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Photos by
Jerry Nunn

Wonka Ball keeps it light with 'SNL' theme

BY JERRY NUNN

About Face Theatre held its annual gala at the Museum of Broadcast Communications on May 11. Even though it was a Friday, you would have sworn it was a Saturday night. Wonka Ball at Saturday Night Live: The Experience! proved to be the perfect theme for the LGBTQ-focused theater company.

Guests were encouraged to dress as their favorite comedy characters, picking from a variety of SNL skits, and to explore the exhibits in the museum. It was an opportunity for Chicagoans to go "back-stage" of the New York-filmed TV show, where attendees could get an up-close view of costumes, dressing rooms and the control booth. They could play guitar on the Wayne's World couch or sit in the makeup chair like a celebrity. Along the way, there were food stops in the maze of nostalgia, thanks to vendors like Taylor's Tacos and Vincent.

On the fourth floor of the building, more bites were offered from Fat Cat, Polo Cafe and STK Chicago, in addition to snacks and desserts courtesy of Do-Rite Donuts, Garrett Popcorn and Insomnia Cookies—plus an Ambiguously Gay Duo cake cut at the end of the night. Blue Plate Catering, MillerColors and CH Distillery provided cocktails and other beverages.

DJ Matthew Harvat played a mix of current and retro tunes while people danced and mingled. Guests were able to explore an outdoor VIP area, coffee talk with Linda Richman and bid on the silent auction items along the exterior wall. Raffle prizes included tickets to Saturday Night Live in New York City, Late Night with Seth Meyers, Hamilton Chicago and Sesame Street.

Jim Bennett and Heather Vickery hosted the awards ceremony, during which the About Face Youth Theatre MVP Award was given to Liv Haman for outstanding work as an ensemble member.

Recipients of the Leppen Leadership Award were talented trans actor Delia Kropp and the Chicago Inclusion Project, which is dedicated to inclusive hiring practices in the theater community.

Throughout the ceremony, SNL characters popped out for brief and hilarious performances.

AFT is dedicated to advancing the LGBTQ community in the world of theater in the Chicago area. Visit www.AboutFaceTheatre.com for details on upcoming shows, including Bull in a China Shop by Bryna Turner.



From top: Hosts Heather Vickery (left) and Jim Bennett; Liv Haman; Chicago Inclusion Project; Delia Kropp.

Photos by Jerry Nunn. See more photos on page 30.



BILLY Masters

Things are really ramping up for the royal wedding. The big news last week was that while **William** will be **Harry's** best man, **Kate** will not be the maid (or, I suppose, matron) of honor. A royal snub? Hardly. Apparently it is considered unseemly for a future queen to be an attendant to anyone—even on their wedding day! It's also been whispered that **Meghan** doesn't want anyone to upstage her—like Pippa did at Kate's wedding! So, who will attend to Meghan? Nobody, that's who. The official word is that she has too many friends to choose from, but our sources inside the palace tell us that Meghan actually wants her friends to have a good time and not have to work and fuss with her dress. Have no fear—she won't be all by her lonesome. The bridal party will have all those little kids as attendants and pages, including Will's children, George and Charlotte.

The big scuttlebutt in London has to do with another royal couple: **Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson**. Even though they divorced in 1996, Andy and Fergie get along better than ever and continue to live together. However, it's not like they're sharing a one-room flat—since their divorce, they've been cohabitating in a 12-bedroom estate! But the birth of Prince Louis has apparently had a domino effect on the royal family. The law states that the sovereign must approve the marriage of the first six people in line for the throne—so it's the heir, the spare and four others in case of something like bubonic plague. Up until Louis' birth, the line of succession was Charles, William, George, Charlotte, Harry, and Andrew.

Now with Louis ensconced between Charlotte and Harry, Andrew is number seven and technically doesn't require mummy's approval to wed. Royal watchers speculate that Andrew and Sarah would like to remarry, but the queen would likely not allow it; one does not quickly forget the toe-sucking incident. Still, I find it unlikely that he'd go against his mum's wishes—he ain't no Princess Margaret! Plus, that old woman can't live forever. Here's the catch—if he waits till Lizzie dies, Charles becomes king, Andy moves back into sixth position and the whole problem starts all over again—until Harry and Meghan have a kid.

