

WINDY
CITY
TIMES

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TRANS AND QUEER COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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Michael Bauer.
Photo by Hal Baim

PAGE 4



Jerry Pagorek.
Photo courtesy of Killian Walsh

PAGE 10

PLAY TIME

Lesbian chef leads
Gold Coast spot.
Photo by Gerardo Rios

28



ROSS
EXAMINED

'Drag Race' judge
brings brunch to
Chicago.
PR photo

26



THE RATING
GAME

Activists issue
report card on
Lightfoot.
Photo of Charles Straight
by Matt Simonette

11



LIVES OF
ACTIVISM

Chicago loses
two advocates:
Michael Bauer
and Jerry
Pagorek



Matthew Huston and Joe Giovannetti in
All That He Was at Pride Films and Plays.
Photo by Nicholas Swatz

FALL
THEATER
PREVIEW

PAGES 16-22


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INDEX

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NEWS

Political activist Michael Bauer passes away	4
Obit: Paul Baker	4
Foundation for gay man starts walk/ride	6
OBITS: Rice, Dobson	7
Looking back at the life of activist Jerry Pagorek	10
Activists issue 100-day report card on Lightfoot	11
Trans woman's suit; activists want new CDPH head	12
Viewpoints: Adams, Irvine	14

ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS

Fall theater previews	16, 18
Theater: 'Come From Away' feature	19
David Cromer, director of 'The Band's Visit'	22
Reeling preview	24
Talking with Ross Mathews	26
NIGHTSPOTS	27
Classifieds	29
Calendar	30

UPCOMING 2019-20

WINDY CITY TIMES PRINT DATES:

Sep. 18	Jan. 8	April 29
Oct. 2	Jan. 22	May 13
Oct. 16	Feb. 5	May 27
Oct. 30	Feb. 19	June 10
Nov. 13	March 4	June 24
Nov. 27	March 18	July 8
Dec. 11	April 1	July 22
Dec. 25	April 15	August 5

online exclusives at
www.WindyCityTimes.com



WHAT A CHARACTER

Wizard World Comic Con, as always, was a mix of celebrities, vendors—and cosplay.

Photo (left) by Andrew Davis

SAM, I AM



Windy City Times talks with out actor/singer Sam Harris about his latest project, Ham: A Musical Memoir.
 PR photo courtesy of Anderson Group

A SPORTING CHANCE

New Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association President Matt Herek talks about the state of the organization.

THAT'S SHOW BIZ

Find out the latest about Jill Soloway, The Flaming Lips and Laverne Cox.

plus
DAILY BREAKING NEWS

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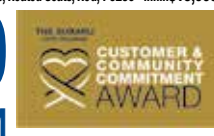
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'18 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, P6288	\$15,995	'15 Forester Prem.	Auto., Sunroof, Heated Seats, White, P6136A	\$15,995
'18 Hyundai Elantra SEL	Automatic, Full Power, Silver, P6286	\$14,995	'14 Forester Prem.	Auto., Sunroof, Heated Seats, 1-Owner, 22752A	\$14,995
'16 Toyota Corolla LE	Automatic, Full Power, Grey, P6281	\$13,995	'13 Forester Prem.	Automatic, Heated Seats, Red, 20768A	\$12,995
'15 Honda Civic LX	Auto., 1-Owner, Full Power, Black, 22783A	\$12,995	SUBARU OUTBACK		
'18 Nissan Sentra S	Automatic, Full Power, Deep Blue, P6287	\$12,995	'16 Outback Prem.	Auto., Alloys, Heated Seats, Silver, 22357A	\$18,995
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'10 Volvo XC70 3.2 AWD	Automatic, Full Power, Bluetooth, 22820A	\$9,995	SUBARU CROSSTREK / WRX		
'07 Toyota Camry XLE	Auto., Leather, Sunroof, Only 31K, Grey, 22130A	\$8,995	'16 WRX Prem.	Automatic, 1-Owner, Crystal Black Silica, 22792A	\$22,995
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Political activist Michael Bauer dies

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Activist Michael Bauer passed away Aug. 29 after a long bout with cancer. Bauer, who was an attorney and executive, had been a prominent fundraiser on behalf of numerous Chicago politicians, among them mayor Lori Lightfoot, for whom he was an early supporter as well as her campaign's finance chair.

A native of Chicago's East Rogers Park neighborhood, Bauer became heavily involved in political fundraising in the mid-'90s; he focused his energies on LGBT, women and Jewish communities. According to his Facebook page, Bauer was born Nov. 8, 1952.

Besides Lightfoot, Bauer worked on campaigns for Judges Tom Chiola and Sebastian Patti; U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin and Dick Durbin; and Ald. Tom Tunney. He said he was inspired by the activism of physician Ron Sable, who ran to be 44th Ward alderman in 1987 and 1991.

All those Bauer supported, he told Windy City Times in an August 2019 interview, were "really smart people."

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

Bauer was a frequent guest on host Bruce DuMont's radio program Beyond the Beltway. On Facebook, DuMont called Bauer "the personifica-

tion of civil discourse." He added that Bauer's "broad smile and his great sense of humor made a great combination with Michael's passion and spirited defense of progressive causes."

Indeed, Bauer's Facebook page included myriad tributes from friends the evening of Aug. 29.

Illinois Department of Human Rights Director Jim Bennett said, "Sad to hear of Michael Bauer passing. He did so much good and made doing good so joyous and fun. In my world, Michael fought against poverty with Shriver Center, he was a founder of Lambda's Midwest office, and he was at the Capitol on the front lines whenever our civil rights—in the greatest and most expansive definition—could move forward or be threatened. [He] did so much more in so many places than I can even imagine."

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy said, "Tonight I lost one of my very dearest friends, but my sweet son lost his godfather and telling him Michael Bauer was gone gutted me. We have built an amazing family here but Mike has been at its center for what feels like forever. Rest well my friend—the lives you've touched, the ways you changed this world for the better, and the love you gave our boys are an amazing legacy. I am so thankful to have had the gift of your friendship and love."

State Rep. Ann Williams added, "My heart is broken to learn about the loss of this beautiful man—so full of life passion and love."

Attorney and activist Coco Soodek said that Bauer "was a one of a kind man in full with many many friends and a remarkable husband in Roger.



Michael Bauer.

Photo by Matt Simonette

He inspired strong feelings in all who knew him. His contributions to Chicago, Democrats and many causes and activists are profound and impactful."

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley said in a statement, "For over 35 years Michael fought for the rights of every citizen of our city, state and country with gusto, boundless passion, and a complete and total commitment to equality and justice. Always at the forefront of each battle the LGBT

community has faced since the AIDS epidemic began devastating the community, Michael connected elected officials, business leaders, and non-profit organizations to elevate the visibility of the community and safeguard its rights. Inspired by his own mother's story as a 103-year old survivor of the Holocaust, Michael understood that the future of humanity—of the LGBTQ, Jewish, pro-Israel, and civil rights communities, in particular - was dependent on protecting against oppression; he took the directive of 'Never again' literally and devoted his life to that end."

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal from 1992-2016, said in a separate statement, "I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of my longtime friend and former Lambda Legal board member, Michael Bauer. Without him, there might have never been a Lambda Legal office in the Midwest. Because of his tireless support and hard work, we were able to open our doors in Chicago in 1993. Michael helped build the base of support that we needed to get off the ground in Chicago and establish Lambda as the national organization that it is today."

"Michael was so supportive, in big ways and small. He believed in Lambda Legal and our mission and was never shy to make big requests for support on our behalf. He was a kind man and helped in any way that he could. He would welcome me into his home when Lambda couldn't even cover the expense of a hotel room. I am thankful to him for everything that he has done for Lambda Legal, and for me, and I will miss him immensely. On behalf of Lambda Legal, I want to extend our deepest sympathy to his husband, Roger, and their many friends and family for this tremendous loss."

Both Bauer's parents were Holocaust survivors, and he is survived by his mother, with whom he spoke several times a day, as well as his husband of 37 years, Roger Simon.

A funeral service was held Sept. 3 at Anshe Emet Synagogue, 3751 N. Broadway.



Michael Bauer and fellow activist Renae Ogletree in 2008.

Photo courtesy of Debra Shore

PASSAGES

Paul Baker

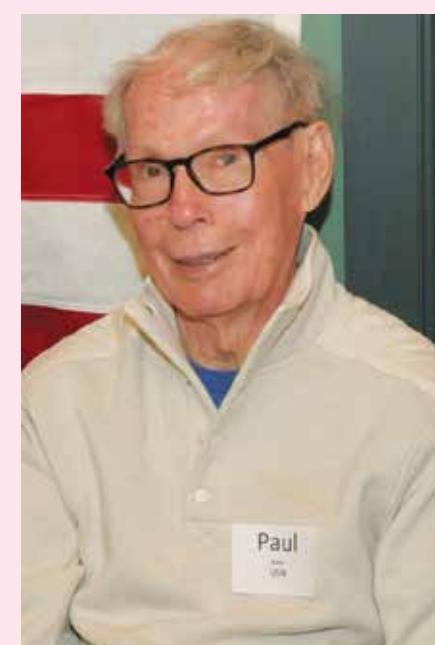
Paul Baker, a longtime North Side resident, passed away Aug. 19. He was 88.

He was born Jan. 9, 1931, and raised in Carrollton, Missouri. He served in the Navy and lived and worked most of his adult life in Chicago.

Paul enjoyed travel, took cruises yearly and just last year walked the Great Wall of China. He served for decades as president of the Boardwalk Condominium board of directors, where he was the heart and soul of the Boardwalk community. He was an avid reader, traveler and exercise enthusiast, walking to classes at Weiss Hospital several times a week including the last week of his life.

He was preceded in death by his father Paul Baker, his mother Lucille Baker, his brother James Baker and many friends.

He is survived by nieces Kyle Baker and Kim. He is mourned by friends including Doris Sidney, Nancy Poore and Jean Albright, who will forever miss his friendship and gentlemanly presence.



Paul Baker.

Photo by Hal Baim



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Foundation's ride/walk event about mental health, dedicated to late gay man

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

In honor of the late Michael James Dunlap, his family and friends created The Michael James Foundation to raise awareness for people with mental health issues.

The foundation will be hosting an inaugural bike ride/walk fundraiser Sunday, Sept. 8, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Montrose Fields, 601 W. Montrose Ave.

Dunlap died due to a drug overdose this past March 29 at age 30 after a long struggle with depression and addiction. He was born Sept. 12, 1988, in the Chicago suburb of Harvey and was raised in Tinley Park. Dunlap graduated from Marion Catholic High School and received his bachelor's degree in business from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

At the time of his death, Dunlap was a deli manager at Butera Grocery in Frankfort. He previously worked in retail management/sales at other grocery/deli and fine jewelry establishments.

Dunlap's mother, Carla Lazzara, explained that the genesis of this fundraising event stemmed from a conversation she and her daughter Jen Walters had with one of Dunlap's good friends, Rachael Rodgers, shortly after his death.

"Rachael asked us if we would be interested in doing this," said Lazzara. "We had given some thought at the time but we were still grieving and did not think we could put it together. We had established a fund in his name soon after his passing and his memorial service raised almost \$2,000 to benefit To Write Love on Her Arm (TWLOHA), a non-profit that helps people struggling with depression, addiction and works to prevent suicide and self-injury.

"Her idea was to make it a celebration of Michael's life during his birthday month and raise money for the foundation we had formed to benefit those Michael would have helped. Rachael, Jen and I and another dear friend of Michael's, Vito DiPerte, began meeting once a month and networking to plan the event. He would be so proud of his name being a conduit to those who struggle with mental health."

The reason why they decided to make this a



Michael James Dunlap.

Photo courtesy of the Dunlap-Lazzara family

bike ride/walk event was due to Dunlap's passion for biking that began in his mid-20s and later turned into moments in his life where he was at peace.

Lazzara told Windy City Times that Dunlap biked from Chicago to Baltimore in the summer of 2017 to raise money for TWLOHA.

