and Faye Georgette Connolly, all of Las Vegas.

Private interment of cremated remains at Maryhill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to AIDSUnited.org.

Arrangements by Cremation Society of Illinois, 773-281-5058 or Cremation-Society.com



George Haas and cousin Sunny Megatron.
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Jeanne Balke on career, WWII, life as a lesbian pre-Stonewall

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Just a few weeks before Chicago native Jeanne Balke's 10th birthday, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, plunging the United States into World War II.

Balke and her family lived in the public housing project Cabrini-Green and she attended what is now called LaSalle Academy at the time. Due to her love of reading, she paid attention to what the newspapers were saying about the war.

"I would see the headlines that said 'War Declared' and remember everyone on the street talking about it," Balke told Windy City Times.

Balke explained that there were different color ration stamps for food like meat and sugar and other goods.

"When I went to the store my mother used to tell me if I saw a line get in it because the items were limited in number," said Balke. "You were only allowed two pairs of shoes a year which was hard because as a kid you went through shoes pretty fast. I always had to use my father's extra stamp to get another pair of shoes."

Balke said there was some intrigue in Chicago during the war because there were Nazi spies on the North Side and establishments were raided to root them out. Bullet holes could be seen in the North Avenue Beach grandstands.

"I was president of the LaSalle Victory Garden Club and our garden was at North Avenue Beach, but most of what we grew we lost due to its location," said Balke. "There were victory gardens all over Chicago during the war."

A year after the war ended, Balke graduated from LaSalle Academy and went onto Lincoln Park

High School which was then called Waller High School.

While in high school, Balke became the first white person to integrate the now-defunct North Avenue YMCA when she applied for a social membership that included Black students.

Balke said she liked her high school because it was diverse for the times, with some Black students as well as Japanese, Polish, Irish, German and Italian students. She explained that everyone got along well.

"As kids we did not know anything about prejudice against certain groups of people except against homosexuals," said Balke.

Due to prejudice against LGBT people, Balke had to keep her lesbian identity a secret. She realized she was a lesbian at 14—when she would practice kissing other girls in the water while swimming at the North Avenue YMCA.

"I decided to learn everything I could about homosexuality while I was in high school," said Balke. "I read everything I could find but little was available. There was a bookstore on Chicago Avenue that had LGBT books and the first one I read was The Well of Loneliness. Also, a book by a woman psychiatrist where she said homosexuality is a normal phase of adolescence so I thought, 'What am I worried about' since I was still an adolescent and I will outgrow this."

Balke had two girlfriends in high school; however, her first long-term relationship began while she was a nursing student at Augustana Hospital Nursing School. It was then that Balke accepted herself as a lesbian. Her most recent long-term relationship ended several years ago when her girlfriend died.



Jeanne Balke.

Photo by Carrie Maxwell

"We did not know any other gay people when I was in nursing school and had to live a double life and do everything romantic behind closed doors in specific places where we would not get caught" said Balke.

Balke said when they went to the handful of gay bars that existed in the 1950s there was always a fear of police raids which she missed by one evening a handful of times. She explained that women had to dress in a feminine manner and that included having zippers on the side of their pants. Balke said when gay people got arrested attorney and ally Ralla Klepak, who died this past June, would represent them and was successful in getting their charges dropped.

When the Stonewall Riots happened, it made her feel hopeful about the future of the LGBT community. Balke was not involved in any activism; however, she did join a lesbian group in the 1980s that would meet at Ann Sather's on Clark Street in Andersonville.

Balke said she never thought she would see the day where same-sex couples could legally marry across the country but she worries about the LGBT advancements that could be taken away by right-wing legislators and judges.

While working as a nurse in various capacities and navigating life as a lesbian, Balke pursued other endeavors including a bike trip on July 6, 1959, to Saugatuck, Michigan, that she did with a nursing colleague. This was the same day Queen Elizabeth II arrived in Chicago for her first visit to the city. They started the journey on Outer Lake Shore Drive early in the morning on three-speed bikes and took Route 20 all the way around Lake Michigan and arrived at St. Joseph, Michigan, in the late afternoon where they stayed the night at a motel.

"I told a friend in Saugatuck to make a reservation so we would have a place to stay," said Balke. "I called the hotel the morning after we stayed in St. Joseph to let them know we would be earlier than we thought. They said, 'Are you the girls who are coming on bicycles' and I said yes. They said, 'Where are you because everyone is waiting for you here.' They took our pictures when we got there because they wanted to mark the occasion. That was a really interesting and fun trip."

Balke explained that she did not have a car until she was 30 years old and today she would not want to be without one because it is her lifeline to the world.

"I get out and drive every day to run my errands and so I do not lose those skills," said Balke. "Even though it is hard for me to get around, I can still drive."

When asked what Balke would like for the elder LGBT community in Chicago, she said there needs to be more social and support groups available across the city.

"Too many of us are alone because we have lost our spouses/partners and friends and it is really hard to meet people, especially when we have mobility issues," said Balke.

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State treasurer commemorates LGBT History Month

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois state Treasurer Michael Frerichs marked LGBT History Month on Oct. 16 with a ceremony in the rotunda of the James R. Thompson Center in downtown Chicago.

In the opening moments of the ceremony, Frerichs remarked on why the ceremony is held each year in what is essentially the midst of the Thompson Center's food court.

"There is a reason we celebrate here," Frerichs said "Welcome to life. There are distractions."

Frerichs also remarked on the recent passing of Chicago Pride Parade organizer Richard Pfeiffer: "We are grateful for the legacy of his work ... He will be missed."

In keynote remarks, state Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) discussed both the progress that the LGBT community has made in recent years, as well as new challenges that have arisen in the nation's volatile political climate.

"Our history and our rights are very recent things ... That's something to celebrate, but that's something we need to protect," Harris said.

He added, however, "All those rights are back on the table, and those rights need to be defended."

A number of awards were presented to community leaders and members for their contributions to the state's LGBT community as well. Among those honored Ryan Bandy, proprietor of the establishments Club Station House and Win, Lose or Draught in Springfield, who was recognized for outstanding service or business; Raymond Crossman, president of Adler University, for outstanding commitment in education; Center on Halsted,



State Treasurer Michael Frerichs.
Photo by Matt Simonette

for outstanding commitment in community service; which was accepted by CEO Modesto Tico Valle; state Rep. Kelly Cassidy (D-Chicago), for outstanding commitment as an elected official; Jackie and Cyndi Richter, the founders of Heels and Hardhats Construction, for outstanding service in workforce and labor; and Olympic athlete Caitlin Cahow, for Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship.

Activist Michael Bauer was posthumously awarded the Outstanding Service in Leadership award. It was accepted by his husband, Roger Simon, who said of Bauer, "Awards did not mean much to him. He just wanted to get the work done, for all people—and for equality."

The ceremony was emceed by WCIU-TV's Jon Hansen, with additional remarks were given by Kim Hunt, of Pride Action Tank. Activist Richard Streetman sang the national anthem, and members of American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) presented the call to arms.

—The Center on Halsted's third annual Trans Military Appreciation event will honor and demonstrate support for transgender military members, transgender veterans, and families Wed., Nov. 6, at 7 p.m. at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St. It's a free event, and no RSVP is needed. More information is at Community.CenterOnHalsted.org.

—State Comptroller Susana A. Mendoza will be honoring veterans—including Air Force veteran Jean Albright and Navy veteran Stanley Jenczyk—on Friday, Nov. 1, at 11 a.m. in the Blue Room on the 15th floor of the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St.

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PASSAGES

Richard Adams

Richard Adams, from Chicago, died Aug. 18. He was 73.

He was a proud U.S. Army veteran. He worked for the State of Illinois for three decades and retired in 2003.

Requiem mass was held at Church of the Atonement.

Military events to spotlight LGBTQs

—The Chicago chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights will hold its annual LGBTQ Veterans Day Dinner Monday, Nov. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at Ann Sather Restaurant, 909 W. Belmont Ave. The dinner speaker will be Tatyana Moaton, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst. There will be a silent auction, with admission being \$35. RSVP to Jim Darby at 773-752-0058 or jamesdarby@aol.com. There's more at Facebook.com/AVERChicagoChapter/ or AVERChicago.org.

Foundation acquires major Roger Brown work

BY KERRY REID

Though born and raised in small towns in Alabama, the late gay artist Roger Brown's greatest fame came through his association with the Chicago Imagists, an informal band of artists who grew out of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the late 1960s and whose work often had a surrealist bent to it, filtered through lenses of pop culture and social commentary.

Now the Terra Foundation for American Art—which has emphasized collecting Chicago artists in recent years—has acquired Brown's painting *The Big Jolt*, a 1972 canvas created as part of his *Disasters* series. It was in a private collection until Terra bought it at auction this fall. The foundation also recently bought *Top Cat Boy*, a piece by Brown's fellow Imagist Ed Paschke, and Beauford Delaney's *Untitled (Village Street Scene)*. All three paintings reflect Terra's more recent focus on collecting American art of the post-World War II era.

The Terra Foundation Collection represents around 800 works, including paintings, works on paper, and sculptures ranging from the late 18th century to the mid-20th. Founded in 1978 by the late Daniel J. Terra, who also established the former Terra Museum of American Art (first in Evanston, then on Michigan Avenue, where it operated from 1987 to 2004), the Foundation now focuses on partnering with institutions around the world in sharing the work of American artists. But as curator Peter John (PJ) Brownlee noted, there is increasing interest in exhibiting

post-1945 American art, especially in foreign museums.

"We have a collection plan and we revise and update that every few years," said Brownlee. "We try to be generous lenders to exhibitions organized by other museums. So we see what kinds of requests are coming in, and if you've been paying attention to the art world at all, you'll see that it's swung firmly to the 20th century." Through the Terra Collection Initiative, the foundation sends work to exhibitions around the world. Terra president and CEO Elizabeth Glassman noted that over the last 15 years, about 89 percent of the collection has been shared with other cultural institutions. Locally, the Art Institute also maintains a rotating collection of around 30 paintings from the Terra Foundation.

Brown's work holds special resonance for Chicago's LGBTQ community. In 1997, the year Brown died of AIDS-related complications (he was inducted posthumously into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 2004), he unveiled his glass mosaic mural *Hull House*, Cook County, Howard Brown: A Tradition of Helping at what was known as the Howard Brown Health Center (now Howard Brown Health) on North Sheridan Road. Figures representing Hull House founder Jane Addams and Howard Brown flank buildings representing Cook County Hospital, Hull House and the Howard Brown Health. It's a decidedly more positive spin on the urban landscape than that of Brown's *Disasters* series, which, as in *The Big Jolt*, often feature buildings on the verge of collapse.