A queer marriage in the States is officially kaput. As I told you last week, **Colton Haynes** and hubby **Jeff Leatham** appeared to be estranged since they stopped following each other on Instagram. Days later, Colton released a song called "Man It Sucks," which led to rumors that Jeff had cheated on him. Haynes said, "Jeff would never cheat. He's an amazing man. Please stop being mean to him." Days later, Colton filed for divorce. He cites that old chestnut, "irreconcilable differences." This got me thinking—if not Jeff, then maybe someone else cheated. Hmm.

Since I had a few days to kill before the "event,"



Colton Haynes (right) and Jeff Leatham' marriage is kaput after six months, Billy says.

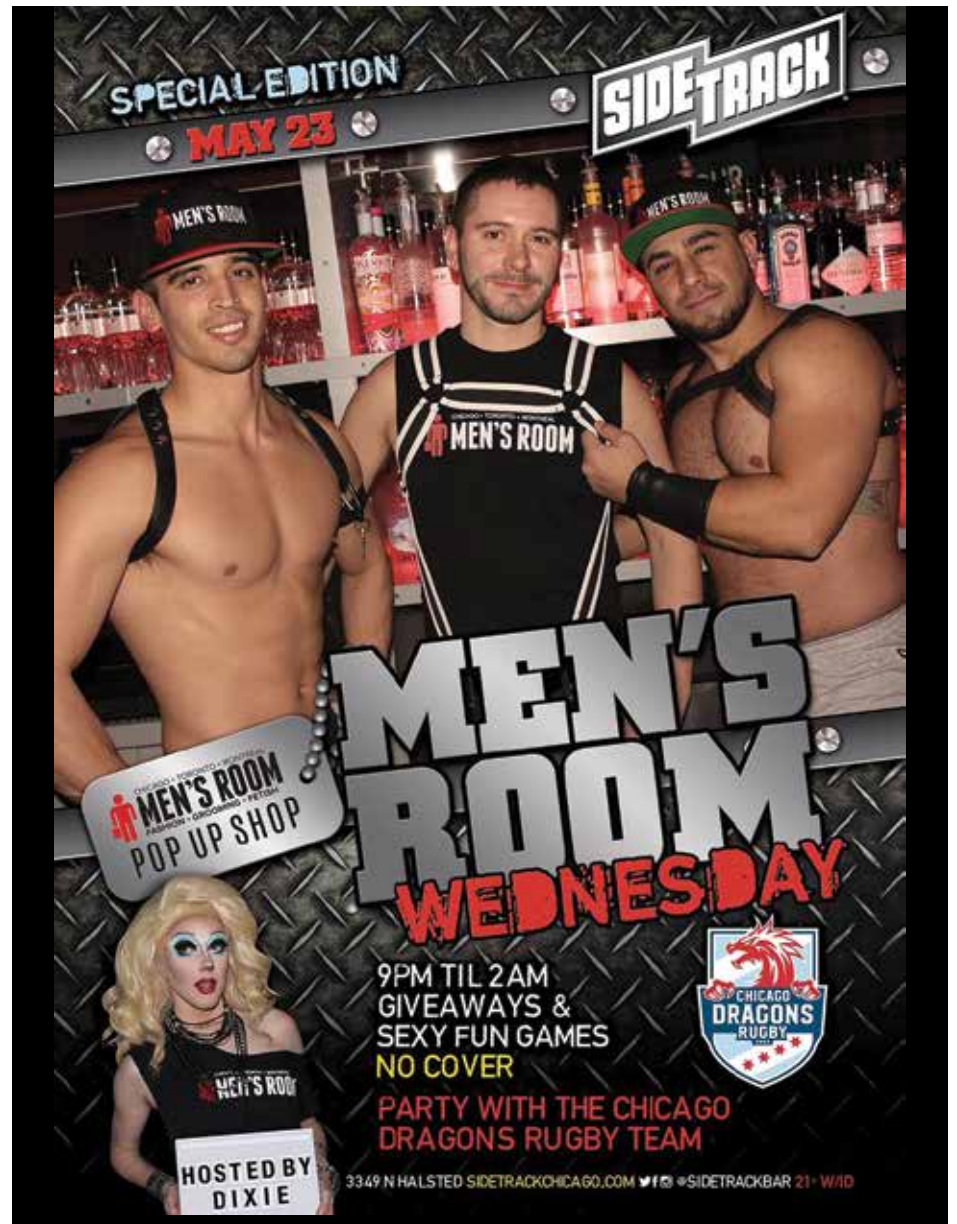
Photo of the couple from Haynes' Instagram account

I decided to go to Russia. And why wouldn't I, a gay American, fly to Russia from England at this particularly time in history? What could possibly go wrong? So far, I must say that Saint Petersburg is a gorgeous city with lots to see and do. I randomly picked a hotel in the center of town. When I went to arrange for an Uber to head out, it specified that I meet the driver at a nearby address. The place, which was only a few doors away, turned out to be one of the gay clubs in town! And, even though it was 10 a.m., some people were still inside partying. I later discovered that the same block also has another gay bar and a drag bar. So, I dunno about all this anti-gay sentiment—it seems to be alive and well on the block where I'm staying!