"When he hopped on his bike that summer he had only biked 10 miles at a time and truly had no real idea how to accomplish his endeavor," said Lazzara. "He had a tent, a back pack and a used Trek bike. He struggled to complete the ride, almost gave up once and met so many people. He was amazed by it and raised \$2,000 to boot."

Lazzara said her son came out as a gay man to the family when he was a junior in college and was immediately accepted and loved by his entire family. She explained that his depression and addiction led to him being in treatment at Banyan Treatment Center (Banyan) in 2018. Lazzara said in addition to being in treatment, Dunlap began visiting and calling Center on Halsted (the Center) in 2015 when he lived in Chicago to get services and find community.

When asked why they chose Banyan, Lazzara said it was because of their services and approach in helping those in need.

"Banyan gave Michael a comfortable and non judgmental environment that he had never experienced before in treatment," said Lazzara. "They are also proactive in the community and believe we all have something to offer to those in need, even when in need ourselves."

"We are honored that they have chosen to contribute to the Banyan Cares Initiative," said Banyan Treatment Center Digital Marketing and Technology Director Alyssa Valentin. "All proceeds will go to our scholarship fund to help people who cannot afford addiction treatment."

Lazzara said they chose the Center because "it was a place where Michael felt safe and comfortable."

"We are grateful to the family for connecting with Center on Halsted in memory of Michael," said the Center CEO Modesto Tico Valle. "Michael found community at Center on Halsted and your participation in this event, as well as your in memoriam gifts, will help the Center support other members in our community through behavioral health services, HIV testing and other programs."

When asked what legacy the family wants to leave with The Michael James Foundation, Lazzara said, "Michael was a helper. He always knew what was best for his friends who were having a hard time. He could be in a terrible place himself but he was always calling or going to visit someone who needed a friend. Everyone was Michael's friend. Once he met you, you were a friend of his, period. He would want to continue to care for those suffering from mental health issues like he did."

As for what Lazzara wants to accomplish with the bike ride/walk, she said, "Mental health issues affect so many, are often hidden behind doors and within families. Those who suffer often have no outlet or knowledge of services available to them, nor the ability to pay for it. In the LG-BTQ community, although so much has changed for them, people still suffer judgment and shame and our family wants to tell others that everyone deserves love, and to be loved. We are passionate about this in honor of Michael, his circle of friends and others; no matter whom they love or how they identify."

The Sept. 8 fundraising event will also feature lunch and games; all ages are welcome to attend.

See <https://www.facebook.com/donate/2400628300023016/> to make a donation. To RSVP for the bike ride/walk, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/2387172278236897/>.

rector of Policy and Advocacy Keenan Crow.

"This event will focus on LGBTQ people living in the heartland and their needs," One Iowa Interim Executive Director Courtney Reyes said. "The overarching narrative that LGBTQ people in the U.S live in urban coastal areas ignores the millions of LGBTQ individuals living and working in the middle of the country. We look forward to hearing what the presidential candidates have to say to this often overlooked, but politically powerful community.

For more, see OneIowa.org.



Frank Rice Jr. and friend Linda.

Photo from Cremation Society of Illinois

PASSAGES

Frank Rice Jr.

Frank Rice Jr.—a poet and resident of Chicago's uptown neighborhood, passed away unexpectedly at home Aug. 15. He was 72.

He was the son of the late Frank Rice, Sr. and Mary Odessa Rice (nee West).

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



Steven Ray Dobson.

Photo from Cremation Society of Illinois

PASSAGES

Steven Ray Dobson

Steven Ray Dobson, of North Aurora, passed away Aug. 16. He was 70.

He was born in Pontiac, Michigan, and was an employee of Grand Trunk Railroad;

Steven was an easygoing person who loved to laugh, made friends easily, and enjoyed life. He also enjoyed collecting antiques and listening to classical music.

He was preceded in death by his partner of more than 35 years, Leo "Dennis" Thomison; his parents, Elden J. Dobson and Grace Nash (nee Glancy) Dobson; and his beloved Chihuahua, Carlos.

He leaves behind his siblings Lanny (Lucy) Dobson, Constance (Thomas) Stubits, Nancy (Gary) Bracken and Betsy (Patrick) O'Brien; a nephew and several nieces; and many great-nephews and -nieces.

The interment of cremated remains took place Aug. 29 at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago.

For date/time, contact Cremation Society of Illinois at 773-281-5058 or Cremation-Society.com.

Presidential candidates to talk LGBTQ issues in Iowa on Sept. 20

Former Vice President Joe Biden, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro, former Pennsylvania Rep. Joe Sestak, U.S. Sen. Cory Booker and author Marianne Williamson—who are all Democratic presidential candidates—will speak at a Sept. 20 forum on the lives of LGBTQ people and other civil-rights

issues impacting them in the heartland and rural areas, according to a press release.

All Democratic presidential candidates have been invited to participate.

Statewide LGBTQ advocacy organization One Iowa, publication The Gazette, LGBTQ media-advocacy organization GLAAD and the LGBTQ news source The Advocate will host this event in Sinclair Auditorium at Coe College, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Moderators will include The Gazette political reporter James Q. Lynch; The Advocate Editor-in-Chief Zach Stafford; and One Iowa Di-

State rep announces new South Side LGBT center

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Illinois state Rep. Lamont Robinson Jr. announced Aug. 24 that he had helped secure \$15 million in funding for an LGBT center to be located on the South Side.

Robinson's remarks came during a panel discussion that was part of the Fahrenheit Chicago weekend-long celebration.

"As a member of the LGBT community—particularly the Black LGBT community—I've talked to folks in that community, and it became apparent that we need our own center," Robinson later told Windy City Times. "I certainly agree with that, and I worked with leadership to get funds out of the capital bill for this project."

Howard Brown Health will be the fiscal agent for the project. That health system has a number of South Side locations, and will offer health services at the new center. Among the locations being considered are Washington Park, South Shore and Woodlawn, Robinson added. He predicted that the project would take about three to five years until opening.

"I've brought LGBTQ organizations together to talk about their assessments of their wants and needs are for the center," he said. "The next move is to talk to LGBTQ youth, to see what their



Illinois state Rep. Lamont Robinson.
Photo courtesy of Robinson

concerns are, but also to [consider] where the best site for this is [with consideration towards] a needs assessment."

Robinson said that the center would ideally include the health center as well as a gymnasium, space for South Side-based Black LGBTQ organizations, housing services and retail space. He added, "It's also important to have space where people can go to find jobs, or get GED training.

We want to make it not only a center for the LGBTQ community but the [entire] community on the South Side."

Besides Howard Brown Health, Center on Halsted is also assisting in the preparation. "Other folks at the table include Black LGBTQ organizations," Robinson said. "We want to make sure that the Center is someplace that encompasses everyone and is a place that folks can call home."

SAGE endorses aid-in-dying laws

Patient-rights organization Compassion & Choices issued a press release praising SAGE, dedicated to improving the lives of LGBT elders, for endorsing medical aid-in-dying laws.

Medical aid-in-dying laws give mentally capable, terminally ill adults the option to request a doctor's prescription for medication they can decide to take to end what they view as suffering, when no other palliative care treatment provides relief.

"After facing a lifetime of stigma and discrimination, LGBT older people know all too well the importance of personal autonomy and the need to be able to make personal decisions,

guided by their own moral compass, not that of others," said SAGE's memorandum of support. "Within our LGBT community, many elders are haunted by the memory of loved ones suffering from HIV/AIDS, for whom aid-in-dying became all the more important ... LGBT and end-of-life options movements are deeply intertwined."

SAGE joins a growing list of advocacy, health and medical organizations that have endorsed medical aid in dying, including GLMA: Healthcare Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality, Latino Commission on AIDS, American College of Legal Medicine, American Medical Student Association, American Medical Women's Association, American Nurses Association/California, American Public Health Association and Nuestra Salud (Our Health), among others.



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- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

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- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

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- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit BIKTARVY.com for program information.



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Remembering AIDS activist/volunteer Gerald 'Jerry' Pagorek

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

Longtime community member and AIDS activist Gerald (Jerry) Pagorek died on Aug. 24 following a lengthy illness. He was 76.

Born June 7, 1943, on the South Side of Chicago, Pagorek attended St. Mary Magdalene Grade School and St. Frances de Sales High School.

Following high school graduation, Pagorek moved north. With his natural eye for style, Pagorek soon was highly regarded for his window and retail displays at a number of upscale Chicago stores and boutiques in the 1960s and early 1970s. For several years, Pagorek also owned and operated the posh flower shop Metropolis Floral, in the Belden Stratford. In addition, he was employed by Progress Printing during 1977-88.

When the AIDS epidemic hit Chicago, Pagorek was a shining example of an AIDS activist and volunteer. He was one of the formative members of Open Hand Chicago, helping to plan delivery routes, delivering meals and even driving the Open Hand van in the Pride Parade.

Pagorek's volunteerism during Chicago's peak AIDS years included such groups as the Names Project, the AIDS Walk and Howard Brown Health. When his community needed him, Pagorek was there, working through his personal grief and fears by being of service. His example was inspiring.

Pagorek was cared for in his illness by friends Jeff, Carmen and Darr, as well as Kathy and Wayne.

In addition to his numerous friends, Pagorek is survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Kathy and Wayne Van Tichelt.

Friends recalled Jerry as a kind man and a giving soul:

"I got to work with Jerry a lot as the AIDS crisis began to decimate Chicago. Amidst waves of sadness and anger and fear, Jerry was always a quiet rock of strength, comforting and compassionate to people in need, and donating untold hours helping those who were struggling or just needed a kind word. Jerry was a brave, kind soul and will be missed," said Illinois state Rep. Greg Harris.

Center on Halsted CEO Modesto Tico Valle said, "Jerry was one of those unsung heroes of our community. I knew him from the early days of the AIDS epidemic, volunteering wherever he was needed, caring for those we lost during an awful time in our history. In later years, he continued to be present at many events, lending a hand but never looking for recognition, simply giving a hug, a smile, and his support. He will be greatly missed."

"Jerry was a fountain of love, peace, and joy. I'm honored to have called him my best friend. Now he can design with the angels," said Darr Gapshis.

"When AIDS was raging, Jerry was a quiet warrior working or volunteering with Open Hand, the Quilt and The AIDS Walk. He continued to volunteer for the Legacy Project. He was steadfast and kind. He will be missed," stated Killian Walsh.

Bruce Koff added, "Jerry was a singular man with a big and compassionate heart. He was truly an unsung hero of the early days of the AIDS epidemic through his work with Open Hand Chicago. Although such selflessness was not uncommon in those days, his was constant and enduring. He made us all better at being human."



Jerry Pagorek.

Photo by Owen Keehnen

Carmen Sherwood said, "I loved him and always will. This man forced me to look at myself, accept responsibility for my actions, and to always be compassionate to others. My life is not the same because of him." Activist Lori Cannon added, "In life all you can really leave is a good name. Jerry Pagorek did just that. It was a real treat to work with that special and generous man all those ear-

ly years when death had become a way of life for all of us. Thank you, sir, for all your memorable service to the AIDS community."

"Jerry was one of the most kind-hearted friends I've ever known. He could light up a room with his presence," said Paul Highfield, while Margaret Harris said, "Jerry's selflessness and service was natural. It was what he did. He was very compassionate and had a deep connection to spirit. Jerry was very Zen, and a great friend."

"From the first time I met Jerry I knew he was someone that was going to make a difference in our community. He fought along with all of us as we watched our friends die," said Dean Ogren. "He helped to drive the fundraisers and community events that brought us some light in those dark days. He had an eye for making an event just pop, whether it was the flowers, the lighting, or the venue itself. Jerry knew how to make it special. I was always in awe of his talent that way. I looked up to him as a good friend and partner in the fun we all enjoyed when he was around. I will miss his laugh and dry wit."