Brown's longtime personal and creative part-



Roger Brown's 1972 work *The Big Jolt*.

Photo from tThe Terra Foundation for American Art, courtesy of the Roger Brown Study Collection

ner, George Veronda, was an architect. Their shared studio at 1926 N. Halsted St., containing Brown's extensive collection of art and artifacts (which included everything from his fellow Imagists to folk and Indigenous art, Art Deco and travel souvenirs) was styled by Brown as "The Artists' Museum of Chicago" and is now maintained as the Roger Brown Study Collection through the Art Institute.

The special significance of *The Big Jolt*, according to Terra assistant curator Taylor Poulin, is that

Brown and his fellow Imagists were "picking up on things that were happening in the moment. If you think about where they drew their imagery or their interests, Roger Brown would open up the newspaper and see a disaster happening." Poulin added "What they touch on is this anxiety about these things. It's humorous, but he's also kind of making a point about how fearful the world can be to a lot of people."

Brownlee noted that many of the issues artists such as Brown and others represented by the Terra delved into have relevance today for places like Brazil (the Terra has partnered with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sao Paulo), where LGBTQ rights and environmental activists have both been under attack in recent years. Putting work by American artists in conversation with each other and with artists from other nations remains a high priority for the Terra. In that way, Brown's wide-ranging interests as a collector as well as a creator of work reflecting a broad and eclectic array of styles and media also echo Terra's mission.

But as Glassman notes, the foundation's interest in expanding its collection of work by Chicago artists also remains a priority. The foundation's 2018 Art Design Chicago initiative helped cement Terra's desire to showcase work by artists such as Brown. But Glassman said, "We don't buy them only because they're Chicago artists. We buy them because they're great works of art and because we do feel that they speak to other works in our collection." She noted that the Paschke painting, which features a masked and top-hatted man holding a woman in a leopard-print bikini, can work in conversation with other Terra pieces emphasizing "the performative," such as a Reginald Marsh painting depicting the backstage of a burlesque show and a Walt Kuhn painting of a clown.

Building connections between works of art and spectators also remained important to Brown throughout his life. In a letter Brown sent months before he died to Lisa Stone, curator of the Roger Brown Study Collection, he wrote "I feel the things in the collection are of universal appeal to all artists and people with a sense of the spiritual and mystical nature that material things can evoke."

PPIL locations offer gender-affirming hormone therapy

Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL) now offers gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) at all 17 locations across the state.

PPIL GAHT services include comprehensive and ongoing medical care, psycho-social and emotional support, mental health assessments and case management. Since starting to offer GAHT services in 2016, PPIL has served more than 1,200 patients.

PPIL Medical Director and Vice President Dr. Amy Whitaker said in a press release, "The trans and gender non-conforming community is largely underserved and we aim to fill the existing gap in care by providing compassionate, respectful care to genders across the spectrum. We feel this service is crucial because, in many cases, hormone therapy is providing a lifesaving service."

PPIL clinicians are specially trained in GATH using the informed consent model and following The World Professional Association for Transgender Health Inc. guidelines. Minors age 16 and 17 may be seen at PPIL for gender-affirming

hormone therapy with parental consent from both parents/guardians with approval of a licensed mental health provider. All patients under 18 must have a letter from an outside social worker or see one of the LCSW on staff at PPIL prior to meeting with the clinician.

Among other things, PPIL also provides family planning and pregnancy services for transgender patients, including education and counseling for their future of fertility.

Commissioners expand voting access

Cook County commissioners Scott Britton, 14th District, and Kevin B. Morrison, 15th District, were lead sponsors on the Voting Opportunity and Translation Equity (VOTE) Ordinance that unanimously passed at the Cook County Board of Commissioners October board meeting, held Oct. 24.

The VOTE Ordinance mandates that fully translated ballots and voting materials in as many as eight additional languages will be available for suburban Cook County residents with limited-English-proficiency in 2020. In total, the ballot will be available in as many as 12 languages,

putting Cook County among the top jurisdictions in the nation for ballot language access.

Illinois is in the top six states for the most naturalized citizens. In Cook County, 35 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home.

ALMA marking 30 years on Nov. 15

The Association of Latinx Motivating Action (ALMA) will mark its 30th anniversary with an event Friday, Nov. 15, at the Puerto Rican Arts Alliance (PRAA), 3000 N. Elbridge Ave., 6-9 p.m.

In partnership with the PRAA, ALMA will be unveiling its archives to the community. Additionally, art inspired by the archive and created by young people from After School Matters' program, BLOOM, will be showcased alongside the ALMA archive to contribute to dialogue regarding past, present and future movements within the Latinx LGBTQ community.

During the event, a panel of Latinx LGBTQ leaders will share reflections about LGBTQ Latinx activism.

See "ALMA Presents Our Past, Present and Future '30 Years Of Archives'" on Eventbrite.com.

Safe Schools event Nov. 9 at UChicago

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and Pride Action Tank are hosting the Safe Schools Symposium on Saturday, Nov. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The symposium will take place at the University of Chicago (UChicago) School of Social Service Administration, 969 E. 60th St. Attendees will learn about the recently passed LGBT Inclusive Curriculum Law, how the Alliance and Pride Action Tank advance equitable education across Illinois and the power of inclusive learning to transform education.

See ILSafeSchools.org/safe-schools-symposium.

Safe Schools Alliance advances PHIMC partnership

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) has been putting the finishing touches on a merger with the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC).

The Alliance has long advocated on behalf of LGBT students in Illinois schools, contributing to anti-bullying efforts and participating in legislative pushes such as the one that recently made LGBT history a mandatory part of the state's curriculum. PHIMC has more often than not been a behind-the-scenes player in public health initiatives.

"Our primary focus is to collaborate with public health and healthcare systems to promote equity and access to care," said Executive Director Karen Reitan, emphasizing that PHIMC does not provide direct services to clients. "... We work with government and non-government public health and healthcare organizations to improve the quality of services that people get."

PHIMC has 26 people on staff and has a budget of about \$13 million, which is composed of city, state and federal money and a variety of private

grants from local organizations, Reitan added.

In May 2017, the Alliance lost a key grant and faced serious questions about its long-term sustainability, said Mary Morten, the Alliance's co-founder and former board chair, who is now a PHIMC board member.

The Alliance was looking to "concentrate more on programs, and less time on back-office [tasks]," added Morten. "That was our focus: How could we find a strategic partner with whom we had some commonality that we would become partners with?"

Morten said that the Alliance looked at about six local organizations as potential partners, but said that there was the most commonality between it and PHIMC, especially since PHIMC has done extensive work on school health issues. The merger was completed in July 2019.

"It was really an unexpected and fortuitous match," Morten said.

"There is a wealth of experience and expertise within PHIMC, added Nat Duran, the Alliance's youth engagement manager. "I've been involved with the Alliance for a pretty long time, both on the staff and as a board member. We are a small



Nat Duran, Mary Morten and Karen Reitan.
Photo by Matt Simonette

but mighty and scrappy group, so one thing that got me excited about going into the merger process was that we would be moving into an organization with such a strong leadership team."

Among the projects coming up for the Alliance is its ongoing collaboration with the Legacy Project and Equality Illinois on the LGBT history curriculum coming soon to Illinois schools. Now that the curriculum has become law, the next step is actually figuring out the logistics of how the history will be taught and which materials should be used.

Morten emphasized that stakeholders are most interested in infusing the existing history curriculum with relevant information about LGBT persons.

"We really want to make sure that people understand that this in no way about anything more than saying, "Sally Ride was an extraordinary as-

tronaut and Sally Ride was a lesbian. It is adding to that person's identity, so that young folks sitting in a classroom know that LGBTQ people made contributions."

The Alliance is also putting finishing touches on its Safe Schools Symposium, which it is presenting along with Pride Action Tank on Saturday, Nov. 9 from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. That event takes place at the University of Chicago's School of Public Service Administration. Among the scheduled speakers are historian and Gerber/Hart Library & Archives Board President John D'Emilio and Evanston Township High School Marcus Campbell.

For information and to register for the symposium, visit ILSafeSchools.org/safe-schools-symposium.

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viewpoints



**Rev. Irene
MONROE**

Halloween unmask our troubled history with race

Halloween is one of this country's favorite yearly activities. Unfortunately, Halloween can be America's scariest, too—especially for those of us seen as costumes you wear rather than the human beings that we are.

Asian Americans, Native Americans, Blacks and Muslim women in burqas, hijabs and Muslim men in turbans with beards are frequent targets of race-themed costumes. Whites donning blackface has been commonly accepted misbehavior that dates back long before it was disclosed months ago that the Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam once went in blackface as Michael Jackson in the 1980s. With anti-immigration sentiment toward Mexicans evident with the mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, there will be some Halloween revelers mocking this racial group. However, those not intending to mock or to mimic yet dress up in a Mexican serape and hat or in the “Little Mexican Amigo Toddler Costume” sold on Amazon will hit racial landmines, too.

This is a country that doesn't want to confront race. Halloween—an activity that's masked with tricks and treats and playful mischief—ironically unmask the face of the United States' troubled history with race.

It's hard not to make the connection with contemporary topics, themes and people trending in news and culture to Halloween costumes worn that year. For example, a year after Trayvon Martin's murder, a

rash of Trayvon Martin Halloween costumes appeared with white people wearing hoodies, carrying Skittles and sporting gunshot wounds. That same year, in 2013, Julianne Hough, then a judge on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, wore blackface as her favorite character, Crazy Eyes in the Netflix hit *Orange Is the New Black*, for Halloween. Award-winning Nigerian American actress Uzo Aduba portrays Crazy Eyes.

This year we see Halloween decorations of lynching across the country. In Chesapeake, Virginia, a figure was found wrapped in black trash bags hanging from a tree. In Brooklyn, a Halloween decoration displayed children hanging from nooses. Now gone, the display was across the street from an elementary school. Here in Andover, Massachusetts—just a 30-minute drive from my home in Cambridge—a McDonald's apologized for a Halloween decoration displaying a person hanging from a tree by the neck.

In this racial climate of a resurgence of white nationalism, it's not hard to connect President Trump's recent comment about lynching to some of the hanging-themed Halloween decorations popping up across the country. In a tweet, Trump compared the House's impeachment inquiry into him to a lynching.