Tom Daley was also back in the USSR. He competed in the FINA Diving World Series in Kazan, Russia. In the mixed three-meter synchronized dive, he came in second alongside his partner, Grace Reid. He posted a photo to Instagram showing that he accepted his silver medal while wearing a rainbow pin. "From Russia with love... Thank you so much!" No, thank you!

As we were going to press, we heard that Quantico was cancelled. That means some really hot gay guys are suddenly unemployed. That leads to our "Ask Billy" question, from Karl in Atlanta. "I remember you mentioning a movie with **Russell Tovey** playing a gay soccer player. Did it ever come out? The photos you ran were hot."

You know, I completely forgot about *The Pass*. It was made a couple of years ago, but then I never heard anything more. It turns out it opened at the BFI Flare London LGBT Film Festival in March 2016. Then it played a bunch of film festivals before winding up with a UK DVD release in April 2017. Last week, it turned up on Amazon Prime in the United States, so you can see it for yourself. Here's what I'll tell you—Russell's really hot. Like REALLY hot. Like, he's never



looked hotter. And his "teammate," Arinze Kene, is even hotter! Together they are like gay-porn hot. I didn't know anything about the movie, but it comes across as a play—most scenes include only two or three people in a single locale. Turns out, it started life as a play—starring Tovey! It's interesting and sexy with a dark and somber turn towards the end. Despite the claustrophobic atmosphere, there are some striking visuals—in particular, one I'd call "sleeping double in a single bed." Because I'm such a giver, you can see the entire film on BillyMasters.com.

When Tovey is making a flagrant pass (or a pass in flagrante delicto), it's time for me to end yet another column. And even here in Russia, they read BillyMasters.com—the site of many tongues. If you have a question for me, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before someone sucks my toe at that wedding reception. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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WINDY CITY TIMES

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., May 16

Elizabeth Rosenthal, author American Sickness Shocking investigation into our dysfunctional healthcare system 7:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/paperback-tour-american-sickness-elizabeth-rosenthal>

Thursday, May 17

Booze and Bingo David Dodd & The Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus present the 2nd Annual Booze & Bingo Fundraiser. \$25 gets 2 drink tickets. Register online. 6:30pm - 9:30pm D.S. Tequila Company, 3352 N Halsted St, Chicago <http://bit.ly/2JTK0Wf>

Author Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence The University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) LGBTQ speaker series concludes with University of Maryland Associate Professor of American Studies Christina Hanhardt. 11:00pm 5733 S. University Ave. <http://gendersexuality.uchicago.edu>



HONORING AN ICON

Saturday, May 19

There will be a street dedication for Chuck Renslow in Andersonville.

Friday, May 18

Lesbian Speed Dating Snacks and soft drinks provided. Hosted by L House. BYOB. 5:00pm - 10:00pm Text 312-446-0256 for address and access

BTQ Book Group 3rd Fridays 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org/>

Jesus Christ Superstar North American premiere with Heath Saunders as Jesus, Ryan Shaw as Judas, and Jo Lampert as Mary Magdalene. Through May 20. \$35. 7:00pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N.Wacker Dr. Chicago Tickets: <http://jcsuperstar.org>

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm The Athenaeum Theatre 2936 N Southport Ave Chicago <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Saturday, May 19

21st Annual National Ovarian Cancer Coalition run/walk Break the silence on ovarian cancer 9:00am Arlington International Racecourse <http://runwalk.ovarian.org/illinois>

Chuck Renslow street dedication Clark Street from Ainslie to Winnemac, near some of the businesses owned by gay activist Chuck Renslow, will be given the honorary name of Chuck Renslow Way. 4:00pm Clark Street at Winnemac Ave., 5025 N. Clark St., <http://www.facebook.com/events/589306168100048/>.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents Under the Big Top Spring show will feature animals, acrobats, aerialists, music, 150 chorus members, six dance numbers, over 30 dancers, five circus performers. Three dates, three locations 8:00pm