"To have known Jerry, as I have for over 50 years was a blessing. He was the most inclusive person I've ever known. Of course that meant he'd show up for a dinner party with one or two extra people. To say he'll be missed would be an understatement," said Sonny Coatar.

Lastly, Sharyl Holtzman said, "I got to know Jerry when I started volunteering at the Open Hand office, with founder Matthew Hamilton. AIDS raged around us. I looked at Jerry and said, this place isn't just somewhere to volunteer, it's where I want and need to be. Jerry took the steps to bring me on as first administrator."

"AIDS was relentless, stealing everyone away and through it all, Jerry was the picture of grace, compassion, generosity; he brought joy with his love of flowers and beautiful design, and laughter with his three-snap wit. He channeled his grief over his own seismic losses into working harder for the clients we served. I was fortunate and honored to work side by side with Jerry and call him my friend. He is irreplaceable."

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Activists issue 100-day report card on Lightfoot

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A coalition of Chicago-based community activists gathered Aug. 26 at City Hall to issue Mayor Lori Lightfoot a figurative “report card” on how well she’s done in her first 100 days in office.

The marks, based on the perceived progress the mayor has made on her various campaign promises, were not good as far as the coalition is concerned, ranging from “incomplete” at best to “F” at the worst. They were compiled under the auspices of United Working Families (UWF), a political organization that recruits and trains Black and Latinx political candidates for progressive causes, and is affiliated with a number of area unions, among them Chicago Teachers Union and SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana.

The coalition’s goal, according to a statement from the coalition, is “to work more collabora-

29]. If there is money going to Lincoln Yards, there is money for violence prevention.”

Rev. Charles Straight, who is gay, spoke to the assertion that Lightfoot has been slow to deliver on money bonds, noting, “In her campaign, Mayor Lightfoot pledged that she would end money bond as a means of reducing pre-trial incarceration and addressing racial disparities in the criminal justice system.”

He added that Lightfoot was given a D as opposed to an F “because she has previously talked explicitly about ending money bond and addressing the root causes of violence, and we want to encourage her to stick to her word.”

Windy City Times asked the mayor’s office for comment on the UWF report. Officials there did not respond directly to all the assertions, but noted that Lightfoot had, among other accomplishments, appointed a diverse school board and increased school budgets and staffing so as to promote equity; stewarded on “all-hands-on-deck” approach to public safety that incorporates advising from various stakeholders to better centralize police deployments; and issued an executive order that terminated ICE access to city databases and facilities.



Charles Straight.
Photo by Matt Simonette

tively with Mayor Lightfoot in the future to realize the bold, progressive agenda she campaigned on.”

Among the criteria were affordable housing and homelessness, for which Lightfoot earned a D (for promised work towards increasing the Real Estate and Transfer Tax to fund programs for person) and an “incomplete” (for promised work to pass an ordinance that would stem gentrification and displacement); immigration defense and sanctuary, which earned Lightfoot a D; police accountability and criminal justice reform, which earned the administration both an F (for supposedly failing to implement a substantial police oversight mechanism) and a D (for not yet ending the money bond system); public education, which was an F (activists alleged Lightfoot undercut efforts for an elected school board); and mental health centers and violence prevention, which were both ranked as “incomplete.”

Organizer Emma Tai of UWF said, “One of the questions that gets asked when you have conversations like this is, ‘Where is the money going to come from?’ We’re going to see Mayor Lightfoot deliver or preview her budget address on [Aug.

Man alleges forest preserve violated whistleblower laws

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A man is suing the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the District), among others, alleging that he was unlawfully terminated from his District job for whistleblowing.

John Regalado, who is gay, sued the District, Cook County and District Superintendent Arnold Randall on July 15, accusing them of firing him in August 2018 in retaliation for his notifying the Cook County Office of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG) that a colleague had provided false testimony in their investigation of a sexual-harassment case. According to the complaint, Regalado was fired by Randall mere hours after his OIIG notification.

The investigation centered around an incident involving one man simulating sex with another, and surveillance footage of the incident; a colleague told investigators that she had told Regalado about others viewing the footage. Regalado maintains that the colleague never told him that, and he notified OIIG and District officials to that effect.

He is alleging violation of the Whistleblower Act as well as retaliatory discharge and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Regalado asks for his job back, as well as back pay, back benefits and court costs. The suit was filed in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

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Trans woman files suit against Circle K

BY MATT SIMONETTE

An area transgender woman is taking Montreal-based Circle K convenience stores to court, alleging that she was subjected to anti-trans and racist discrimination while employed at a Bolingbrook location.

Judi Brown was employed as a cashier at the Bolingbrook store during May 2016-June 2017. During that time, she alleges, she was subjected to repeated misgendering on her employment related-documentation as well as intrusive questions regarding her gender identity, among other indignities. She is being represented by ACLU of Illinois in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois Eastern Division.

"It was an uncomfortable and hostile environment," Brown told Windy City Times. "It definitely was a trial—I really had to endure in that experience working there."

That "uncomfortableness started immediately," she added. "It accumulated to the more severe situations that transpired. From the beginning, there were issues."

Brown first became aware of potential difficulties when she was asked to answer probing questions about being transgender, she alleges. "They were asking me about my genitalia, my thoughts about surgery, my sexual experiences and things



Judi Brown.
Photo courtesy of the ACLU of Illinois

of that nature."

According to her complaint, Brown had to repeatedly tell management not to use her birth name on her review and coaching documents; those documents additionally referred to her us-

ing male pronouns. Brown also said in her complaint that store employees used anti-Black slurs both to insult her and speak about Black customers as well.

Her difficulties came to a head in June 2017, near the time of the Chicago Pride parade. Brown had planned to participate in the event, which she alleges management was aware of, but was notified that she would be expected to work that day. Brown, who worked a relatively fixed Monday-Friday schedule, replied both by text and in person that she was unavailable, she said.

She went to the parade as planned. When she returned to work the following day however, her credentials did not allow her to clock in. Brown then phoned the store manager, who told her she'd been terminated. According to the complaint, the company's documentation cited her missing the day of the parade as the reason.

Circle K disputed Brown's application for unemployment benefits and she was rejected, she alleges, "under false pretenses. [Circle K] said that I was told that I would be terminated if I did not come in for work, but that was incorrect."

Brown is asking for a jury trial for the matter.

ACLU of Illinois Staff Attorney Carolyn Wald said, "This kind of harassment against transgender workers, particularly transgender women of color, is all too common, even in Illinois, and even in 2019. Even though state and federal anti-discrimination laws protect transgender workers, we're still seeing it happening."

Activists urge mayor to hire CPDH head, reprioritize HIV spending

BY MATT SIMONETTE

A group of community-service providers and social-service agencies—as well as various aldermen and one member of Chicago Board of Health—called on Mayor Lori Lightfoot to hire a Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH)

agency head soon and reconfigure how city monies are distributed among agencies fighting HIV/AIDS.

Ald. Raymond Lopez (15th Ward) announced Aug. 28 that he and other alderman were prepared to act legislatively if the administration did not speed things up.

Lopez said in a statement, "If Mayor Lightfoot does not keep her pledge for a nationally-open [search] process, focusing on these funding disparities, we are prepared to introduce an order to the Department of Public Health on September 18, 2019 requiring the department withhold approximately \$40 million in HIV/AIDS dollars until a commissioner has been selected from a national search effort focused on bringing equity to communities of color."

Activist Juan Calderon—who is a Board of Health member but emphasized that he was speaking on behalf of agencies serving communities of color and not in an official capacity as a board member—told Windy City Times that myriad South and West Side agencies were continuing to receive diminished funding as monies instead went to North Side-based agencies and hospital systems, increasing the likelihood that smaller South and West Side agencies would eventually have to close their doors.

Among the organizations and initiatives potentially affected by the diminishing funding streams would be Brothers Health Collective, Project Vida, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, TRANS Chicago and Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Calderon said, adding that it was logistically impossible for many of these clinics and programs could not compete with hospitals and federally-qualified health centers.

Project Vida CEO Jerome Montgomery added that a restructuring of the application process has made it difficult to compete or even take part in that application process.

"Here we are, running entire outreach programs, bringing in two or three people and supplies for the same amount they're spending on office staff," he said. "It's not at all equitable."

Read the full article online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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Stuff happens. Housing discrimination doesn't have to.

Stuff happens—sometimes really awful stuff.

Most of my 20+ years of involvement in the LGBTQ community in Chicago has been good stuff. I have been fortunate enough to be a member of the board of directors or play a leadership role for some of our institutions, such as the Center on Halsted, Howard Brown Health and Test Positive Aware Network, among others. But in 2014, a bunch of stuff happened—bad stuff.

I am a person living with disabilities and, in May 2014, I was struggling mightily. After being released from the emergency room one day, I was wandering around my neighborhood confused and disoriented. A neighbor called the cops. The cops arrested me and, over a few days, I bounced back and forth between jail and the emergency room. The felony charges were later dropped after I pled guilty to a citation for “disorderly conduct.”

Folks “with records” like me face potential barriers

to maintaining a stable life. In Chicago, for example, prospective landlords often deny housing to a person because of their past interactions with the criminal legal system. In my case, I was fortunate enough to secure a lease in 2015 from a housing provider who did not know or did not care about my arrest.

This issue has serious implications for LGBTQ folks. LGBTQ people have higher rates of addiction and mental illness than straight folks. The scourge of methamphetamine addiction among gay men—which has impacted me personally—is just one example of a disparity that has had profound negative consequences for our community. Drug use and crime are strongly linked, making addicts much more likely than non-addicts to be arrested. People with disabilities overall are more likely to be arrested than people without them. In sum, LGBTQ people—particularly LGBTQ people of color and low-income LGBTQ individuals—are more likely than straight folks to come into contact with the criminal-justice system. Correspondingly, our LGBTQ brothers and sisters are at a heightened risk of being denied housing.

Recently, local lawmakers took significant steps to address this problem by passing the Just Housing Amendment. The measure prohibits landlords in Cook County from automatically barring housing applicants on the basis of their conviction history. Instead, it requires landlords to conduct individualized assessments of each applicant before deciding whether to offer or deny them rental housing.

For applicants with arrests but no convictions, the amendment prohibits the landlord from giving any weight whatsoever to arrests.

In coming weeks, the Cook County Board of Commissioners will decide on regulations that will govern how the Just Housing Amendment is implemented. The coalition of organizations that helped pass the Just Housing Amendment is working to ensure the regulations are free of anything that would subvert the law's purpose, such as overbroad exclusions based on generalizations or stereotypes. The commissioners whose districts include neighborhoods with high LGBTQ populations—such as Edgewater, Andersonville and Boystown—should actively support the coalition's goals on behalf of their LGBTQ constituents.

Finally, the City of Chicago, under the leadership of our new openly lesbian mayor, should follow the Cook County Board's lead and adopt similar protections for folks living in the city. The truth of the saying “stuff happens” applies to everyone, but LGBTQ folks get more than their fair share. Therefore, as a community, we should support policies such as the Just Housing Amendment that eliminate barriers to people who are trying to rebuild their lives after experiences with our criminal-justice system.

Brent Adams is the senior vice president of policy and communication at Woodstock Institute, a financial-justice organization, and was formerly a cabinet member in the administration of Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn.

Joshua
IRVINE

A straight man's foray into an LGBTQ world

My first assignment for Windy City Times looked something like this:

I hopped in my car and drove from my white, middle-class, cookie-cutter suburb to a tiny theater in a part of the city I'd never seen so I could photograph (on a camera I'd never used professionally before) the musical performance/burlesque routine of a gay Black man in a rainbow leopard-print onesie.

My editor, Andrew Davis, knew that. He also knew that my exposure to Chicago had been largely confined to the Loop and the Red Line's Addison and Loyola stops. I'm not certain if he knew Donyae Asante's music heavily focused on the singer's sex life (and I'm pretty sure I lied about how well I knew how to use the camera), but he definitely knew I'd never had to discuss the anatomical realities of non-hetero sex with a stranger in a public park, which is

what the next day's interview looked like.