“So some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can impeach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights. All Republicans must remember what they are witnessing here—a lynching. But we will WIN!,” Trump tweeted.

The horrific act of lynching is a form of domestic terrorism and social control. Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African American male teen lynched in the Mississippi Delta in the summer of 1955, became this nation's iconic image of the cowardly acts of white supremacist terrorism. In 2018, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (informally known as the National Lynching Memorial) opened to commemorate the thousands of recorded Black bodies lynched in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Trump's use of the racial trope essentializes and erases the particular history and context of Black struggle in America. Our present-day fight is to pass legislation to make the act of lynching a federal hate crime in this century. Also, in this climate to “Make America Great Again,” Trump's use of the racial trope of lynching sadly might encourage some to taunt, jeer, frighten and even act violently toward non-white, non-Christian and LGBTQ+ Americans.

Even with the best intentions, Halloween items displaying the act of lynching ought not to bring joy nor laughter—whether intended to cause harm or not. Dany Rose just recently learned this lesson. Rose's home window display of brown cutout paper dolls hanging by their neck immediately prompted community outrage and protest. Rose—the co-director of ArtShack Brooklyn, who recently resigned from her post—offered the following apology:

“The images were based on the horror movie *Annabelle*, but because they were made of brown kraft paper and hanging from nooses, they were deeply racially offensive. ... I understand that ignorance is no excuse and apologies are not enough, but nonetheless I want to apologize sincerely to my neighbors and community.”

Some feel Halloween no longer brings joy and laughter in a “woke” culture where the tyranny of political correctness and identity politics police behavior. However, if you feel you're rocking your Halloween outfit instead of mocking an ethnic group or cultural practice, please keep these thoughts in mind: wearing the traditional clothing of another culture is not a costume. Donning “blackface” is not a mask. Dressing as a homeless person isn't funny. Adopting someone else's dialect for the evening is not cool. Purchasing the “Disguise Women's Dragon Geisha Costume” from Amazon is not okay.

Halloween is a Celtic festival. People lit bonfires and wore costumes to ward off ghosts. We can do the same without dredging up the ghosts of this country's racism.

letters

Response to hate

Dear Editor:

God's presence is always reflected in us. As a person of faith, I believe in Jesus Christ.

No wonder this generation is starving for the community, connection and relationship when we see attacks on people of color and the trans community. We want to be truly seen as fully human. I believe in a God who is trustworthy, a God who is faithful

and a God who requires more from each and every one of us.

The LGBTQ community's hunger for justice requires us to speak out and to act. Take two recent examples: how Progress Bar responded to claims of racism, and the anti-trans attack involving Women and Children First bookstore.

In both of these incidents, we saw the responses from two separate communities, but we should look at the response to hate. Our vision of the community must be inclusive and not exclusive. One community

cannot paddle the canoe alone; our multiple communities must first pray for guidance, and respond in a compassionate manner.

We must learn to support each other, communicate in a respectful manner and work together.

We have our differences—and those give us the opportunity to grow and develop.

Joe Murray

Executive Director

Rainbow Sash Movement (LGBTQ Roman Catholics)

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



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PAGE 28

Joseph Stevens Photography



THEATER REVIEW

Kentucky

Playwright: Leah Nanako Winkler

At: The Gift Theatre at

Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.

Tickets: TheaterWit.org 773-975-8150; \$42

Runs through: Nov. 16

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When you think about people who live in rural Kentucky, do you visualize loud, vulgar, brawny, illiterate, bigoted, meth-smoking, moonshine-swilling yokels? When you think about people who live in New York City, is the image that comes to mind one of shallow, materialistic, mercurial, neurotic, pharma-popping, thrill-addicted, fossil fume-huffing urban chauvinists?

Leah Nanako Winkler's play features some of these archetypes, to be sure, but a writer who answers to a multi-ethnic surname and an origin story spanning Lexington, Kentucky, and Kamak-

Emjoy Gavino and Paul D'Addario (in background) in *Kentucky*.
Photo by Claire Demos

ura, Japan, is also likely to have some surprises up her sleeve. Corporate-wizard Hiro's reluctant return to her mountain home may appear to be

occasioned by the wedding of her little sister Sophie to an African-American pastor's son, but to the runaway sibling, herself, it's a rescue mis-

sion.

That's just the premise, however. Over the course of the nuptial preparations, we learn that the clan patriarch's toxic misanthropy arises from an upbringing of corporal punishment administered by a maternal bully, generating denied guilt exacerbated by his marital-martyr Japanese-immigrant wife, and that most of Hiro's childhood companions have perished in car crashes and drug overdoses, their untimely deaths only serving to strengthen the survivors' endurance. Most important, we discover that the church-going groom and his devoutly Christian parents practice all that they preach, making for a protective stability that goes far in explaining the security Sophie derives from their unconditional acceptance—a security that Hiro continues to pursue in the Big Apple.

This isn't Osage County, though. The bouts of grim filial-wrestling share stage space with bursts of mid-speech soliloquy, song-and-dance

Turn to page 14

THEATER REVIEW

Proxy

Authors: Alexander Sage Oyen (music/lyrics),

Austin Regan (book),

Rachel Franco (additional book/lyrics)

At: Underscore Theatre, 4609 N. Clark St.

Tickets: UnderscoreTheatre.org; \$25

Runs through: Nov. 24

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This non-Equity world premiere is a serious work with several key decisions to make.

It's a play with a lot of songs rather than a true musical, as it has no dance, no chorus (not essential) and few ensemble numbers. More than that, Proxy tells three stories with only five charac-

ters, so focus constantly shifts. The authors must decide which story is most important. Also, the hero is alcoholic and aggressively disaffected, although she's only 27. She's defensive, accusatory and judgmental almost to the end, which makes empathizing difficult. Changes need to be made if Proxy is to develop successfully.

Proxy concerns Vanessa (Carisa Gonzalez), an e-zine journalist. When she was 12 her best friend, Ronnie (Tessa Dettman), stabbed her 21 times with a knife. Ronnie has been institutionalized ever since in small town, Midwestern "Proxyville." As for Vanessa, she left home at 18 and didn't even return for her dad's funeral. Now she's a blogosphere star with an on/off relationship with her editor, Doug (Michael Meija). When declining hits threaten their jobs, Vanessa proposes exploiting her personal story and goes home to

interview Ronnie. Her return takes her brother, Sean (Kyle Kite), and mother, Martha (Jenny Rudnick), by surprise.

One-third of Proxy concerns Vanessa reconnecting—or failing to reconnect—with her family. One-third concerns Ronnie and the attack. One-third is about Vanessa and Doug, who follows her to Proxyville (unconnected to the Proxyville web soap opera), challenging her ethics when she interviews Ronnie in disguise. This is problematic because (a) journalists work undercover all the time, and (b) after Ronnie's public trial for attempted murder 15 years ago, surely Vanessa already knows the how/why of the attack.

Vanessa's inability to heal emotionally from the attack is more credible, but not why she blames her family for that failure or why she took to drink. Her mother, whom she calls Martha, is

perfectly caring to the degree Vanessa allows, and her bro is a perfectly nice slacker with whom Vanessa gets high—and neither one impacts the story much. With only five characters, all of them must be crucial (or, at least, four should).

The music is tuneful mainstream pop/rock with interesting rhythms and several Broadway-style numbers, such as a ballad for Martha and "Fake IDs," a song and dance for Sean and Vanessa (except without dance). Vanessa's solo, "Her & Me," displays jazz influence while "To Find Out Who I Am" is a fine rock duet for her and Sean. Ronnie needs a belt voice, which Dettman delivers well. Some songs are quite short and none ends with a musical button—certainly a conscious decision, which seems odd. The company is solid and sincere under director Stephanie Rohr and musical director T. J. Anderson.

THEATER REVIEW

You Are Happy

Playwright: Rebecca Deraspe; English

translation: Leanna Brodie; American

Sign Language translation: Mary Kate Ashe,

Michelle Mary Schaefer, Brendan Connelly

At: Red Theater at The Edge Off

Broadway, 1133 W. Catalpa Ave.

Tickets: RedTheater.org; \$10-\$30

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Since 2015, Red Theater has made accessibility a cornerstone of its operating mission. And this inclusivity is reflective in its contemplative and deconstructed Chicago premiere of Quebecois playwright Rebecca Deraspe's 2011 comic drama *You Are Happy*.

Actually, Deraspe's play was originally titled *Deux Ans de Votre Vie* (Two Years of Your Life). But English translator Leanna Brodie renamed it *You Are Happy*.

Red Theater goes a step further in the play's translation journey by making American Sign Language (or captioning) as a default language

alongside spoken English. That's because two of the leading characters are played by deaf or hard-of-hearing actors.

You Are Happy has a deliberately simplistic plot: Chloe (Michelle Mary Schaefer) is an insecure waitress who gets manipulated into becoming the girlfriend of a graphic designer named Jeremy (Brendan Connelly).

It is Jeremy's assuredly single and hearing sister, research analyst Bridget (Emily Turner), who is the matchmaking mastermind. Bridget's romantic wrangling stems from her belief that a girlfriend will stop her brother's repeated (and so annoying!) suicide attempts.

In *You Are Happy*, Deraspe questions whether couple-hood truly brings about happiness. She also delves into the randomness of life, plus she questions whether honest communication can really lead to unending romantic bliss.

Co-directors Aaron Sawyer and Mary Kate run with the play's existential bent (and Julianna Marchese's production concept) by presenting everything as barebones. The co-directors deconstruct things further by having the characters shadowed by spoken English translators. (Sarah JK Shoemaker is Chloe's Voice, Bowie

Footo is Jeremy's Voice and Elana Weiner-Kaplow is Bridget's Voice.)

These voices largely function in the same way in that American Sign Language interpreters get trotted out and pushed to the side for some theaters' special accessibility performances. Yet these "voice actors" also get to interact now and then, and they appear to read out stage directions as part of the overall text.

All these levels of communication are simultaneously distancing and enthralling for *You Art Happy*. Yet one wishes for more physical comedy now and then from the performers.

Clearly *You Are Happy* can become a laugh riot if its actors dig into the quirky nature of Brodie's translation of Deraspe's sometimes offbeat dialogue and nonsensical situations. As played at Red Theater, things are mostly straightforward and seriously presentational rather than being awkwardly situational slapstick fun.

So Red Theater deserves kudos for its assured and inclusive take on *You Are Happy*. Yet one wishes that the quirkiness could have been ratcheted up with more comic physicality to contrast with the existential uncertainty that pervades the play and this production.