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts 9501 Skokie Blvd. Skokie, IL 60077 <http://www.cgmc.org/spring>

Springfield Pridefest: No H8. No Labels The Pride Parade will kick off Springfield Pridefest at 11:30 am leading to a ribbon-cutting event at 4th and Capitol. Musicians Fun DMC, Thornhill and The Shenanigans and drag performers. 11:00 am Capital Avenue, between 4th and 6th Streets, Springfield <http://SpringfieldPride.org>

Sunday, May 20

Andersonville Wine Walk Wine tasting at Andersonville businesses. Benefiting the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce. Three routes, Cork, Cellar & Bottle. 3:00pm - 5:00pm Various locations <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3404686>

The Tea on Queer Topics with Special Guests Drag Queens (Local and visiting) lead panels, Trannika Rex and Lucky Stiff invite guests to break down the topics the queer community is talking about. Ppen to all. \$10 - Online registration will close on Friday, May 18th at 4pm. Event tickets may be available at the door. 3:00pm - 5:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://https://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/tea>

Monday, May 21

Pride Films and Plays Nominee Night Concert Performances by Non-Equity Jeff Award-nominated musical theater performers. Produced and music directed by Robert Ollis. \$30 VIP (includes drink ticket), \$20 general admission, \$17 seniors, students, military 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, Chicago 773-857-0222 <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

Wed., May 23

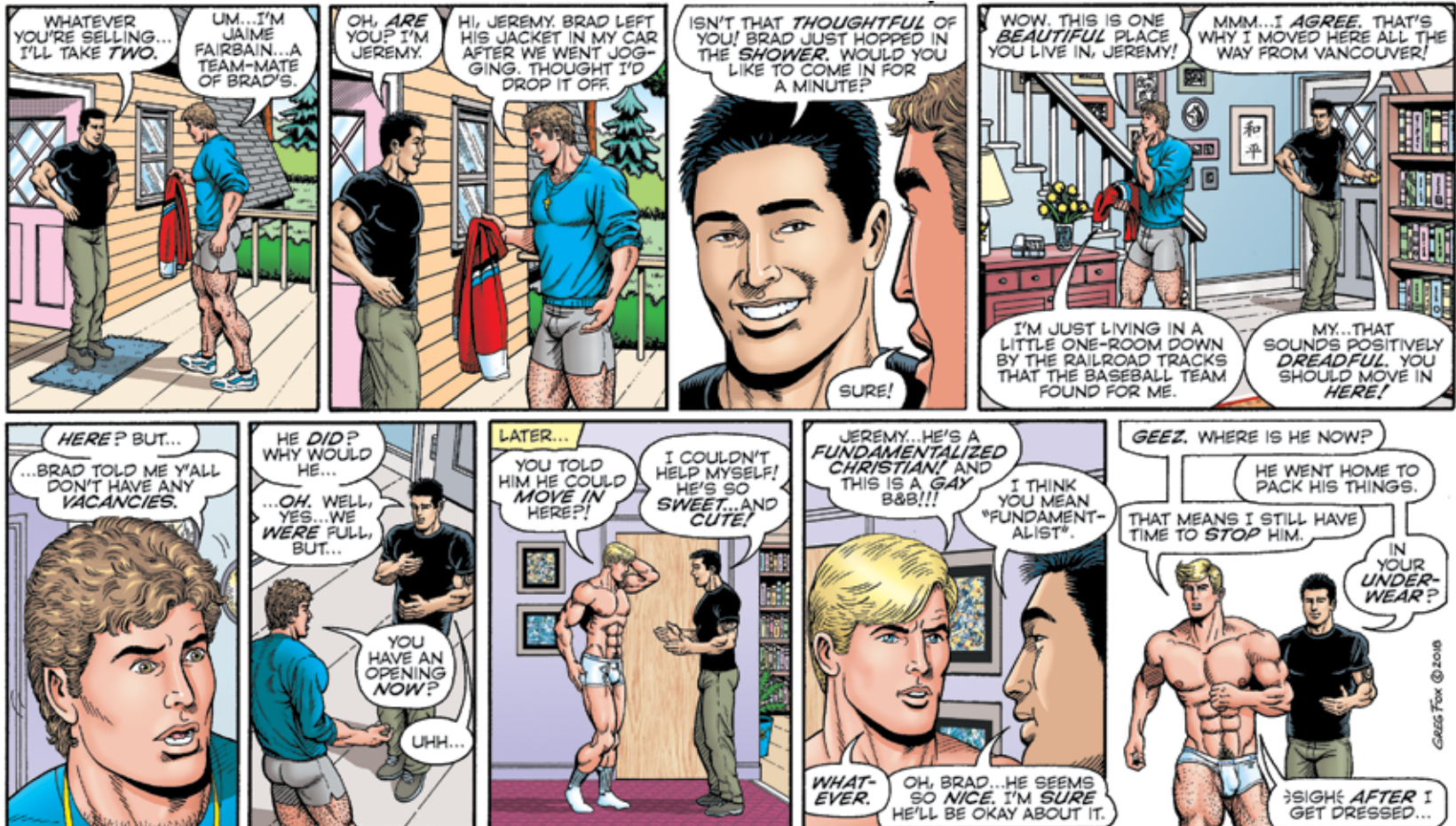
LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois Young Professional Mixer Networking event and workshop on productivity 5:30pm - 7:30pm Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce 3179 N Clark Chicago; <http://lgbtcc.com/>