This is not an airing of grievances. No wrongdoing or deception was involved: I took this internship knowing full well I would be covering the LGBTQ community, and in covering a community that is defined in part by sexual identity I would unquestionably encounter the matter of, well, sex. Nor was anything I interviewed Asante about abnormal; it just wasn't my kind of normal.

I have lived my life in a peculiar yet highly common state of open-mindedness, where I and what I imagine to be a significant number of white, college-educated, heterosexual people proudly proclaim ourselves as equal in our treatment of all races, creeds and colors without ever having to encounter anyone who doesn't look or behave exactly like us. There were occasional gaps in the curtain—a long unmarried uncle casually outed, a classmate who showed up to school one day with hair cut short and a new name—but rarely do any of us elect to reach forward to the breadth of these vastly different communities.

I'm not asking for a pat on the back. The issue at hand isn't what I did (and even then, did behind the comfortable facade of the objective reporter), but what so many straight, white, cis people—particularly men—don't. We succumb to inertia, letting our kumbaya chant drone out the realities of a fractured world and then responding with knee-jerk denial when someone on the other side of the curtain gets

fed up and tries to wrench it open for us.

So how do we fix this? At my college paper, The Daily Northwestern, we talk about the need to integrate women and LGBTQ persons and persons of color into traditional, heteronormative environments, in our case mainstream media outlets. We talk less about putting white, heterosexual reporters like me into environments like Windy City Times.

It's not hard to see why. The curtain has historically been just as much a protective barrier for those on the other side as it has been a tool of comfort for my group. To some who helped cultivate these safe spaces, letting someone like me not only look in but also step across this divide, is an affront.

But I know am a better man for having been granted the opportunity, and I believe others like me would benefit from such access.

I also believe that this access is something that needs to be granted. Straight people showing up to Pride doesn't bring change—just Citigroup-sponsored floats. We need to be immersed, thrown in the deep end.

My internship with Windy City Times is coming to a close. I hope it is not the end of our association, but if it is, I emerge with knowledge and an attitude I could not have gained in any other environment. And I hope I am not the last like me to gain this knowledge.

Joshua Irvine is a member of Northwestern University's class of 2022.



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DAVID CROMER

ON THE
BAND'S
VISIT AND
MORE

PAGE 22

David Cromer.
Marc J. Franklin

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Checking out this season's musicals

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Chicago musical theater lovers have lots to rejoice about the 2019 fall season. There are musicals making Chicago debuts, plus many revivals of classic and contemporary fare. All musicals play in Chicago unless otherwise noted.

Premieres:

—**The Band's Visit**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St.: An Egyptian military band gets stranded by mistake in a remote Israeli desert town in this 10-time Tony Award-winning Broadway musical adaptation of the 2007 Israeli film. Former Chicago director David Cromer won his first Tony Award for staging this wistful, slow-burning musical about human connection amid so many differences. (now to Sept. 15; Broadway-InChicago.com)

—**Something Rotten!** Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire: Two playwrights seek out the help of psychic Nostradamus in order to outdo their rival, William Shakespeare. Jeff Award-winner Scott Weinstein stages the first homegrown Chicago-area production of this 2015 Elizabethan Broadway musical comedy. (now to Oct. 20; MarriottTheatre.com)

—**Midsummer (A Play with Songs)**, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.: An executive seeking revenge sex and a thief on the prowl come together for a series of misadventures in Edinburgh. This British show by playwright David Greig and songwriter Gordon McIntyre arrives in Chicago after an acclaimed run in the Scottish capital. (Sept. 4-Oct. 6; GreenhouseTheater.org)

—**Songs in the Key of Stevie**, Black Ensemble Theater, 4450 N. Clark St.: Rueben Echoles is set to write and direct a new biographical musical centered on the amazing songwriter and musician Stevie Wonder. (Oct. 5-Nov. 17; BlackEnsembleTheater.org)

—**Lindiwe**, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.: Ensemble member Eric Simonson teams up with the musical ensemble Ladysmith Black Mambazo for a song-filled drama that travels from Chicago's Kingston Mines to South Africa. (Nov. 7-Jan. 5; Steppenwolf.org)

—**The Simon & Garfunkel Story**, Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place, 175 E. Chestnut St.: This multimedia-filled 2015 London musical revue follows the sometimes contentious friendship between Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel. (Nov. 19-Dec. 1; BroadwayInChicago.com)

Revivals

—**All That He Was**, Pride Films and Plays, 4147 N. Broadway: Composer Cindy O'Connor and playwright/lyricist Larry Cousineau have updated their 1993 musical set at a funeral of a young man who died from AIDS-related complications. (now to Sept. 9; PrideFilmsAndPlays.com)

—**Into the Woods**, Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe: Director Gary Griffin brings extra

intimacy to the classic Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine musical mashup of timeless fairytales by staging the production in the round. (now to Sept. 22; WritersTheatre.org)

—**Monty Python's Spamalot**, Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport Ave.: Eric Idle and John Du Prez's musical adaptation of the classic 1975 film comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail is back home in Chicago, the city that hosted its pre-Broadway tryout back in 2004. (now to Nov. 3; MercuryTheaterChicago.com)

—**Newsies The Musical**, Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora: Harvey Fierstein's stage adaptation of the 1992 Disney film musical became a surprise Broadway hit back in 2012. Director Jim Corti stages this historically inspired 1899 tale of New York newsboys who went on strike to defy publishing magnate Joseph Pulitzer. (Sept. 4-Oct. 20; ParamountAurora.com)

—**The Color Purple**, Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace: Lili-Anne Brown directs this revival of the hit 2005 Broadway musical. It's inspired by Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-

winning novel about Celie, an African-American woman in the early 1900s who finds romantic and familial love despite so much early abuse in life. (Sept. 13-Nov. 3; DruryLaneTheatre.com)

—**Hello Again**, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre, 721 Howard St., Evanston: Michael John LaChiusa relocated Arthur Schnitzler's controversial 1897 sexual drama La Ronde to 20th century America for his 1993 off-Broadway musical adaptation. (Sept. 13-Nov. 3; Theo-U.com)

—**Anything Goes**, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell St., Arlington Heights: Cole Porter's quintessential 1930s musical is set aboard an ocean liner and features hit song standards like "You're the Top," "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" and more. (Sept. 19-Nov. 2; MetropolisArts.com)

—**Big Fish**, Bohemian Theatre Ensemble at Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave.: Songwriter Andrew Lipka and playwright John August drew inspiration from Daniel Wallace's novel and the 2004 Tim Burton film for their musical tryout. This production allows local audiences to see what changed since the musical's 2013 Chicago tryout and a too-short Broadway run. (Sept. 29-Nov. 17; BoHoTheatre.com)

—**A Man of No Importance**, Pride Films and Plays at Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway: A closeted bus conductor in 1960s Dublin stirs up controversy when he tries to stage a community theater production of Oscar Wilde's Salome. This 2002 off-Broadway musical by playwright Ter-



Above: Matthew Huston and Joe Giovannetti in **All That He Was** at Pride Films and Plays.

Photo by Nicholas Swatz

Below: Sasson Gabay and Chilina Kennedy in **The Band's Visit** at the Cadillac Palace Theatre.

Photo by Matthew Murphy



rence McNally and songwriters Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty is inspired by the 1994 film. (Oct. 10-Nov. 10; PrideFilmsAndPlays.com)

—**Sunset Boulevard**, Porchlight Music Theatre at Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.: Jeff Award-winning actress Hollis Resnik stars as Norma Desmond in composer Andrew Lloyd Webber's Tony Award-winning adaptation of the classic 1950 Billy Wilder film. It's all about a faded silent screen star and the desperate screenwriter who falls into her clutches. (Oct. 11-Nov. 24; PorchlightMusicTheatre.org)

—**Oliver!** Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire: Lionel Bart's beloved 1960 musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel Oliver Twist makes a return. (Oct. 30-Dec. 29; MarriottTheatre.com)

—**Disney's Beauty and the Beast**, Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora: The smash hit 1994 Broadway musical inspired by Disney's acclaimed 1991 animated feature returns to the Chicago area for another regional run. (Nov. 13-Jan. 19; ParamountAurora.com)

—**Mary Poppins**, Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace: British producer Cameron Mackintosh teamed up with Disney for this 2004 stage musical adaptation of the beloved 1964 film about a magical nanny. (Nov. 15-Jan. 19; DruryLaneTheatre.com)

—**Always... Patsy Cline**, Firebrand Theatre at Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave.: Artistic director Harmony France and actress Christina Hall alternate in roles of country legend Patsy Cline and the suburban housewife Louise Seger in this biographical 1997 off-Broadway musical. (Nov. 16-Dec. 15; FirebrandTheatre.org)

—**Annie**, Citadel Theatre, 300 Waukegan Rd., Lake Forest: The smash-hit 1977 Broadway musical about Little Orphan Annie returns for an appropriately timed holiday run. (Nov. 20-Dec. 22; CitadelTheatre.org)



Bethany Thomas stars as the **Witch** in **Into the Woods** at Writers Theatre in Glencoe. Photo by Michael Brosilow

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Equus (Sean William Kelly in a publicity image). Photo by Derek Bertelsen

FALL THEATER PREVIEW

Second looks and overdue appointments: Classics and revivals

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Our city has become a worldwide destination for premiering plays (if Mark Larson's new book on the history of show biz in Chicago is correct), but there's still room for second-look and better-late-than-never theatergoing experiences in a season crammed with possibilities.

Bona fide classics:

—**Richard III:** Don't put away your daggers and poison yet, all you Game of Thrones fans—Eclectic Full Contact Theatre presents Shakespeare's

most charming villain making with the royal mischief. It runs Oct. 1-Nov. 3 at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave. Info/tickets: EclecticTheatre.com, 773-935-6875

—**Romeo and Juliet:** More than 400 years of teenage emancipations, elopements and suicides have been attributed to Shakespeare's romantic tragedy, so what can we expect from a production whose publicity depicts an interracial couple clasping hands? It runs Oct. 31-Dec. 22 at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave. Info/tickets: ChicagoShakes.com, 312-595-5600

—**Rutherford and Son:** Githa Sowerby's critique of filial strife in 1912 industrial England may have been eclipsed by male contemporaries like Ibsen and Shaw, but this forgotten proto-feminist finally gets her due over a century later from Timeline Theatre. It runs Nov. 6-Jan. 12 at Baird Hall, 615 W. Wellington Ave. Info/tickets: TimelineTheatre.com, 773-281-8463

—**Oedipus Rex:** Sophocles' account of the abandoned child who tried to escape his destiny, freshly translated by Nicholas Rudall for this Court Theatre production, premiered in 429 BC—you can't get much more classic than that. It runs Nov. 7-Dec. 8 at Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave. Info/tickets: CourtTheatre.org, 773-753-4472

Revivals:

—**Whose Body?** Playgoers who missed Frances Limoncelli's 2002 adaptation of Dorothy Sayers' flagship mystery starring blue-blooded crimesolver Lord Peter Wimsey can now see the play that inaugurated Lifeline Theatre's most successful series. It runs Sept. 16-Oct. 27 at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. Info/tickets: LifelineTheatre.com, 773-761-4477

—**King Hedley II:** This ninth in the late August Wilson's ten-play trilogy reintroduces characters from earlier chapters to explore hard times in the Pittsburgh Hill District during the recession of 1985. It runs Sept. 12-Oct. 13 at Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis Ave. Info/tickets: CourtTheatre.org 773-753-4472

—**Equivocation:** If you weren't taking notes at the 2012 Victory Gardens production of Bill Cain's fact-packed historic drama about the Gunpowder Rebellion, religious wars, art as propaganda, grief therapy and how Macbeth came to be written, Idle Muse offers you a chance to repeat the course. It runs Sept. 23-Oct. 20 at the Edge Off-Broadway, 1133 W. Catalpa Ave. Info/tickets: IdleMuse.com, 773-340-9438

—**Equus:** Peter Shaffer's exploration of repressed adolescent sexuality and pagan totemic worship gone awry is being marketed by Aston