CRITICS' PICKS

The Effect, Strawdog Theatre Company, though Nov. 23: Is love in the brain or in the mind, playwright Lucy Prebble asks, and can it save two human guinea pigs (and their handlers) in a pharmaceutical? *MSB*

The Color Purple, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, through Nov. 3: Director Lili-Anne Brown allows this speedy musical adaptation of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning to properly breathe with great emotional performances and gorgeous singing. *SCM*

Invisible, Her Story Theatre, through Nov. 3: Muckraker playwright Mary Bonnett takes us back to the Deep South and KKK of 1925, when even righteous feminists could entertain racist bigotry unawares. *MSB*

Twice, Thrice, Frice, Silk Road Rising, through Nov. 10: Fouad Teymour's world premiere comedy concerns three contemporary American Islamic women dealing with friendship and polygamy (allowed for men under sharia law). For one woman, it's unexpectedly empowering! *JA*

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

THEATER REVIEW

Sugar in Our Wounds

Playwright: Donja R. Love

At: Den Theatre, 1333 N. Milwaukee St.

Tickets: FirstFloorTheater.com

Price: \$18-35

Runs through: Nov. 23

BY KAREN TOPHAM

Donja R. Love's *Sugar in Our Wounds* takes place during the Civil War in the shadow of an enormous tree that grows on a plantation, its branches so high that it appears to be reaching all the way to heaven.

As told by Aunt Mama (Renee Lockett), the ageless matriarch of a makeshift slave family, the legend of the tree is that it is where all the male ancestors of the current group were hanged and where their spirits still reside. James (Michael Turrentine), a young slave who is trying to defy the odds and become a learned Black man, certainly believes it to be true as it explains the odd music the tree makes, the strange lights that can be seen in its branches, and the fact that he keeps hearing it murmur his name.

Also living with James and Aunt Mama is Mattie (Ashley Crowe), a 20-year-old who once was favored by the family in the main house as a playmate for Isabel (Grainne Ortlieb). But that was a long time ago: After Isabel's father bedded Mattie, she was cast out, beaten and disfigured by cuts to her face; Isabel has grown into a cruel woman, still obsessed with hurting Mattie at ev-



Londen Shannon and Michael Turrentine in *Sugar in Our Wounds*.

Photo by Gracie Meier

ery opportunity, but willing to risk punishment to teach James to read for her own private reasons.

The incident that incites the play's main conflicts is the arrival in the shack of alpha male and closeted gay man Henry (Londen Shannon), who has just been torn from his own family and sold to this plantation. His arrival upsets the precarious harmony of the makeshift family, as he falls for James (who is also gay) while Mattie is falling for him. Interestingly for a show that focuses on same-sex love, Mattie's seduction of Henry is the only sex act played out on the stage. The encounters between Henry and James are absolutely PG, involving no more than kissing.

This is a play rife with modern emotion and argument despite its Civil War setting. While there was certainly gay activity among the slaves on southern plantations, the acceptance of it here

SPOTLIGHT

First it was a 1994 British Film and then a 2002 musical by the formidable team of composer Stephen Flaherty, lyricist Lynn Ahrens and playwright Terrance McNally (the team that created *Ragtime*). In whatever form, *A Man of No Importance* is an unusual coming out story in the unlikely—and dangerous—setting of conservative, Catholic 1964 Dublin, Ireland where bus driver Alfie Byrne directs amateur theatricals. Deeply in denial, Alfie is inspired in more ways than one by the spirit of his favorite playwright, fellow Irishman Oscar Wilde. *A Man of No Importance* is not new to Chicago, but this is a new production, presented by Pride Films & Plays through Nov. 10. Donterrio Johnson is the director, recently honored Robert Ollis is musical director and Ryan Lanning (pictured in sweater) is Alfie. Tickets: pridefilmsandplays.com.

Photo by Heather Mall



feels rather anachronistic. Aunt Mama proclaims, in answer to James's query about whether it is "normal," that not only is it completely common in Africa, but that she herself has been with many women. (Despite relying on her script at times, Lockett rocks this part; her Aunt Mama is an uncommonly sympathetic, all-knowing, once-vital woman who is weighed down by age and the pain of loss.)

Director Mikael Burke, working on a set by Joy Ahn that suggests more than shows the tree and the shack (that adds to the somewhat surreal undertones of the mystical aspect of the play), brings out excellent work in his cast. His creative team is also strong, from Madeleine Byrne's pe-

riod costumes—both for the slaves and for Isabel—to the very effective lighting (Eric Watkins) and sound (Sam Clapp) that not only set the scenes but bring the tree to life.

Because this is a melodrama, prepare for some strong emotional responses. (One woman at the show I attended left at the end openly sobbing.) Today, decades after the civil rights movement ostensibly made the races equal, in an era in which same-sex marriage is legal across the United States, we continue to witness additions to this persecution brought on by ignorance and hatred. *Sugar in Our Wounds* is a reminder (as if we need one) that the historical fight goes on—and there is not a real ending in sight.

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OPERA

'Dead Man Walking' makes Lyric debut

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It has taken nearly two decades for the Lyric Opera of Chicago to finally stage *Dead Man Walking*. But that's just a blink of an eye considering the more than four centuries of operatic history.

Dead Man Walking premiered in at San Francisco Opera in 2000. It was general director Lotfi Mansouri who came up with the idea of commissioning the gay collaborative team of composer Jake Heggie and playwright Terrence McNally to write their first opera together.

"Terrence thought of doing *Dead Man Walking*, and I was immediately struck that it was a brilliant idea," said Heggie during a recent visit to Chicago. "I was set on fire musically and creatively."

"[McNally] told me early on, 'If you feel music starting to take you on a journey, go,'" Heggie said. "I'll rewrite words, you rewrite words, whatever you need. Just follow the music."

Initial *Dead Man Walking* reviews were great, and other companies clamored to produce it. Heggie is proud to note that by the time *Dead Man Walking* reaches the Metropolitan Opera in New York during the 2020-21 season, the opera will have been produced by 70 different international companies and schools (including a 2015 Northwestern University production).

Heggie has gone on to write more operas. Three *Decembers* and *Moby Dick* were both respectively staged by Chicago Opera Theater in 2010 and 2019, while Heggie re-teamed with McNally for the contemporary 2015 comedy *Great Scott*.

al reaction to being in attendance for Sonnier's 1984 execution by electrocution.

"That night right out side the gates of (Louisiana's Angola State Prison), the first thing I did was throw up," Prejean said. "I had never witnessed a human being being rendered completely defenseless and killed."

Prejean became an activist against capital punishment, which she further explored in her 2004 book *The Death of Innocents*.

Prejean's latest memoir, *River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey*, was released in August. It details Prejean's upbringing and spiritual journey to becoming a Roman Catholic nun. She considers herself very lucky to have experienced the reforms that grew out of the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s.

"Nobody benefited more from that than nuns," said Prejean, noting that many semi-cloistered and unquestioning sisters like herself would turn outward toward the society around them to further basic human rights.

"No one should be treated with disrespect simply because of the color of their skin, or their gender or their sexual orientation," Prejean said.



Dead Man Walking composer Jake Heggie (left) and author Sister Helen Prejean.
Photo by Kyle Flubacker

Dead Man Walking takes its inspiration from Sister Helen Prejean's autobiographical 1993 book of the same name detailing her experiences as the spiritual adviser to two Louisiana death-row inmates: Elmo Patrick "Pat" Sonnier and Robert Lee Willie. Like director Tim Robbins' 1995 film adaptation (which won Susan Sarandon an Academy Award for playing Prejean), the opera conflates the two men into the single character of Joseph De Rocher.

Heggie said that McNally was a very generous collaborator. And as a well-known opera lover (as reflected in his plays like *Master Class* and *The Lisbon Traviata*), McNally knew that the music should take precedence over his libretto.

In spring 2020, Chicago Fringe Opera stages Heggie's revised 2016 work *Two Remain* (Out of Darkness), which is based upon the separate journals of two World War II Holocaust survivors. But Heggie is amazed that his most-produced work continues to be the one that established his career as an operatic composer.

Prejean is also heartened by the success of *Dead Man Walking* as an opera. Visiting Chicago as part of events tied to the Lyric premiere, Prejean suggested that opera was "the fullest art form of all because it's live drama with music to instruct the heart."

"I am at the service of this story because of what I witnessed," said Prejean about her viscer-

Grand Opera) or Jamie Barton (earlier this year at Atlanta Opera).

For the Lyric, lesbian soprano Patricia Racette makes her role debut as Sister Helen. Meanwhile, Susan Graham has graduated to playing the fraught mother Mrs. De Rocher.

"[Patricia Racette] is such an amazing actress, and I think she will be stunning," Heggie said. "And I think Ryan McKinny is going to be great as Joseph De Rocher. I've known Ryan probably 12 to 13 years and he's become a big Wagnerian. He'll be amazing because he's a very visceral performer."

The Lyric warns that director Leonard Foglia's *Dead Man Walking* production "contains nudity, graphic violence and explicit language." Much of this occurs at the start as Joseph DeRocher commits the murders of two teenagers.

Far from being scandalized, Prejean admires McNally's decision to include this violent scene because audiences are "not using any kind of moral energy or creative energy to figure out if he did it or not."

"Our main goal in writing *Dead Man Walking* was to bring people into this very difficult dialogue—not tell them how they should feel," Heggie said. "Are we for vengeance or for forgiveness? Do we believe in redemption or do we only believe in damnation? What does make us stronger as a society? All these questions come up because of this piece. And it's also a story of parents and children. What's more timeless than that?"

***Dead Man Walking* is at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr., for six performances only Nov. 2-22. Tickets are \$39 to \$279; call 312-827-5600 or visit LyricOpera.org.**

REVIEW from page 12

interludes and a pair of bridesmaids who double as Greek chorus, scene-shifting stagehands, and various auxiliary characters. Let's not forget, either, meek mother Masako's beloved cat—played by the charming Martel Manning—to whom she croons, in her native language, the plaintive ballad "Ue O Muite Arukou" (Anglophone audiences will recognize it, trust me.)

Winkler's parable dances between generational and cultural demographics with an agility that could easily dissolve into a farcical mash-up of cartoon stereotypes and Chick-tracts, but director Chika Ike and her ensemble-trained cast never succumb to the adrenal self-consciousness that so often infects actors forced to utter repugnant pronouncements. (Paul D'Addario's Daddy James, in particular, has a meltdown scene that will spur you to wash out your ears with soap after the show). Matching him decibel for vitriolic decibel is Emjoy Gavino's Hiro, sporting eyeglasses the size of Imax screens and an even bigger attitude. Don't discount the nuanced performances contributed by Hannah Toriumi as the quietly resolute Sophie and Helen Joo Lee as the deceptively self-effacing Masako.