Thursday, May 24

IML Opening Ceremonies Ticket Packages available Ticket Sales Desk at Congress Plaza Hotel, 1st floor. Event includes the introduction of judges, contestants and number selection. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., show begins at 8 p.m. 8:00pm - 10:30pm Congress Plaza Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave. <http://www.imrl.com>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox





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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Palm Restaurant; WingFest

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Few dining spots have as storied a history as the **Palm Restaurant** (now in the Swissotel at 323 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; <https://www.thepalm.com/restaurants/chicago/>).

And after three decades in the city, this particular branch recently underwent an all-encompassing restaurant remodeling. There are new additions to the design (resulting in a space that's much more open, reminding me of the Atwood Cafe remodeling from a few years ago), infamous caricature artwork (of local and national luminaries, including Jennifer Hudson) and a (somewhat) altered menu.

New art installations showcase colorful walls and illustrations hand-painted by the restaurant group's resident artist, Zack Bird. To capture the history of Chicago, Bird created a custom, expansive wall-to-wall mural depicting the city's most well-known landmarks.

What hasn't changed is the quality of the food (although it seems the actual menu listing hasn't changed that much—which isn't a bad thing). A recent lunch items such as Nova Scotia lobster roll, crispy calamari fritti, a very tasty bison burger (which is new, for sure), the justifiably popular chicken parmigiana and a crab cake that is definitely better than most I've tried in Chicago.

And don't forget to ask about the 837 Club, which offers exclusive benefits to Palm regulars. A one-time registration of \$25 earns you membership—and a \$25 gift card toward your next visit. Accumulated points lead to benefits as varied as Tiffany & Co. gift cards, a Napa Valley wine tour and a private party.



Palm Restaurant's Lakeshore Room. PR photo

By the way, the Palm isn't done with the changes: Later this summer (around Sept. 1), the restaurant will reveal an all-season, temperature-controlled enclosed patio that will offer views of the skyline, the Chicago River and Navy Pier. Why fight with the crowds watching fireworks when you can watch and dine in style?

WingFest a winner yet again

Reportedly, 1 billion chicken wings are consumed during Super Bowl Sunday each year. It seemed like there were that many at **WingFest**, which took place May 6 at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave.

Dozens of vendors offered items such as habanero, ghost pepper and goat cheese-and-chive wings for hundreds of hungry attendees. More than 3,000 people sampled wings at the event, which featured Emmy-winning co-hosts Elliott Bambrough (WGN's Chicago's Best) and Samantha Thomas (SmallTALK with Samantha).

Restaurant winners were declared in various categories (such as mild, exotic, hot and BBQ, with the winners being Wild Wings & Slots, Bounce Sporting Club, Howells & Hood and Rack House Kitchen & Tavern, respectively), and there were also competitive-eating contests for men and women. Windy City Times was fortunate enough to be included as a judge in the "mild" category.

In addition, the 2018 Best of Fest Winner was Bounce Sporting Club.

More photos from

About Face Theatre's Wonka Ball

Photos by Jerry Nunn



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HELP WANTED

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO is seeking applicants for the position of Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center. View position details and apply online at <https://jobs.uic.edu/>. For fullest consideration, please upload a resume and cover letter by August 8, 2018 (8/8/18-13)

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