Rep as a "thriller" so prepare yourself for images of violence (animal-lovers, especially). It runs Sept. 28-Oct. 27 at the Edge Theatre, 5451 N. Broadway. Info/tickets: AstonRep.com 773-828-9129

—**The Brothers Size:** Steppenwolf's Theatre for Young Adults series features this first in Tarrell Alvin McCraney's trilogy, drawing on Yoruba and



70 Scenes of Halloween.

Promotional photo from Theatre L'Acadie

Louisiana bayou myths to recount the fortunes of two dissimilar siblings. It runs Oct. 4-Oct. 19 at Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St. Info/tickets: Steppenwolf.org, 312-409-1650

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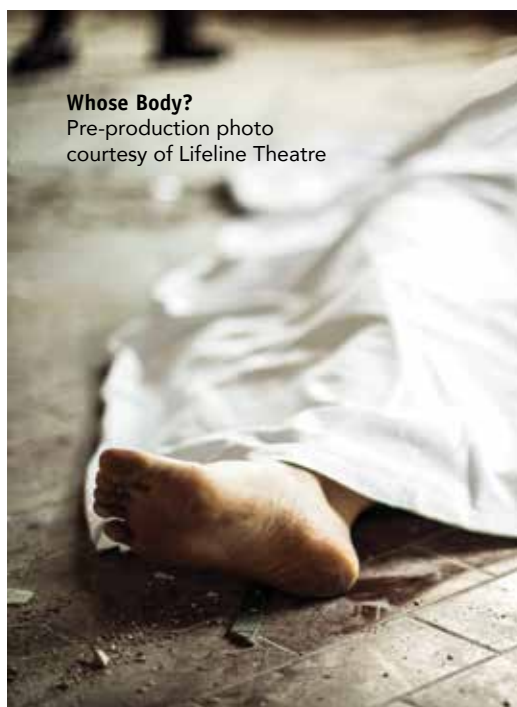
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Tix: RonnieLarsen.com

Whose Body?
Pre-production photo
courtesy of Lifeline Theatre



—**The Hound of the Baskervilles:** James Sparling and Adam Bitterman return to portray Holmes and Watson for the third time since assuming the roles, following Terry McCabe's 2007 premiere adaptation for City Lit of the super-sleuth's most famous case. It runs Oct. 6-Nov. 20 at City Lit Theatre in the Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. Info/tickets: CityLit.org, 773-293-3682

—**Hoodoo Love:** It's not exactly a musical, but Katori Hall's torchy tale of Beale Street blues musicians during the Depression brings plenty of Memphis soul to stave off pre-holiday chill. It runs Nov. 4-Dec. 15 at Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St. Info/tickets: RavenTheatre.com, 773-338-2171

Tricks and treats:

—**Seventy Scenes of Halloween:** Cajun-country Theatre L'Acadie makes its Chicago debut with Jeffrey M. Jones' fable of a marriage gone spooky on the eeriest night of the year. It runs Sept. 26-Oct. 13 at the Athenaeum, 2936 N. Southport Ave. Info/tickets: TheatreLacadie.com, 773-935-6875

—**Blue Man Group:** Since taking up Chicago residence in 1997, the enigmatic azure aliens with the splashy drums and spitting vests have been mystifying all-ages audiences with their geeky stunts. There's an open run at the Briar Street Theatre, 3133 N. Halsted St. Info/tickets: BlueMan.com, 773-348-4000.

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Kevin Tuerff (left)
with Andrew
Samonsky, who
portrayed him in
the original cast of
Come From Away.
Photo from Tuerff

THEATER

The real 'Kevin T' of 'Come from Away' on Gander, lessons learned

BY KAREN TOPHAM

"It's a very American and Canadian story," said Kevin Tuerff about what happened in Gander, Newfoundland, on Sept. 11, 2001.

That story—which includes Tuerff's experiences—forms the basis for the landmark musical *Come From Away*, which just finished a Chicago run and will return next summer. But for Tuerff—a gay man and lifelong Catholic whose book about his experience, *Channel of Peace: Stranded in Gander* on 9/11, is available on ebooks and on an audiobook he narrates—the play is only the most visible reminder of an event that changed his life.

Both *Channel of Peace* and *Come From Away* tell the story of 38 transatlantic flights that were diverted to the small town of Gander when US airspace was closed following the attack. Gander, which had only about 9,000 residents at the time, had an oversized airport stemming from the days before jumbo jets when it was a practically required refueling stop, so it could (barely) accommodate all of the planes. But it was the

influx of 6,700 "come-from-aways," as the locals call non-Newfoundlanders, that showed the Canadians' true nature. The town and citizens of Gander not only welcomed these strangers into their midst but housed, fed, and clothed them during their days-long layover. Every large space in town became a hostel, and many of the travelers were invited directly into people's houses in a display of human compassion that both the book and the musical celebrate.

"Compassion means to engage in the suffering of others and that's what Gander did," Tuerff said, doubting that such things would occur now in the United States. "If they wanted to have empathy," he added, "they would have sent thoughts and prayers and a few pizza boxes." He said that he was glad to see the kind of compassionate outpouring that followed Hurricane Katrina, but wonders, "Why does it take a natural disaster or a terrorist attack to get people to act this way?" He remembered that, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, "people were kind to one another," but notes that this state of affairs only lasted a very short time.



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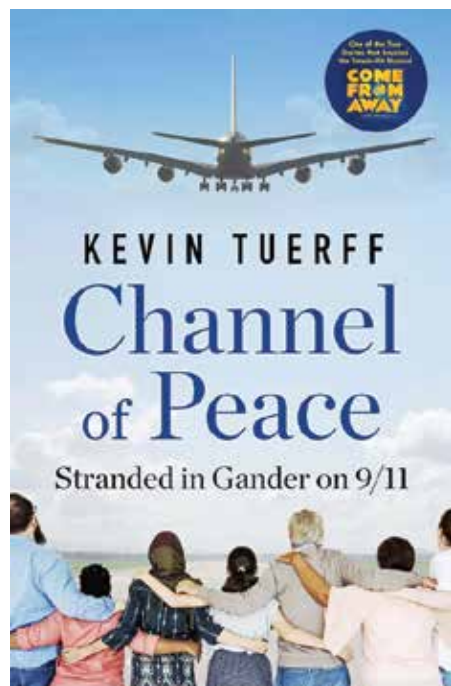
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"We are a nation on edge," he told Windy City Times. "We only tend to help people in our own siloes, whether community, race, religion, or family, so compassion for the 'other' is what's missing." Citing the Biblical book of Matthew, he noted that Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me," and marveled that he "got to experience that firsthand."



And Gander's amazing generosity was not a one-off, either. Tuerff, who has returned to Gander several times to see friends—both come-from-aways and Newfoundlanders—who share his memory of those remarkable days, recalled being "blown away" when he returned in 2016 and discovered that Gander residents had "adopted" four Syrian refugee families. "It's following the Golden Rule," he said, which is the same in every religion in the world but is not always, or even often, followed. When his 9/11 experience was over, the residents of Gander said that thanks were not necessary, that the debt was paid in full. "They say, 'You would do the same for me,' but my God no we wouldn't," he said—especially not if the incoming strangers included, as they did, many people from African and Arabic countries.

Still, Tuerff continues to try to make a difference. Shortly after his return, he created Pay It Forward 9/11—an organization that asks people, on the anniversary of the attack, to do something nice, "random acts of kindness," for their fellow man. When he still owned his own business, he gave employees \$100 each to distribute in any way possible and then come back and share their stories. He is retired now, but is pleased that the producers of *Come From Away* have taken up the cause, giving cast and crew members money to give away and discussing it in a talkback after the Sept. 12 performance. With five companies now performing the play in the United States and Australia, Tuerff sees the joy of giving spreading.

"There were 16,000 stories in Gander," he said, most of which obviously didn't make it into the play. But the stories that did have enshrined in

popular culture the attitude of a people who genuinely care for strangers in their midst. He's disappointed, though, that we in the United States seem to have forgotten how the world rallied behind us in our day of need. "In the aftermath of 9/11 our country was united, but now it couldn't be any less united." He wrote *Channel of Peace*,

its title taken from a Christian hymn, as a statement that individuals can make a difference. It's the same reason he wears a rope bracelet made for him by a janitor in Gander: "I wear it all the time to remind myself" of what can happen when people actually come together.

About Face names new associates

About Face Theatre has announced the addition of five new artists to the company's roster of artistic associates.

Along with Artistic Director Megan Carney, the associates represent the company's core artistic community whose creative focus helps shape About Face Theatre's theatrical productions and outreach. They are Sheldon Brown (actor, *This Bitter Earth*), Mikael Burke (director, *This Bitter Earth*), Armand Fields (former performer, AFT's Outreach Tour), Delia Kropp (actor, *I Am My Own Wife*) and Lexi Saunders (director, *Power in Pride*).

About Face aims to create exceptional, innovative, and adventurous theatre and educational programming that advances the national dialogue on sexual and gender identity, and challenges and entertains audiences in Chicago and beyond.

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THEATER

David Cromer on The Band's Visit and more

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Director and sometimes actor David Cromer rose to local fame 20+ years ago with fresh ideas about classic plays—Tennessee Williams, Thornton Wilder, Arthur Miller, Tony Kushner, Elmer Rice—at Writers Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Next Theatre Company, the Hypocrites, Famous Door Theatre, Steppenwolf and others after graduating from Columbia College Chicago. His first New York forays were Off-Broadway shows he'd directed first in Chicago: Orson's Shadow (2005), The Adding Machine (2008) and Our Town (2009)

in which Cromer also played the Stage Manager. All three were nominated for multiple awards and Cromer's career was launched, soon taking him to Broadway.

Cromer won the 2018 Tony Award for Direction of a Musical, *The Band's Visit*, which had transferred from a successful Off-Broadway run at the Atlantic Theatre Company. *The Band's Visit* swept the 2017 Tony Awards with 10 wins. The national tour of the small cast, nuanced musical now is at the Cadillac Palace Theatre through Sept. 15 (although it could return next year).

The Band's Visit first was a non-musical Israeli film which became an international sleeper hit. Roger Ebert named it one of 2008's best films. It concerns a small Egyptian police band, on a goodwill tour, that's stranded for 24 hours in a dusty Israeli desert town. There's no hotel and no bus 'til the next day. The locals, led by Dina, who runs the town café, offer the band their hospitality, warily at first but with increasing connection and shared humanity.

In 2016, writer Intamar Moses and composer/lyricist David Yazbek adapted the film as a stage musical, with Cromer directing. Yazbek—whose heritage is Lebanese, Jewish and Italian—created a score featuring both traditional Middle Eastern instruments (such as the oud) and western instruments, played onstage by musicians incorporated into the action as members of the band. There's neither chorus nor big production numbers, although plenty of the songs are lively and spirited.

Cromer, an old acquaintance, talked with the *Windy City Times* by phone from Greensborough, SC where he was fine tuning the tour—which began three months ago—just days before the Chicago opening.

Windy City Times: David, the question all

Windy City Times Readers want to know is this: does winning a Tony Award improve your sex life?

David Cromer: (laughing) How could my sex life possibly get better than it already was? I hope no one would want to sleep with me because I won a Tony who wouldn't have wanted to sleep with me before!

WCT: When Broadway shows go on tour, the stage manager or assistant director often does all the real work. What were your responsibilities for the tour of *The Band's Visit*?

DC: I directed and cast the tour myself (with the associate director and the choreographer. We went into rehearsal with it for three weeks plus nine days of technical rehearsals. It was a bit abbreviated because, of course, the production already existed. So far, it's hard from me to walk away from the show. Some of the cast were veterans of the Broadway production or understudies, some were new. Sasson Gabai, who plays the Egyptian band leader, Lt. Col. Tawfiq Zacharya, heads the cast. He played the role in the original movie and on Broadway for a year, so he's the Ur-veteran!