Winkler endows her oft-misrepresented characters with unprejudiced warmth and compassion almost, but not quite, eclipsing the profound intelligence reflected beneath its sometimes-giddy presentation, so pay attention, you all.

"I'm realizing the importance of getting religion right, because religion is being used in terrible ways to oppress people—including [(former U.S. Attorney General]Jeff Sessions quoting Romans 13 to uphold the separation of children from their parents at the border. Is that not unspeakable?"

In terms of her legacy, Prejean pooh-poohed any notions of *Dead Man Walking* "canonizing" her as a character in the standard operatic repertoire. Prejean was also diplomatic not to name any favorites among the famous opera singers who have portrayed her like Susan Graham (who originated the role of Sister Helen), Joyce DiDonato (featured on the 2012 CD recording from Houston



BY KERRY REID

Six years ago, Whitney Chitwood was living in New York, trying to make it in theater, and feeling disillusioned, "because I did it all my life. So I would go to comedy clubs and watch shows a lot, and got bit by [the comedy bug] that way. I just wrote on my own and didn't perform for anyone for maybe six months. And then I got very drunk and went to my first open mike. When you do it once, you get sucked in, for sure."

Chitwood has just released her first full-length comedy album, *The Bakery Case*—named after the Masterpiece Cakeshop Supreme Court ruling. On the album—released Oct. 18 through Stand Up! Records and recorded at Chicago's Green Mill, where Chitwood has been a frequent performer with the live magazine show *The Paper Machete*—she, indeed, talks about Masterpiece. Ironically, Chitwood noted that she performed several times in Fort Collins, Colorado, while shaping the material for *The Bakery Case*. (The bakery is located in Lakewood, Colorado.) "They were the first place to have me headline a festival," she said.

But Chitwood's comedy isn't solely directed through a political lens. In the segment entitled "A Bigot, A Baker, A Wedding Cake Maker," Chitwood ties Masterpiece in with her own experience confronting the infidelity of a longtime partner. When a friend tried to console her by saying "Don't hate the player, hate the game," Chitwood responded, "It's CHEATING. If [NBA player] Steph Curry ran around during the playoffs hitting people in the head with hammers, you wouldn't say 'I hate basketball!'"

Chitwood tried Los Angeles for a while after deciding to pursue stand-up, but she said Chicago gave her the environment she needed to hone her voice and her chops. "I am forever and eternally grateful to the Chicago comedy scene," she told *Windy City Times*. "I think it's the best in the country, just in terms of diversity and creativity.

Chicago is in an interesting position specifically as a comedy city, because ... you come here, you gestate and then you shoot out to a coast. It's a breeding ground. There are a lot of people in the community who want it to be recognized as more than that. It's not just the place to come and learn how to ice skate and then go play hockey somewhere else."

Simply taking the stage as a queer woman constitutes a political act, Chitwood noted. But she also said, "I feel like everyone in Chicago is kind of queer. It's like a really super-queer city. It feels like a place that is nonjudgmental in terms of identity, so I can be 'Yeah, I'm a dyke—now, can we move on?'"

Chitwood said that she's moved on a bit from the material in *The Bakery Case*. She has developed about a half-hour's worth of new material for her second album, and she noted that it's moving in the direction of even longer-form material, stating, "There are maybe four stories, at the most. It's sort of long-winded, I jump around a lot, and I want to give people a chance to catch up."

In the live performance recorded for *The Bakery Case*, it's notable that Chitwood isn't afraid of taking longer pauses to let an image or a line land with her audience, rather than hurrying them along to the next point or set-up. Although she also pointed out that she's done more surrealist bits in the past—like opening her set by speaking fake French for a few minutes—the challenge and the joy for Chitwood lies in figuring out how the stories connect.

The material she's working on now comes out of a couple of different experiences, including the death of her grandfather earlier this year. "A lot of it is centered around like growing up on the farm and all of the various disasters that happened there," Chitwood said. (Growing up in a small town outside Peoria, Chitwood also became a self-described "horse girl," which has led to a

series of horse-themed memes fans have shared on her Instagram.)

But Chitwood said she's also interested in exploring how "we as a society don't do things just to feed our soul anymore." She pointed to the influence of social media as one of the factors; in fact, a longer essay on that subject that Chitwood performed at the Green Mill for the *Paper Machete* caught the attention of fellow comedian Maria Bamford and helped turn Bamford into a

fan.

Being on the road three or four months out of the year can be a strain, but Chitwood has found returning home to Chicago's comedy scene helps feed her own soul. "In New York, it's like clubs and bar shows and here it feels like there's just a whole slew of odd shows that are in weird places with really cool audiences," she said.

Visit <https://standuprecords.com/>.

Tegan and Sara discuss high school biography

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Twin sibling performers Sara and Tegan Quin—aka Tegan and Sara—stopped by the Museum of Contemporary Art on Oct. 15 to discuss their collaborative memoir *High School*.

Tegan said that the duo originally contemplated producing a concept album or podcast focused on their high school years in their native Calgary, but ultimately settled on writing a book together. The process highlighted fundamental differences between Tegan and Sara, both in terms of their process and their temperament.

While Tegan was deliberate and contemplative of the material she chose to document,

Sara wrote quickly and from the heart.

"You find that you have to surrender your story," Sara said. "... This seemed like a really direct way to do it."

She later added: "I just wrote from my memory and talked to my therapist a lot."

Tegan said, "I just wanted to tell a good story. ... I was more careful and protective."

Music journalist and critic Jessica Hopper moderated the event, which was part of the Chicago Ideas Festival.



Sara and Tegan Quin, and Jessica Hopper. Photo courtesy of Chicago Ideas

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BOOKS

Life's a witch in Augusten Burroughs' new memoir

BY TONY PEREGRIN

After reading Augusten Burroughs' new tome *Toil & Trouble* some readers might have a "Witch, please?!" reaction to the memoirist's big reveal that he is a practicing witch.

In *Toil & Trouble*, Burroughs writes about discovering his abilities at age 9 on a bus ride home from school. Staring at the blur of trees flashing by his window, he suddenly became filled with anxiety, followed by a certainty that something terrible had happened to his grandmother. In fact, earlier that day, his "Amah" had been in a car accident, his mother reveals, breaking a rib and puncturing a lung. His ability to "know things he shouldn't have known," is because he is a witch, his mother informs him, a descendant from a long line of witches hailing back to the days of the early U.S. colonies.

It was "simultaneously the most confusing and the most comforting thing anyone had ever said to me," writes Burroughs—the openly gay New York Times best-selling author of *Running with Scissors* and *Lust & Wonder*—in the new memoir released Oct 1.

Toil & Trouble—the title references the cauldron speech in *Macbeth*—is a penetrating and, yes, haunting memoir, illuminating new details about the writer's complicated relationship with his mother, and his journey to understand and harness his unconventional powers. For Burroughs, the craft is less about potions and wands and more about developing a heightened focus to generate desired outcomes—like when he casts a series of spells to nudge his husband (and long-time literary agent) Christopher Schelling into buying their dream home in rural Connecticut.

Windy City Times: As an openly gay man, I have always thought members of our community possessed a special ability or power—one that allows us to manifest a better life as a survival technique.

Augusten Burroughs: I actually think that a lot of people probably do have a special power, if you want to call it that. Maybe they're not aware of it, or they might name it something else, a woman's intuition or a sixth sense or a funny feeling. But I think that anybody who is isolated or persecuted as a child or has been told 'Who you are is defective and wrong' absolutely develops a special power. You develop a powerful resiliency. I think it can, if it doesn't break you, it can teach you to trust your own inner voice and that's a powerful thing.

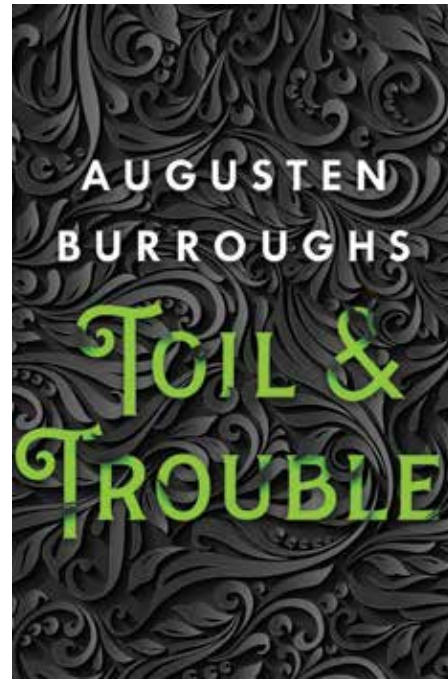
WCT: When your mother sent you to live with her psychiatrist, Dr. Finch, and his outlandishly dysfunctional household (*Running with Scissors*)—did you use witchcraft to cope?

AB: I did. It absolutely helped me. It helped me feel less isolated. It helped me to withdraw into

myself and it helped me to sense when something awful was about to happen so that I could be prepared or clear out of a way. It helped to the extent that I knew what to ask of it, if that makes any sense.

WCT: Were you hesitant about revealing to the public that you are a witch?