WCT: The great Harold Prince (who died July 31 at 91) was originally going to direct *The Band's Visit*. When he dropped out, did he recommend you to take over? Did you know him?

DC: No. I met him once backstage, but he's not the reason I got the job. I'd worked with Intamar Moses, and I'd met and had dinner with David Yazbek in London three years before that, so I knew a bunch of people. Intamar called me and said they were looking for someone, did I know anything about the piece, could I think of anyone I really wanted it BAD, so I said, naturally, I won't get it.

WCT: Was there still a lot of writing to do? How much did you influence the piece?

DC: The writing is beautiful. I added one or two things. Mostly I needed to encourage them,

reassure them that they shouldn't be afraid of being quiet, shouldn't be afraid of being subtle, shouldn't be afraid about the show taking its time or being spare. The characters communicate through music, break through to each other, because music is a thing that people can bond over and discuss and enjoy that isn't politics or religion.

WCT: Before *The Band's Visit*, you'd never directed a Broadway musical. What did you learn?

DC: Trust your musical director and your choreographer! Make sure all your departments are integrated and talking to each other. I'm not musical, I can't read music, but I can understand when it makes emotional sense to me.

Cromer is loyal to old Chicago friends and professional associates. He returned in 2015 to play Ned Weeks, the lead role in Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*, for TimeLine Theatre and earlier this year he directed *Next to Normal* at Writers Theatre in Glencoe. He'll be back in January to stage Tracy Letts's 1996 play, *Bug*, at Steppenwolf.

WCT: What brings you back to Chicago? It can't be the money.

DC: Actually, the money is good!

WCT: Did Writers Theatre and Steppenwolf say you could do anything you wanted?

DC: No one says "You can do whatever you want." Don't trust anyone who does!

WCT: Will we see you acting again sometime soon?

DC: (As an actor) I used to think I was this lean, off-beat personality with a lot of hair. Now I've just become this doughy, phlegmatic actor and I don't much care for that. I don't think I'm going to miss it that much.

***The Band's Visit* runs through Sept. 15 at the Cadillac Palace Theatre. *Bug* runs at Steppenwolf Jan. 23-March 8.**

A Queer Pride holds benefit at Le Nocturne

On Aug. 23, A Queer Pride held a benefit for L.A.-based non-profit Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement (TQLM).

The event not only served as a fundraiser but was also the debut event for A Queer Pride's Friday Night residency for an LGBTQ night at Le Nocturne—Uptown's newest nightclub and lounge, located at 4810 N. Broadway. The event featured a headlining DJ set from Gavin Rayna Russon of LCD Sound-system and special guest Familia: TQLM organizer Jennicet Gutierrez.

The event also featured DJ sets from Trqpitca's La Spacer and Cqqchifruit and live performances from rappers Cae Monae and KC Ortiz.

Familia: TQLM is an organization dedicated to uplifting and advocating for trans and gender non-conforming Latinx individuals.

In the future, A Queer Pride will be collaborating with nightlife curators to bring some of their events to Le Nocturne. Upcoming events include Lezbe Event's Flannel Fridays (first Friday of the month), Ariel Zetina's Rosebud (second Fridays) and Organized Grime Crew's Grizzly, along with A Queer Pride's recurring events The Function and MOIST. Upcoming headliners include Maliibu Miitch (from the Bronx), MikeQ (New Jersey), Nina Bonina Brown (Atlanta), Goodboy (L.A.), Shane Stiel (NYC), Wayne G (London) and many more.

For more information, visit Do312.com/aqueer-pride.



DJ Cqqchifruit and DJ La Spacer.
Photo by Vern Hester

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THEATER REVIEW

Out of Love

Playwright: Elinor Cook

At: Interrobang Theatre Project

@ Rivendell, 5779 N. Ridge Ave.

Tickets: 312-219-4140;

InterrobangTheatreProject.org; \$32

Runs through: Sept. 14

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Out of Love makes me think about my older sister and her rare visits to Chicago, during which she deeply bonds with female friends she hasn't seen in years. That's a compliment to the play and production.

It confirms the idea—reinforced by female friendships depicted in literature (at least literature authored by women)—that women form enduring relationships more profound than male buddy relationships. If this isn't true, then women have been gaming us forever!

This contemporary (2017) British play is about all that, presenting 15 or so brief scenes spanning 30 years—not chronological but not random—from the lives of Grace and Lorna, two Northern England friends from childhood. Playwright Elinor Cook's pithy writing is neither elegant nor eloquent, but it's utterly believable and to the point as Grace and Lorna share everything as besties will and should: family trauma, boyfriends, sex details, resentments and in a final tender scene, dreams/hopes of an unachievable future for their

daughters. Grace remains in the provinces while Lorna escapes to London, not that Cook offers much detail about their jobs or even what connects them point to point. The play isn't a biography but a slice of psychology.

Out of Love is extraordinary in an ordinary way, for there's nothing especially distinguished nor distinguishing about Grace and Lorna ... and yet it made me think of my sister and how she's special, not compared to other women but compared to me.

The play is not a wild emotional ride—emotions generally are repressed and subtextual—yet it demands much from actors because there are no transitions between scenes and so little factual exposition. Actors must turn on a dime from scene to scene, making leaps in age, head space and even geography. It's much to the credit of Laura Berner Taylor (Grace), Sarah Gise (Lorna) and Peter Gertas (all the boys and men in their lives) that they accomplish this with ease and grace, and are instantly in the moment of the next scene. Georgette Verdin is the director who has guided them so skillfully.

The physical production is as spare as the play, but nonetheless handsome as designed by Sotirios Livaditis (scenic) and Michelle E. Benda (lighting). The completely neutral unit set consists of six low-rise platforms layered over each other like cards casually tossed on the floor, but nonetheless rising to a small peak, framed by a rectangular skewed shadow box, open at the back to neutral cyclorama. Except for one chair and a small bench, all props—cigarettes, underpants,

babies, etc.—are mimed. Benda's lighting plays with color, especially favoring blues and lavender. It seems as emotionally neutral as the play and, like the play, it isn't.

CRITICS' PICKS

All that He Was, Pride Films and Plays, through Sept. 8: This 1993 musical—newly revised by authors Cindy O'Connor and Larry Todd Cousineau—touchingly looks at the divided friends and family of a young man who has died from AIDS-related complications. *SCM*

All Quiet On the Western Front, Red Tape Theatre at the Greenhouse, through Sept. 14—The universality of war's hardships are vividly illustrated in Red Tape's panoramic multicultural portrayal of Erich Maria Remarque's World War I novel. *MSB*

(Non)Fiction, Right Brain Project at the Athenaeum, through Sept. 14—Playwright Jillian Less' parable of romance undone by good intentions contains a warning for artists and those foolish enough to fall in love with them. *MSB*

The Band's Visit, Cadillac Palace, through Sept. 15—Critics' Picks rarely promotes shows not yet open, but this disarming, compassionate and entertaining musical must be seen despite its short run. It's truly intimate, so splurge on close-up seats. *JA*

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

'Savage Love Live' in Chicago on Sept. 26

Author, sex-advice columnist, podcaster, pundit, public speaker and It Gets Better co-founder Dan Savage will bring his famous column to Chicago when "Savage Love Live" takes place at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave., on Thursday, Sept. 26, at 8 p.m.

Savage, who's openly gay, is a regular contributor to public radio's This American Life and a frequent guest on MSNBC, CNN, Real Time with Bill Maher and other programs.

"Savage Love," his sex-advice column, first appeared in the The Stranger, Seattle's alternative weekly, in 1991; the column is now syndicated to more than 50 papers across the United States and Canada. In 2006, Savage launched the Savage Lovecast—a weekly, call-in advice podcast.

Comedian Emily Galati will be a special guest. She has performed stand-up on Conan, NBC's Last Comic Standing, Comic's Unleashed, Laughs and Gotham Live.

See <https://btt.boldtypetickets.com/events/91682596/savage-love-live-chicago>.

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Photo by Joe Mazza

MOVIES

Reeling festival rolls out new LGBT films

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Reeling 2019, the 37th annual edition of Chicago's LGBT film festival, kicks off Sept. 19, and lasts through Sept. 29 in various venues throughout the city.

Founded in 1982, Reeling is the second oldest LGBT film festival in the nation.

The opening night film on Sept. 19 will be the French comedy *The Shiny Shrimps*, about a down-on-their-luck gay water polo team coached by a surly retired athlete. The film will be shown at 7 p.m. at Music Box Theatre, and will be preceded by a party 6 p.m.

Aspiring filmmakers won't want to miss two panel discussions the afternoon of Sept. 21. The first looks at *Work in Progress*, an upcoming Showtime series co-executive produced by Lilly Wachowski; the first episode will also be screened. The second focuses on the myriad web series that are produced in Chicago.

More *Beautiful for Having Been Broken*, the latest film from Nicole Conn, who helmed, among other films, 1992's *Claire of the Moon*, shows on Sept. 21 as well. It focuses on the relationship between a former FBI agent and a former dancer and her son.

Also on Sept. 21, Darryl Stephens of *Noah's Arc*

co-stars in the romantic drama *From Zero to I Love You*, about a commitment-phobic gay man who falls for a straight man with a wife and kids.

The documentary *Unsettled: Seeking Refuge in America* (Sept. 22) follows the challenges four LGBT persons from Africa and the Middle East face—among them poverty, homelessness, homophobia and a federal government perpetuating xenophobia—as they go through the rigors of applying for asylum in the United States.

Immigration is also a key theme in the Brazil/U.S.-drama *The Garden Left Behind* (Sept. 23), centering on a transgender girl who has come to the United States with her grandmother.

Making Sweet Tea (Sept. 23), a documentary adapted from Northwestern University professor E. Patrick Johnson's chronicle of Black gay men in the south, revisits six of those men and follows Johnson as he returns to his hometown.

The comedy *Pageant Material* (Sept. 24) follows a teenage boy who enters a drag pageant to pay tribute to his recently deceased mother, who had been a beauty queen.

The festival will close Sept. 29 with a showing and party for *Scream Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street Film*, which focuses on how gay actor Mark Patton came to terms with appearing in 1985's *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's*



Lilly Wachowski.

Photo by Christa Holka



Darryl Stephens.

Head shot by Rebecca Sanabria

Revenge, named at the time by the Advocate as one of the gayest horror films ever. Such an association could kill movie careers in the '80s, and it effectively killed Patton's. He also played a transgender character in Robert Altman's 1982 film of *Come Back to the Five and Dime*, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean.

These are just a few highlights from the Reeling

2019 schedule. The festival features a number of other narrative and documentary features, as well as short-film programs, throughout its run. Windy City Times will have additional coverage, as well as reviews, both online and in its Sept. 18 issue.

For more information, see reelingfilmfestival.org.

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NUNN ON ONE

Ross Mathews: Bringing bubbles, brunch to Chicago

Ross Mathews,
Lucy Stoolie,
Bambi Banks-
Coulee, DiDa Ritz
and Lila Star.
Photo by Jerry
Nunn

BY JERRY NUNN

Ross Mathews Presents Dragtastic Bubbly Brunch is a new endeavor for the television personality that combines local drag and a buffet brunch together in an intimate venue.

Many will know Mathews from his numerous TV appearances beginning as Ross the Intern on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, then on Celebrity Fit Club, E! Network and Chelsea Lately. He also wrote a book called Man Up! Tales of My Delusional Self-Confidence.

He finished second place on the first U.S. edition of Celebrity Big Brother, in which he took home \$50,000 and was voted America's Favorite Houseguest, earning an additional \$25,000.

Mathews is currently a judge on RuPaul's Drag Race and is hosting the podcast Straight Talk. He kicked off the first Chicago drag brunch in July and talked about it before the show.

Windy City Times: So, you have been throwing drag brunches all over the United States?

Ross Mathews: We started the over a year ago because I love drag queens and brunch. As I was

at brunch one time and knew I could do it better. I started it up just for funzies and it sold out every week.