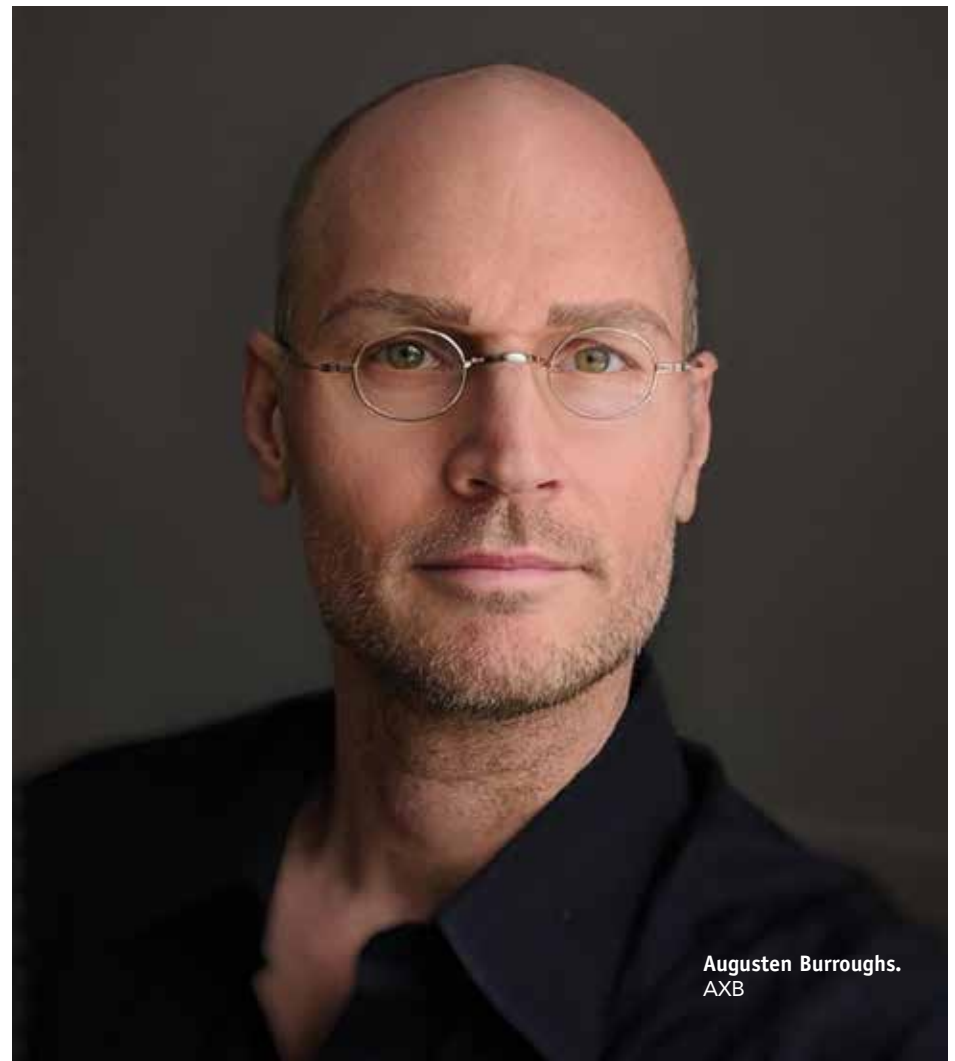
AB: I was never going to write about it. It's so off the table that when journalists would ask me if there was anything about myself about which I wouldn't write—I would always answer "no," truthfully, or so I thought. I'd always said that I'd write about anything—there's nothing that's off the table. Well, except for this thing. I mean, I never, ever told anyone. I mean I just did not talk about it.



My mother made the point very early on that this is the most natural thing in the world, but that people have absolutely no understanding of it and that I'd be a joke if I talked about it.

WCT: I heard you actually destroyed your laptop pounding out the *Toil & Trouble* manuscript, so this must have been a narrative you were ready to release to the world on some level.

AB: I was working on my novel and it was not going anywhere, and it was absolutely out of the blue that I started writing *Toil & Trouble*. I mean literally one minute I was working on the novel, not having any fun or it was not working, and then boom, I just started writing it and I wrote fast and furiously without stopping. And we're talking about days, I didn't write this in years, I



Augusten Burroughs.
AXB

wrote it in days. My arms were just destroyed, I ruined my laptop keyboard. Gone. Threw it away.

WCT: How did your publisher react to the witchy subject matter?

AB: Jennifer has been my publisher for my whole career. I mean, I've never worked with anybody else. I thought there's a really a good chance that she's going to really be like, "Ah, no." But instead she absolutely loved it, and she loved it more than she loved *Running with Scissors*, which was her favorite. She just was absolutely insane over it and was, like, "This explains everything about you. Oh my God, this explains everything."

WCT: There are a couple of spells that are included in the book, and I'm wondering if crafting spells comes naturally to you because you are a writer?

AB: They do, yeah, and I love them. I mean, they're not necessary, but I love them and I enjoy writing them.

WCT: Why aren't spells necessary?

AB: Because it's not about the words, it's about the focus. It's about the mind and incredible amounts of energy directed in a very, very singular direction to a very specific outcome without any doubt whatsoever and with no wavering. You've got to be able to visualize something with absolute perfect clarity. It doesn't dissolve and waiver. Spells can be helpful if they help you focus, but that's not where the magic comes from.

It doesn't come from the words; it comes from the mind.

WCT: I wish it were possible for you to craft a spell to try and influence the current administration.

AB: I wish. I wish I could. I don't know. I don't really think that I have control over people. What I have experienced is being able to add weight, sort of like adding molecular weight to a decision, or when I'm close to somebody, maybe to reshape some of their thinking about things. But if I could, I would be like Samantha on *Bewitched*, wrinkle my nose and....

WCT: The world could really use a little Samantha Stephens right about now.

AB: I've had enough horrible things happen to me in my life that I've learned that often some hideous, horrible thing will, in fact, turn out to have been the key that unlocks a door of magnificence. It could be some sort of cultural correction where we have this just insane creature babbling and foaming at the mouth and delusional...it's so dramatic and so dramatically catastrophic that it could have like a bounce effect and result in an incredible turnaround. I mean— people taking stuff for granted, not voting, not thinking about corruption, not caring, not getting involved in any way, that's over. Those days are gone.. People are woke in ways they never even knew they were asleep. And that's a good thing. That's a really good thing.

MOVIES

Ozon layer: French director's new film looks at church coverup

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A few years back, French director Francois Ozon, whose films—among them *Swimming Pool*, *8 Women* and *L'Amant Double*—had largely centered on female characters, decided that his next project should focus on men and their emotional fragility instead.

As Ozon, who is gay, researched potential subjects, he chanced upon a website comprised of testimonials from people who'd been subjected to abuse from clergy within the Catholic Church—particularly persons who allege they'd suffered at the hands of former Lyon, France-based priest Rev. Bernard Preynat.

Preynat, who was mainly active from the '70s through the '90s, oversaw many scouting trips for young boys. He admitted to a number of the allegations and was eventually defrocked. Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, the archbishop of Lyon, was convicted in 2019 of covering up Preynat's crimes and received a six-month suspended jail sentence that he has appealed.

Ozon brought the film resulting from his research on the case, *By the Grace of God*, to the Chicago International Film Festival (CIFF) on Oct. 22. The film's Chicago release begins Nov. 8.

"I was very moved by their testimonies, so I decided to meet some of the survivors," recalled Ozon the day after the CIFF screening. "They told me their story, and I decided to do some research. I understood—very fast—that what interested me most was the families. The child abuse was like a ticking time bomb that reached everybody. But it was not my first idea to make a film about pedophilia in the church. It was not my goal at all."

By the Grace of God, which is Ozon's 20th film, is different both thematically and stylistically from the director's previous repertoire. While Ozon has previously never shied from stylistic flourishes or pronounced tweaks to genre conventions, as well as graphic depictions of violence and sexuality, the new film is by design a straightforward, character-driven docudrama.

"It was the first time I made a film about true events," he said. "It was a new adventure."

By the Grace of God centers on three principal characters, all adult survivors of abuse by Preynat (played in the film by Bernard Verley). They've each struggled and adapted to their residual trauma differently: Banker Alexandre (Melvil Poupaud) is still an observant Catholic; Francois (Denis Menochet) has for most of his life shrugged off the episodes; and Emmanuel (Swann Arlaud) has struggled both professionally and in his interpersonal relationships. Each man receives varying degrees of support from different members of their family.

All the characters were based on real people,



Francois Ozon.
Photo by Matt Simonette

Ozon said.

"I respected reality," he added. "You don't need to invent anything. For Alexandre and Francois, I kept to reality. For Emmanuel, I made some small changes and mixed some [stories from] survivors who suffered a lot."

By the Grace of God depicts how the men and their families got the message out, mainly via the internet, about Preynat, as well as their efforts to hold the church accountable for the priest's actions. Ozon kept a low profile while filming the story, knowing the subject matter was likely to engender controversy. He filmed exteriors in Lyon, but church interiors—which would have required approval from Lyon religious officials—were shot in Belgium and Paris.

The film's subject matter invites comparison to 2015's *Spotlight*, which detailed investigations into abuses by Boston church personnel. Ozon said that he welcomed the connection from viewers, and one character has a movie poster for *Spotlight* on their wall, just as their real-life counterpart did.

"I like to think of the two films as complementary," he said.

Ozon said that he's had no career repercussions for his being openly gay within the French film industry, adding that, in fact, the idea of being "openly gay" is very much a U.S. construct.

"In France, I'm first a director, and we don't speak about the sexuality of directors," he explained. "That's a way to catalog [people] that is more Anglo-Saxon than in French culture. But of course I'm openly gay, I have no problem with that. But I'm always surprised to be described as a 'gay director.' I'm a director, but in the film, I can be 'straight'—I can show straight people. Though I'm gay, I'm able to not only show gay people in my films. It gives me a sensitivity."

Indeed, in a 2005 interview with the *Independent*, Ozon jokingly described his cinematic perspective as being "polymorphously perverse"; in its classical and clinical sense, that term refers to getting sexual gratification outside normative sexual behaviors. But Ozon used the phrase to

refer to writing from the disparate vantage points of his characters. Now, years later, he thinks that his particular usage of "polymorphous perversity" still applies to his process.

"When you make a film, you have to adapt to all points of view," he explained. "For example, with this story, I realized everything was complex. It was not black and white, the good guys against the bad guys. It was complex within the families and the church. It was interesting for me, because everybody had their reasons. As a director,

when you want to tell the story, you have to show the point of view of all the characters."

He is now at work on his next film, which is to be titled *Summer of '85*.

"It's a coming-of-age film," he said. "It's a love story about teenagers, in the spirit of my first movies, my short films. I really needed some light and love after this story."

See <https://musicboxtheatre.com/films/by-the-grace-of-god>.



By the Grace of God.
Image courtesy of
Music Box Films

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MOVIES

Michael Shannon's 'Current' affair

BY JERRY NUNN

Actor Michael Shannon has built an impressive resume after his film debut in Groundhog Day.

He gained widespread attention in 8 Mile and went on to make movies such as Man of Steel, The Shape of Water, Midnight Special and Loving. He's been nominated for Best Supporting Actor Academy Awards twice, for Revolutionary Road and Nocturnal Animals.

Also, he was nominated for three Screen Actors Guild Awards for the HBO drama Boardwalk Empire. Other television roles have been in Fahrenheit 451 and The Little Drummer Girl.

Shannon founded A Red Orchid Theatre in Chicago and has also worked with Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Northlight Theatre.