I would go to brunch on Saturdays in LA and then Palm Springs by my house on Sundays. I decided to kill two birds with one stone and franchise the brunch in Palm Springs. We have been sold out there every weekend. We put together a business model on how it could work.

We began in Brooklyn and had a line around the block. Now we are doing Bakersfield, San Diego and now Chicago. We are about to announce 12 cities across the country. Next I want 12 more, then I want 50!

WCT: Drag brunches are such a big thing in the Midwest these days.

RM: They are, and so much fun. If the two words "drag" and "brunch" are in the title, you are guaranteed a good time.

WCT: What is unique about your brunch?

RM: We have the stamp of approval because I come from Drag Race. I think we get great queens. I like that our brunches are 360 degrees. Everyone is in the splash zone!

I really want to be able to shut the door on the outside world and make people smile for about an hour and 40 minutes. I think we accomplish our goal every single time brunch by brunch.

WCT: Is it easy to book the RuPaul Drag Race cast members for the brunch?

RM: Yes, because I know them all. People know with my name attached that it will be quality because I come from that world. What people don't know is that I am curating every queen, every menu item and the songs. I want it to have a very

specific vibe. I don't want it to be a bitchy experience or anyone to go home feeling they were read. I want it to be fun. Everyone is welcome.

WCT: Are there different brunch themes?

RM: We just started doing theme weeks. We did gospel in LA recently.

WCT: Do you have a favorite brunch food?

RM: I can't say no to a piece of bacon! I'm only one man and only so strong...

WCT: Have you ever done drag yourself?

RM: I have played female characters in sketches, but I have never done drag. Ru just asked me that the other day and his jaw was on the floor when I said no. Stay tuned!

WCT: Was there a contestant on Drag Race that you feel particularly close with?

RM: Yes. I don't want to go into who I am closest to, but I fall in love with all the queens. When they are on the stage and I can see into their eyes, I can't help but fall in love with those talented people. They are just there under incredibly difficult circumstances trying to keep their head above the water and show the world what they do.

WCT: You have clashed with Michelle Visage on the judging panel of Drag Race in the past. Are there any hard feelings?

RM: No. We text just about every day. Michelle is like family to me. I really love her so much. Two days ago she knocked on my dressing room door and brought me snacks. We just take care of each other, whether it's on the show or in life.

WCT: Who is the latest celebrity you are

Turn to page 29

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BILLY Masters

"Maybe at a show you can have a moment of knowing that you're not alone. I'm aware that as a white male, I don't go through the same things as a lot of the people that come to the shows. I can't claim that I know what it's like, because I don't. So I'm not trying to say, 'I understand what it's like.' I'm just trying to make people feel included and seen."—**Harry Styles** on why he brandishes the rainbow flag at his concerts.

You know the summer is over when hurricanes start hitting Florida. As we go to press, we're bracing to see what Dorian will do to the East Coast. When flying out of Fort Lauderdale Airport days earlier, I read the account of a transgender woman who had gone through the same airport two years ago. According to the 36-year-old, she required a pat-down because TSA's full-body scanner detected an issue around her groin. A female officer took her to a private room, gave her the pat-down, and seemed surprised at what she found. "If the issue is what you are feeling, let me tell you what this is—it is my penis," said the woman. This apparently caused quite a stir and required two more officers and a supervisor.

They determined the trans woman would need a second pat-down by a male officer—which I would have thought made sense since a penis was detected. But I'm wrong. Apparently policy dictates pat-downs must be done by an officer of the same gender as that which is presented by the traveler. So, penis or no penis, since this person presented as female, the pat-down by a female officer was correct. When the traveler in question refused to be patted-down by a male officer, TSA refused to let her through security. "Can I just show you?" she asked. Although this too is against policy, nobody objected. The penis was presented, and the lady made her flight. While I find this story informative, I also find it insulting. With all the flying I do, not once has anyone patted me down—and I've never been shy about whipping out my dick in public!

I kept hearing about **the musical Six**, which has been taking England by storm. It's now invaded the States and is currently at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge following a sold-out eight-week run in Chicago. A hot new musical? About the wives of Henry VIII? Done in a single 80-minute act? I'm in! The show is staged as a concert featuring Henry's six wives as members of a female empowering girl group. These ladies are competing to determine which wife got the short end of the stick (and, according to one of the wives, Henry possessed a mighty short stick). They also want to rehabilitate how history has portrayed them and come out of the shadows of a misogynistic male. The songs are of the Beyonce/Adele/Kelly Clarkson ilk, and



Billy pays homage to the late actress Valerie Harper.

Photo by Michael Buckner & Alberto Rodriguez/Getty Images

the lyrics—while taking some liberties with history—are clever and educational. It's kinda like a #MeToo version of Schoolhouse Rock. The queens are each splendid, and the kick-ass band (Ladies in Waiting) provides ample oomph. The atmosphere is electric from start till the inevitable encore. If you wanna see the next big thing on Broadway, get thee to the ART. It closes Sept. 29 and what few tickets remaining can be found at AmericanRepertoryTheater.org.

The next day, I zipped down to Provincetown to hang out with some more contemporary queens and pay homage to the incredible **Marilyn Maye**—91 and still going strong. She's in outstanding voice and has more energy than ever. The crowd loves her, I love her, and she loves us all. She really is our Queen Mum. This lovefest took place at the Ptown Art House, where she has held court for the past nine years, so it's truly one big happy family. As usual, the show was expertly led by the spectacular **Billy Stritch**, who never disappoints.

Boston got the dubious distinction of hosting the first-ever Straight Pride Parade. But the organization was somewhat lacking. Not only did most people not know that the grand marshal was Milo Yiannopoulos—most people had no idea WHO he is. I'm not saying it was a poor turnout, but the parade kicked off at high noon and was over by 12:13 p.m. Officially, we are told that about 1,000 people showed up—or, to put it in perspective, roughly the same number of people I slept with in February of 2013 (one of my slower months). If you ask me, the whole thing was kinda on the down low. Maybe it should have been called Boston's Down Low Pride. But good for you, guys, and better luck next year. You're

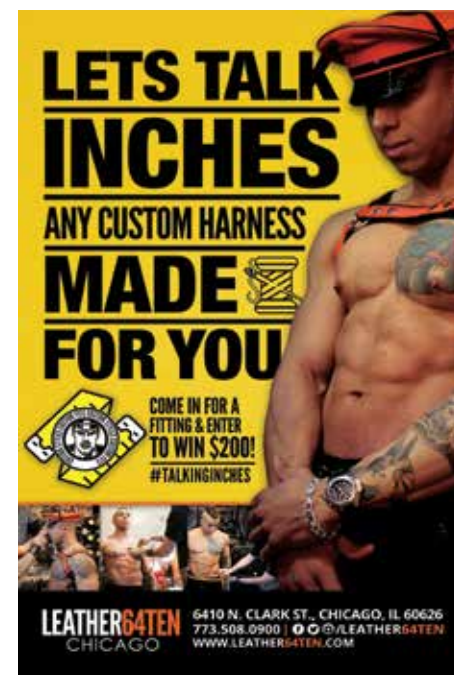


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straight. You hate. You don't have a good jingle.

When Maye's played Ptown, it's definitely the end of summer and end of yet another column. When I grow up, I want to be Marilyn Maye. Of course, I realize that will lead to endless pat-downs ... but I'm OK with that. I'm far less OK with the passing of **Valerie Harper**—one of the loveliest people I've ever met. As nice as you thought she was, she was exponentially more so in person. She had time for everyone—until her time simply ran out. But, remember, she was given six months to live in 2013 and got six years! She made sure to fill that time with as much living as one can. "Don't go to the funeral until the day of the funeral," she was fond of saying. She will be missed. Should this hurricane miss Fort Lauderdale, I'll be there next week. But no matter where I end up, you can always keep up with me at BillyMasters.com—the site that delivers through rain, snow and, particularly, dark of night. For your questions, send them along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before you blink and the parade passes by. So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



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the DISH

Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Lesbian chef curates 'Play'-ful menu in Gold Coast

BY MACKENZIE MURTAUGH

Located on the Division Street strip in Gold Coast are longtime establishments like The Original Mother's and Butch McGuire's. The typical frat boy-ish scene left that part of the Gold Coast without many true nightclubs, with some closed club fronts still standing. But right next door, the new **Play Chicago Kitchen and Cocktails** (7 W. Division St.; ThePlayChicago.com) might bring some life back into the neighborhood's nightlife scene.

"The space is more so a place we call the funhouse," said Executive Chef Melva Jarvis, who happens to be a member of the LGBT community, and who stressed to Windy City Times that this spot is all-inclusive. "The name says it all—come



LEFT: Chef Melva Jarvis. ABOVE: 24-karat gold wings at Play Chicago Kitchen and Cocktails.

Photo by Gerardo Rios

play with us. The food is fun and the staff is fun."

Jarvis—whose track record includes Streeterville's Bottled Blonde, Caesars Palace Las Vegas and the Food Network's Guy's Grocery Games—curated Play's inventive approach to American classics. Jarvis took entrees like burgers and macaroni and cheese and flipped them with creative extras like a half-lobster tail and a signature Cajun cheese sauce.

She said, "I created a menu that is playful and fun and different things, outside of the box. We have some typical bar food, but it's a little bit more elevated."

Jarvis' inspiration for the menu is simpler than the 24-karat gold wings and surf-and-turf burger

make it seem. She wanted to ensure the menu evokes the vibe embodied in the place's name.

"[I am] thinking outside of the box and putting things into play with certain times, like a burger," Jarvis said. "Everyone has a traditional burger with either thick-cut bacon or smoked bacon. I do candied bacon—spicy-sweet bacon that goes on top of a burger."

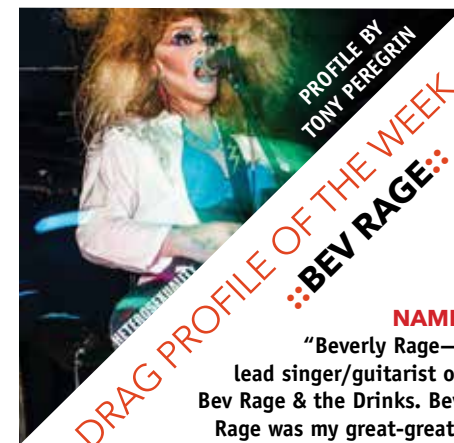
"I [do] things a lot of places don't do in Chicago," Jarvis continued. "No one in Chicago has 24-karat gold wings."

The aforementioned wings are a major player at the establishment, according to Jarvis. The Instagram-worthy, gold-infused wings can easily be found at the trendiest spots in Los Angeles

and New York, but they hadn't hit the Chicago nightlife scene until Jarvis stepped in, she said.

"Food trends are changing fast," Jarvis said. "They're changing almost weekly. You have to keep up with all of them unless you have

Turn to page 29



NAME

"Beverly Rage—lead singer/guitarist of Bev Rage & the Drinks. Bev Rage was my great-great-grandma's name. She lived in the back woods of Ohio and made her own wine. I relate to her."

FIRST DRAG PERFORMANCE

"I began doing drag in any sort of serious way in the fall of 2015, so nearly 4 years.

Prior to that I was doing some trashy bedroom drag with friends, and finally decided to hop on stage when I formed Bev Rage & the Drinks with Aaron Ehinger and Trevor Cole. Sam Westerling joined us on bass guitar in 2017."

DRAG INSPIRATION

"My biggest drag inspirations are Divine, Elvira, Coco Peru and Jerri Blank. Divine was filthy, hilarious, and doing things that no one else was doing with drag. I like embracing weirdness and filth, while still being approachable and never a diva. I've never taken my drag too seriously, but I do take my music and stage show seriously. It just might not look like it, but that's the point!"

GO-TO NUMBER TO SLAY A CROWD

"I write all of my own music, both on guitar and lyrically. A few of our faves to perform are "Limp Wrist," "Someone New," "Bitter Old Queen," and a new song, "Permanent Receptionist."