If that's not enough, he even sings in a band called Corporal, writing a song called "Obama."

His movie, The Current War: Director's Cut, depicts the story of Thomas Edison (played by Benedict Cumberbatch) and George Westinghouse (with Shannon in the role) battling it out in the electricity business. The movie originally stalled when released in 2017 at the Toronto International Film Festival after bad reviews and disagreements with the Weinstein Co.

Shannon talked about this project while in

town for the Chicago International Film Festival.

Windy City Times: As a kid, did you ever want to invent something?

Michael Shannon: That's a good question! I wasn't very science-oriented, when I was a kid. It wasn't my best class. I think I have always been more artistically inclined, as opposed to that.

WCT: When did you make The Current War?

MS: We shot it about three years ago.

WCT: Now it has a renewed life, thanks to the new cut.

MS: Thank God! There was a period when I wasn't sure anybody would ever see it, which made me sad because it's such an important story. That would have really bummed me out.

Our director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon was very tenacious and didn't give up. Founder of 101 Studios, David Glasser, was very kind to bring the thing back to life.

WCT: What did you think of the differences in the two versions of The Current War?

MS: Clearly, the version coming out now is what Alfonso wanted. The version that was shown at Toronto in 2017 was a hodgepodge of some of Alfonso's ideas with some other people's ideas. It wasn't as effective because it wasn't one coherent vision, which is what a great film really needs.



Michael Shannon with Katherine Waterston in *The Current War*.
Photo by Dean Rogers

WCT: How did you study the character of George Westinghouse?

MS: When I met Alfonso, he gave me a book called George Westinghouse. I read it and it didn't have every single detail. It talked about what a great person was.

Like any part, I had to use my imagination. There was no one that was an authority on him. It's very hard to find anything about Westinghouse because he destroyed a lot of his personal writings. He didn't want to be glorified and just wanted to do his work.

WCT: You aren't in any scenes with Benedict

Cumberbatch until the end of the film?

MS: No, but that was a fun structure to play with. They shot most of the Edison side of the story first. Then it was my turn when they shot the Westinghouse side, until the end where they shot that final scene. It was a very rewarding desert after a long meal!

WCT: So, it was shot in order?

MS: Yes. We were able to bring the experience of doing the movie into the scene. That would have been a bummer if they shot it out of sequence.

Turn to page 22

THURSDAY OCTOBER 31 • THE QUEENS ARE HUNGRY FOR BLOOD

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Musical Monday at Sidetrack blasted through the stratosphere when entertainer extraordinaire Billy Porter dropped in on October 28.

Photo courtesy of Sidetrack



BILLY Masters

"Gay is not a limitation. It's a characteristic that I hope they view, like I do, that it's God's greatest gift."—**Tim Cook's** message to questioning youngsters

The phrase "Banned in Boston" relates to many forms of entertainment that officials deemed offensive in puritanical Beantown. There is documentation of the term being used as early as 1651, but enough about the school days of Barbara Walters. Books, songs, movies and plays weren't the only things banned. In 1896, the \$5 bill was outlawed because it featured partially nude figures.

Last week, a bill was proposed to the Massachusetts state legislature that would make it illegal to use the word bitch (or as they term it, the "b-word") to demean another person. So, I guess it's OK to call your puppy a bitch, but not your mother! State Rep. Dan Hunt has proposed this wording: "A person who uses the word 'bitch' directed at another person to accost, annoy, degrade or demean the other person shall be considered to be a disorderly person in violation of this section." The violation, which comes with a monetary fine and/or jail time, can be reported by a witness or by the bitch herself. By those standards, Donald Trump better not make a campaign stop in Boston—he may never be able to leave.

Marlon Anderson, who works as a security guard at a high school in Wisconsin, was fired after he asked a student to stop calling him the "n-word." It bears mentioning that both Marlon and the student used the actual word. And therein lies the problem. The school has a "zero-tolerance policy" when it comes to staff using the "n-word" toward a student—but apparently the rule is not reciprocal. Although Anderson had been a model employee for over a decade, he was fired on the spot. Happily, that's not where the story ends. **Cher** was touring the UK when she saw this story on TV. She tweeted, "If You Want To sue MMSD Ed. Board I Will Incur Your expenses." (The odd caps are hers.) Within hours, the Madison Metropolitan School District rescinded the termination and, as of this writing, Marlon is back at work. Now I know who to contact after I call some Bostonian a bitch!

Meanwhile, Ireland's minister of defense is sick of all the dickering over Brexit. **Openly gay Leo Varadkar** has made it clear he wants "Brexit done" by Oct. 31. It's not just that he's being politically expedient—he has tickets to see **Cher** at Dublin's 3Arena on Nov. 1.

In a domestic political story, a commissioner in Sevier County, Tennessee, was caught on video complaining about having "a queer running for president!" He followed that up by saying, "I'm not prejudice. A white male in this country has very few rights and they're getting took more every day." And, yes, he said "took." And apparently he didn't notice that **Pete Buttigieg** is a white male. After he spoke, several people at the meeting applauded. One even exclaimed, "Amen."



Ex-Republican Congressman **Aaron Schock** is still partying with the guys, **Billy** says.

God's Love We Deliver recently held its annual Golden Heart Awards in NYC, where they honored **Pete Buttigieg** for outstanding leadership and public service. Two of the co-chairs for the event were **Mr. and Mr. Neil Patrick Harris**. When they arrived, **David Burtka** told a reporter, "Neil wants to meet Mayor Pete really bad." This certainly wouldn't be difficult for moi. But for NPH and company, it seemed impossible. In their first attempt, the mayor was talking to **Anna Wintour** and **Tiffany Haddish**. Then Neil remembered he knows Tiffany, so he went up to her ... just as Mayor Pete disappeared. Eventually, a connection was made. Where it led is anyone's guess.

And now, a story most of you already know, but it's my job to report this stuff. Right after **Miley Cyrus'** split with **Liam Hemsworth**, she dated **Kaitlynn Carter**. She is now dating **Cody Simpson**. So, for those of you playing at home, she's on a downward trajectory that will likely end with her dating **Andy Dick**! In an Instagram Live chat with **Cody**, **Miley** said, "I always thought I had to be gay 'cause I just thought, like, all guys were evil. But it's not true. There are good people out there that just happen to have penises. I've only ever met one...and he's on this Live." She added, "There are good men out there guys. Don't give up. You don't have to be gay. There are good people with dicks out there. You just got to find them." For someone who has dated both sexes, one would think she'd know better.

The attacks on poor **Miley** were immediate—and I actually had some sympathy for her because ... well, I don't think she's that bright. She took to Twitter the next day—because nobody explained that social media is NOT her friend. She posted, "I was talking shit about guys, but let me be clear, YOU don't CHOOSE your sexuality. You are born as you are. It has always been my priority to protect the LGBTQ community I am a part of." She may be more a part of it than she thinks—or am I the only one who has questions about **Cody**?

This led to a startling revelation from **Marie Osmond**. "When I was about 8 or 9, I actually thought I was gay. The reason is because I had been sexually abused to the point that men made me sick. I didn't trust them. I didn't like them. I was looking at women and I thought, 'Why am I looking at women? I must be gay.'" The Talk co-host then realized the root of her problem and, poof, was cured. Hallelujah!

Aaron Schock was again seen cavorting with hot, shirtless gay men in public. Ostbahnhof is an underground Los Angeles dance party that springs up at different times and venues and is only advertised through its mailing list. The night **Schock** showed up, the theme was **Scream Kweens**. Perhaps he just went in costume as a gay man with a rockin' body, great ass and big

dick—all of which can be seen in action on **BillyMasters.com**.

Our "Ask **Billy**" question—more of a reprimand—comes from **Frank** in Denver: "**Andy Cohen** just said that he's seeing **Ginuwine's** penis pics and that he's HUGE. How come you haven't run them?"

Nobody asked. Had you asked, I would have happily provided them for you—'cause I'm a giver. I should warn you that the photos in question only show the extra-long appendage. However, **Ginuwine** confirmed the penis in question was his: "Everybody keep talking about the pics and all SO WHAT!!! We all trust people at time that we shouldn't won't say names as of now!!! Stay tuned"

When there's a line to ride **Ginuwine's** pony, it's definitely time to end yet another column. In between your tricks and treats, check out **BillyMasters.com**—the site that never horses around. If you've got a question (or complaint) for me, send it along to **Billy@BillyMasters.com** and I promise to get back to you before this column is banned in Boston! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

the DISH

Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Flight Club; MOMosa

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Flight Club Chicago (111 W. Wacker Dr.; US.FlightClubDarts.com)—with its mix of food, drinks and darts—aims, pun intended, to provide something different.

On all counts, it succeeds.

To be honest, I was a little suspicious of the culinary offerings Flight Club might have. However, my fears were quickly allayed thanks to starters like the absolutely addictive mini poke tacos, fisherman's fries (with shrimp butter, ocean spice, parmesan and smoky tomato dipping sauce) and al pastor skewers (marinated pork with



Al pastor skewers at Flight Club Chicago.
PR photo

pineapple, crispy tortilla, jalapeno and scallions). The only letdown involved the mini crab balls, which seemed to be devoid of the crustacean.

However, things immediately returned to their lofty heights, thanks to the FC Prime Double Burger—which comes with “creamy sexy mushroom cheese” (Flight Club’s words) and red onion marmalade. I don’t know if I felt sexy after consuming the sandwich—but I was more than satisfied.

As for the dart-throwing areas (called oches, with “ocher” rhyming with “hockey”), there are three downstairs and 11 upstairs. Reservations (for groups of six or more) cost \$15-\$40, depending on the day and amount of time—but split among at least six people, it’s a lot of fun at little cost. Also, while competing in various games (including the practically diabolical Killer), finger foods are available because ... trying to eat a salad at this time might be a risky move.

On a side note, in case you’re wondering (like I did), “Alcohol and darts—what could go wrong?,” the manager said there have been no injuries suffered at Flight Club. But if you’re there just to eat or to play a competitive game of darts, you will undoubtedly enjoy yourself.

(By the way, check out Flight Club on Halloween, 8-11 p.m., when “Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, & Madness at Flight Club” takes place. Tickets are \$49 each.)

Sidetrack's MOMosa brunch Nov. 17

Equality Illinois will hold its annual “MOMosa” brunch fundraiser on Sunday, Nov. 17, 1-4 p.m., at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Attendees will celebrate mothers, families and all others who love equality.