FAVORITE PIECE IN YOUR CLOSET

"I don't pretend to have the most expensive costumes out there, but I do make all of my own wigs. I'm a size queen with my wigs. Bigger is better."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU

"We play all over Chicago at music venues, DIY spaces, and sometimes drag bars if we are feeling adventurous. The clubs we play most often are Empty Bottle, Subterranean, and GMan, but we've played most venues that bands our size play."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram: BevRageandtheDrinks

Facebook: Bev Rage and the Drinks

Twitter: BeverlyRage

Photo by Marisa KM Photography



TOUCHE

Scenes from the Cowboy Eye for the Leather Guy makeover contest, part of the inaugural Rodeo 'Round Town weekend.

Photos by Kirk Williamson

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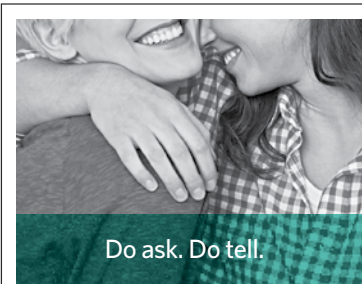
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SPIRITUALITY

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MATHEWS from page 26

obsessed with?

RM: I can't wait to meet Dr. Now from My 600-Lb Life. I don't want to become 600 pounds to meet him, but maybe we can do a brunch in Houston where I can take a picture in front of Dr. Now-zaradan's clinic.

WCT: Talk about your podcast, Straight Talk with Ross Mathews.

RM: It has been on five years with about 300 episodes. I do it just for me. It's the most selfish thing I do. It makes me laugh. I can't believe hundreds of thousands of people listen to it. We have so many loyal listeners. We do live shows in packed places. It's crazy!

WCT: I listened to your segment on Little House on the Prairie.

RM: Listen, I think Little Homo on the Prairie is a show I will pitch. Watch out Hollywood!

WCT: That sounds like a Drag Race skit.

RM: Picture it. I could be a gossip columnist that goes into Walnut Grove.

WCT: Have you met Alison Arngrim, who played Nellie Oleson?

RM: Of course! I saw her at Drag Con this year. I looked up and Alison was in my line to meet me and I yelled, "Make way!"

WCT: Are you writing another book?

RM: I finished my second book. It's so juicy and good. I am reading through it now to do the final edit. The pre-sale for it begins in mid August.

I can't believe I wrote it. It's about when a super fan goes behind the velvet rope and what happens. We just shot the cover and it comes out in February. I haven't released the title yet, so stay tuned!

The next drag brunch is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 15, at City Winery Chicago, 1200 W. Randolph St., starting at noon. For tickets, visit CityWinery.com/Chicago.



LIPS CHICAGO

Grand opening weekend was a smashing success! Joseph Stevens Photography. See many more online at www.windycitytimes.com

DISH from page 28

your own unique style and you're doing things different, like me."

Jarvis flipped the script with the wings, using a golden-colored bourbon barbecue sauce with a generous amount of gold flakes instead of just the simple gold flakes to add a necessary flavor to the eye-catching dish. To Jarvis, both taste and presentation are vital to keep the people coming back to a trendy spot like this.

Jarvis began her restaurant career as a prep cook. She proved herself more than just a cook when she started putting her own twist on the restaurant's recipes.

"The chefs always saw that I was doing something different, like 'Well, Melva's just never going to follow this recipe but it tastes good.'"

Her inventive twists on recipes did not go unnoticed by her bosses; after just two years, she was promoted to junior sous chef. There, she taught her employees some of her creative tricks and lent them a helpful, innovative hand.

Despite spending most of her time at Play, Jarvis is in a relationship with a woman she has known for three years. They met on a dating site after both of them were ending past relationships. At the beginning, the pair would talk for hours and spend time together without any romance involved. In the past year, their lives intertwined in a way that felt normal to them both.

"I was like, 'you know what? You've been my

best friend, and we'll make this work.' It just seemed so natural," Jarvis said.

Their relationship isn't founded on food, but it is something Jarvis enjoys with her partner.

"She knows everything I like, everything I don't," Jarvis said. "She knows what I eat, what I don't. She pretty much knows my whole day-to-day."

Before opening Play, Jarvis showed her creativity on a national scale. Her time on Guy's Grocery Games showcased her ability to improvise on both a budget and deadline. As a contestant on the fried food episode, she made a personal connection with the show's host: food legend and internet culture icon Guy Fieri.

"The way he is on TV is how he is all the time," Jarvis said. "He loves to joke, play, laugh and have fun. That is all it is. I can never have a serious moment with him."

Jarvis' history in the Chicago restaurant industry stretches across various cuisines and markets, and she's seen and ate much of Chicago's best food. When asked about her favorite spots in the city, she laughed.

"As long as I don't have to cook it, I'll go to places where it's going to be quick, fast and I won't have to do much thinking behind it," Jarvis said. "Places where I don't have to critique as much. When you're a chef, you go to upscale restaurants and you critique. It's like, that steak wasn't up to my expectations, I didn't like this part or that part. If I go to Popeye's Chicken, it's always the same."



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Sept. 5

8th annual Collaborative Works Festival,

The Living Diverse array of the work of today's leading composers, and the work these composers are doing in the field of song. 5:00pm Venues around Chicago <http://www.caichicago.org>

American Veterans for Equal Rights GLBTQ Veterans Day Dinner Monthly Meeting

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

Friday, Sept. 6

River North Design District Fall Gallery Walk

Artists paired with designers. 31 locations with openings and events through Saturday, Sept. 7. 3:00pm Throughout Chicago's River North <http://rivernorthdesigndistrict.com>

FIYAH Fridays Every Friday Adult GLBTQ

event. DJ SuperMan blends House, R&B, Hip-Hop, Pop Musicology. Free all night. Reserve VIP at RAILSCHI@AOL.COM 11:00pm - 4:00pm Estate Ultra Bar, 1177 N. Elston Ave.

Saturday, Sept. 7

TPAN's Ride For Life Chicago

Cycling event to support the lifesaving work of TPAN and our community partners. teams champion one another to travel 100-200 miles on Sept 7 and 8 and will share stories of triumph over HIV, our



OH HAPPY FAYE

Monday, Sept. 9

E. Faye Butler is among those slated to perform at "Second City Divas in Concert."

Photo from About Face Theatre

commitment to end AIDS, and TPAN's success in providing expert, compassionate health services to individuals and families across Chicago. <https://www.tpan.com/>

Chicago's LGBTQ Economic Justice Summit

Are you an LGBTQ person who is upset at the economic inequality growing in our community? Join LGBTQ workers from across the region to discuss what

a grassroots movement for economic justice 10:00am SEIU Hciimk, 2229 South Halsted St <http://www.Eventbrite.com>

Out In The Park at Six Flags Great America Annual private night diversity event featuring unlimited riding of all thrill rides to benefit Chicago Spirit Brigade and various non-profits. Advance \$4. Charlies will host the Official After Party in Boystown. 7:00pm - 12:00am Six Flags Great America 1 Six Flags Parkway Gurnee, IL 60031 Tickets: <http://gay-sixflagschicago.com/2019/05/04/how-to-order-your-tickets-2019/>

Callas in Concert: The Hologram Tour

Forty-two years after her death, singing arias by Rossini, Verdi, Gounod, Bizet with members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra performing live onstage, through state-of-the-art digital and laser projection. \$39-\$125 7:30pm Lyric Opera Civic Opera House 20 N.Wacker Dr. Chicago 312-827-5600 <http://LyricOpera.org/Callas>

Sunday, Sept. 8

Women of All Colors Together brunch

Bring a dish to share and a chair. cherylichicago@earthlink.net 2:00pm - 6:00pm Contact organizers for location

Monday, Sept. 9

The Testaments, by Margaret Atwood-

Midnight Release Party Sequel to The Handmaid's Tale answers the questions left open at the end of The Handmaid's Tale...freedom, prison or death? 3:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Second City Divas in Concert

Season of Concern presents Chicago's leading ladies of musical theatre on stage together. SOC is the Chicago theatre community's effort to assist those in the

community impacted by illness, injury or circumstance. \$50 7:00pm The Mercury Theater Chicago 3745 N Southport Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://seasonof-concern.org>

Wed., Sept. 11

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

Women & Children First presents a moderated conversation and audience Q&A followed by a book signing of her new children's book, Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You. Doors 5 p.m. 8:00pm Senn High School Auditorium, 5900 N. Glenwood Ave. Tickets: <http://soniasotomayor.brownpapertickets.com>

Thursday, Sept. 12

These Are Love(d) Letters Book Launch

Party Author Ames Hawkins in conversation with Barrie Jean Borich. Genre-bending visual memoir that begins with the "simple act" of the author receiving twenty letters written by her father to her mother 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Considering Matthew Shepard Concert,

In association with Center on Halsted. "Much more than just one man's story. In some respects, it was everyone's story, a reflection on human travails and heavenly aspirations."-Howard Reich. Public gates open 5 p.m. \$65/\$45. Lawn \$10 7:30pm Ravinia Festival 418 Sheridan Road Highland Park, IL 60035 Tickets: <http://www.ravinia.org/Show-Details/1681/considering-matthew-shepard>

Friday, Sept. 13

TGNC Access to Surgical Services

Holistic Care for TGNC People: Updates on Social, Medical, and Trauma-informed Care Continuum 8:00am - 12:00am Malcolm X

College, 1900 W. Jackson Blvd. <http://events.bizzabo.com/214548>

Livingston Taylor show Top-40 hits from "I Will Be in Love with You" and "I'll Come Running," to "I Can Dream of You" and "Boatman". Professor at Berklee College of Music for 30 years, teaching the craft of stage performance to well-known names. 3:00pm Evanston SPACE 1245 Chicago Ave Evanston, IL 60202 <http://evanston.space.boxoffice-tickets.com>

The Color Purple Celie, an African American woman in the 1900s American South navigates her love for her family, the strife of being in an abusive relationship, and her adoration for her beloved children. Through Nov. 3. \$50 - \$65 8:00pm Drury Lane Theatre 100 Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181 630-530-0111 <http://DruryLaneTheatre.com>

Saturday, Sept. 14

LGBTQ Family Playdate Calling LGBTQ families with kids 8 and under for fun engaging Saturday morning play. Third Floor pre-function area and rooftop deck. 9:30am - 11:30am Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.; <http://community.centeronhalsted.org>

Sunday, Sept. 15

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

Boystown's Leigh Gallery holds closing party

The Boystown business The Leigh Gallery, 3306 N. Halsted St., ended its 15-year run with a closing party on Aug. 23.

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

At the party, she told Windy City Times, "This area needed art so badly. It was the right thing to do and it was where I wanted to be—and it worked out beautifully for the 15 years I've been here. I thank everyone who supported me."

In April, Windy City Times reported that Leigh is retiring and planning on moving to Wisconsin with her wife, Denise Lesiak. Leigh elaborated on plans when talking with WCT at the party: "I'm going on to a writing career. ... I want to write the Great American Novel and I'm going to do some copywriting, just to get back into the [swing of things]."

The Leigh Gallery officially closed Aug. 31.

—Andrew Davis

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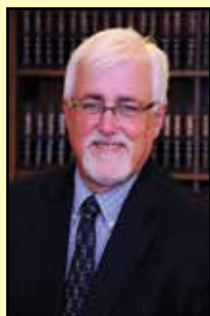


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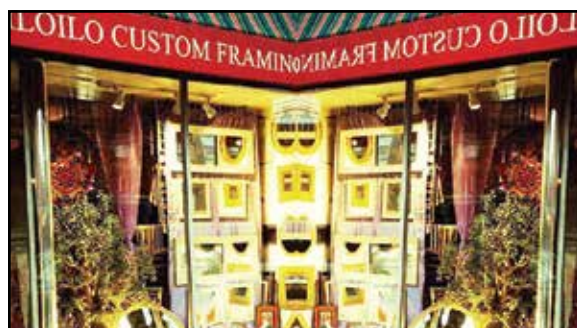


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