All proceeds benefit Equality Illinois. Tickets are 440 each; see <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/momosa-2/>.



A BRUNCH FOR YOU, YOUR MOTHER, AND ALL OTHERS WHO LOVE EQUALITY

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



HOUSE OF BLUES

Hooray for Haunted Hollywood 2,
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Joseph Stevens Photography



BEHIND THE NAME
“I chose Kalli Mauri because I wanted to make sure I stayed true to my comedy roots—it’s a pun. I also wanted people to know that I may look feminine but there is still a tentacle lurking somewhere.”

MY MUSE
“My muse for drag is definitely female pop groups from the late '90s/early 2000s—the girl power, the obnoxious holographic clothes. And the idea that you don’t have to always be sexy; that being girly and whimsical is alright too!”

WHEN I NEED A PICK-ME-UP, I ...
“Grab an iced coffee and work on a jigsaw puzzle.”

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY THE CROWD
“‘Stacey’s Mom’ by Fountains of Wayne. There’s something so powerful about doing a ‘male’ song and looking as feminine as possible.”

MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW THAT I ...
“... am a classically trained actor. I got my start in drag working with Chicago premier camp comedy/theater troupe Hell in a Handbag. One of my first jobs ever was in the national touring production of Veggie Tales Live!”

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU
“Every fourth Saturday of the month I host a show at The Call Bar in Andersonville called 6 Queens, 1 Diva. And every Sunday you can catch me at Lips Chicago.”

SOCIAL MEDIA
Photo by
Drag Files
Instagram: @Kristopurrrrrr
Facebook: @kbottrall1

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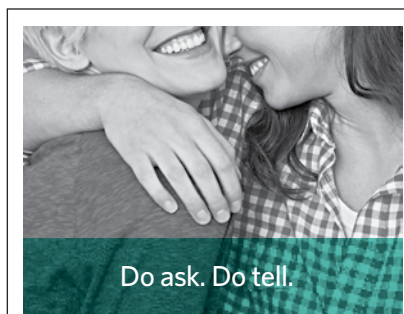
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DIGNITY/CHICAGO Supporting LGBTQIA Catholics, their committed relationships, families, friends + allies. Mass Sunday at 5pm, 3344 N Broadway, Chicago. Visit www.dignity-chicago.org for more info. (10/30/19-13)

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KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Oct. 30

Artemis Singers free workshop Collecting stories from women in the lesbian feminist community about life in the community over the past 40 years. Artemis Singers will select some of these stories and present them as part of the group's spring 2020 concert. 5:00pm - 7:00pm Harold Washington Public Library 400 S State St. <http://www.artemissingers.org>

Her HRC: Art+Craft Join the Human Rights Campaign for a showcase of LGBTQIA artists and mixer featuring live acoustic music, craft beer and art on display. VIP 5-6:30pm first look at art, private tour of Motor Row Brewery, and free sample pours of Motor Row brews. All welcome. 6:30pm - 10:30pm Motor Row Brewing, 2337 S Michigan Ave. <http://www.facebook.com/events/1980283362073556/>

Thursday, Oct. 31

Fiesta! Day of the Dead Modern-day spin on a traditional Latin American holiday to celebrate the lives of those who have fallen due to HIV-related illnesses, addressing socioeconomic health disparities amongst Latinx by providing an opportunity to build community and afford access to sexual health and social services. Plus, there will be free food, raffle prizes, and live performances by local Latinx artists and musicians 6:00pm - 11:00pm National Museum of Mexican Art 1852 W. 19th St. Chicago <http://ChicagoHouse.org>



'OZ' AND EFFECT Thursday, Oct. 31

The annual Haunted Halsted Halloween Parade will take place in Boystown.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

23rd Annual Haunted Halsted Halloween Parade Legendary parade kicks off from Halsted and Belmont and travels north to Brompton. The costume contest crowns a \$500 cash winner in each of six categories: Scary, Drag, Creative, Youth, Cosplay, and Group (<10), and a Large Group (10+) category with a \$1,000 prize. A total of \$4,000 in cash prizes.

FREE to spectate or participate. Floats Welcome!. Register online 7:30pm Halsted and Belmont, north to Brompton Tickets: <http://www.hauntedhalsted.com>

Friday, Nov. 1

State Comptroller Veteran Appreciation Ceremony Illinois State Comptroller Susana A. Mendoza to honor veterans including LGBT Jean Albright and Stanley Jenczyk 11:00am Blue Room, 15th floor of the James R. Thompson Center

Saturday, Nov. 2

CARE Strategy Session First Saturday of every month 11:00am - 1:00pm Lighthouse Church of Chicago, 2335 N. Orchard St. <http://www.lighthousechicago.org/eventsatlighthouse?fbclid=IwAR1fv32chbM8h1Bm4Eph2WvkTuAfv3lchTM9M6QpSgNSyKnKzJ-FnRG5aaE>

Macy's 112th Chicago Tree Lighting The Great Tree measures 45-feet tall and hangs from the ceiling of the beloved Walnut Room at Macy's on State Street in downtown Chicago. 52nd Annual Holiday Windows at Macy's State Street will inspire Chicagoans to Believe in the Wonder 12:00pm Macy's State Street - Walnut Room, 7th Floor, 111 N. State St. <http://Macys.com>

Chicago League of Lady Arm Wrestlers 34th match CLLAW XXXIV: Good vs. Evil features women arm wrestlers, live musical entertainment from indie rock band Roxy Swain and a cash bar. 21+. \$25. Doors 9 p.m. 9:30pm Logan Square Auditorium 2539 N Kedzie Blvd Chicago Tickets: <http://CLLAW.org>

Sunday, Nov. 3

ShowStopper Sunday Drag Dining A night of mega hits hosted by Mimi Marks

10:00pm Lips, 2229 S Michigan Ave 312-815-2662 <http://lipschicago.com>

Monday, Nov. 4

Simply Sensational 2019 salutes Robert Ollis A benefit concert for Pride Films and Plays saluting Music General Reserved Seats \$50, VIP Reserved (including a pre-show reception) \$75. 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, Broadway Theatre at 4139 N. Broadway 773-857-0222 Tickets: <http://www.pride-filmsandplays.com>

Tuesday, Nov. 5

Outspoken LGBTQ storytelling series. Each first Tuesday. Find Outspoken in Facebook 6:00pm - 9:30pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St

FLIP Fest Pride Films and Plays has announced its first FLIP Fest-four nights of staged readings of full-length comedic lesbian plays. \$10. Through Nov. 13 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, Broadway Theatre at 4139 N. Broadway 866-811-4111 or 773-857-0222 <http://PrideFilmsAndPlays.com>

Wed., Nov. 6

Transgender Military Appreciation Day Tatyana Moaton of Howard Brown Health will speak and representatives of the VA medical center will be present. 6:30 socializing. 7:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://centeronhalsted.org>

Thursday, Nov. 7

American Veterans for Equal Rights GLBTQ Monthly Meeting Chicago Chapter of American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national organization of LGBT veterans formerly known as Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA).

7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St. <http://www.averchicago.org/>

Friday, Nov. 8

Chicago LGBTQ Country Dancing Cowboy Roundup every 2nd Friday of the month hosted by Second City Outlaws. Everyone in cowboy hats gets \$1 off drinks! 10:00pm - 2:00am Touche 6412 N Clark St Chicago <http://touchechicago.com>

Saturday, Nov. 9

Safe Schools Symposium Building Bridges Across Sectors to Demystify Inclusive Learning. \$50 per adult participant over 24 y/o. Youth free with reservation Questions to vince.pagan@phimc.org. Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is a program of Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago. Pride Action Tank is a program of AIDS Foundation of Chicago. 9:30am - 2:30pm University of Chicago School of Social Service Admin, 969 E. 60th St. <http://secure.qgiv.com/for/phimc/event/807637/>

David Mixner: 60 Years of Political Activism In conversation with Steve Kmetko. Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, <http://PrideFilmsAndPlays.com>

Tuesday, Nov. 11

American Veterans for Equal Rights Veterans Day dinner Dinner speaker will be Tatyana Moaton, former U.S. Army intelligence analyst. RSVP to Jim Darby at 773-752-0058 or jamesdarby@aol.com 6:30pm Ann Sather - Belmont 909 W Belmont Ave Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/AVERChicagoChapter>

SHANNON from page 18

WCT: In the past, were you a fan of mystery films, like your new movie Knives Out?

MS: I haven't watched one in a while. I was really curious to be in one. No one had ever asked me to do one. They are their own particular thing. It sure was a lot of fun to make it.

WCT: The cast is crazy good!

MS: Even if we hadn't made the movie and just shown up to hang out, that would have been amazing. We got to make a great movie, on top of it. It was a fast shoot.

WCT: Does a theater background come in handy when that happens?

MS: You just have to be prepared. You learn that in the theater. There are some people that never do theater and are still prepared, but theater can feed into the film work.

WCT: I saw your last live theater show in Chicago.

MS: Victims of Duty is one of my favorite plays. We had actually done that play about 25 years ago, so we were revisiting the material. That is where I learned to act, in that little room there with Red Orchid.

WCT: Last time we talked at a nightclub, you said that you had a movie coming out for the LGBT community called Freeheld. Now that I have seen it, I saw how your character, Dane Wells, went on such a journey of accep-

tance in that film.

MS: Yes. Dane is a real guy. I got to meet him. He was very gracious to spend with me and talk to me. He's a totally decent human and it was a great experience for him to have. It opened his eyes and his consciousness a bit.

WCT: Have you ever played a gay character?

MS: I did in the John Waters movie Cecil B. Demented. I was in love with Jack Noseworthy, but he wasn't in love with me, because he was straight. That's funny because, in real life, I'm straight and he's gay.

WCT: How was the experience of working onstage with Audra McDonald this year in Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune?

MS: I was so sad when that finished! I adored doing it. Going out onstage with her every night and telling such a beautiful story was unforgettable.

Terrence McNally was around and it meant a lot to him that we did it. He came up to us on opening night backstage and he said, "I finally got to see my play!" He's a beautiful person.

WCT: Audra is very kind.

MS: Oh, yeah—and down to earth, considering she's won more Tonys than anyone ever!

The Current War is currently playing at theaters. Knives Out opens Wed., Nov. 27.

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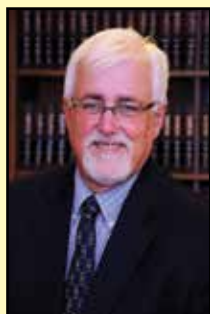


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