

MAY 12, 2026 • VOL XVII • ISSUE #5

GRAB **MAGAZINE**

CHICAGO'S MONTHLY **LGBTQ** PUBLICATION

— THE —
GRABBY
A W A R D S

Sat, May 23
at The Metro

Hosts

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GRAB BARRY

Barry Walters makes us feel “Mighty Real”

By Gregg Shapiro

“**Mighty Real: A History of LGBTQ Music, 1969-2000**” (Viking, 2026), by gay music journalist Barry Walters, is a practically comprehensive overview of the presence, the impact, and the ongoing legacy of music made by and for LGBTQ folks. Part reference book, part memoir, the rainbow musical spectrum covered is particularly notable. Beginning with groundbreaking artists including Laura Nyro and Lou Reed (along with the Velvet Underground), Walters invites us on this revealing musical odyssey touching on a vast multitude of talent including Sylvester, Elton John, The B-52s, Wendy Carlos, k.d. lang, Bob Mould, Indigo Girls, Bronski Beat, and Dusty Springfield, to mention a few. Additionally, Walters makes a point to include allies such as Cyndi Lauper, Grace Jones, Bette Midler, Patti Smith, Cher, Dolly Parton, and Madonna, as well as influential record labels (Motown and Olivia) and genres (disco, punk, post-punk, and hip-hop). Deserving of praise not only for his vast knowledge of the subject but also for the way he connects the dots with several artists, Walters was generous enough to answer a few questions before the book’s publication in May 2026.

Gregg Shapiro: Did the concept for your book “Mighty Real: A History of LGBTQ Music, 1969-2000” begin with one of the essays (before it became a chapter), or was the idea for the book already fully formed from the onset?

Barry Walters: The book’s inspiration is a departed friend of mine, Vito Russo, and his extraordinary, pioneering 1981 book “The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies.” I fell in love with it when I was a graduate school cinema studies student at NYU and starting

my professional career at the “Village Voice.” Through a mutual friend, Steven Harvey – a film critic who wrote in the “Voice” what might’ve been the earliest first-person article written about what it’s like to have AIDS – we met. I sensed that Vito wanted to share with me what he knew and loved while he still could. He’d show me Bette Midler at the Continental Baths, or Babs and Judy dueting on “The Judy Garland Show,” back when footage like that was a coveted, rare treasure. Seen through his eyes, what I’d considered old-hat was fresh and vital. In 1987, he revised “The Celluloid Closet,” and included something I’d written in the Voice about Pee-wee Herman that put him in an LGBTQ context. Vito’s blessing made me feel as though I’d become a serious, legit writer. When he and Steve both died, I felt I had to bear witness because I’d been spared. After I left the “San Francisco Examiner” in 1997, I tracked down Vito’s agent. He loved my idea about doing a popular music answer to “The Celluloid Closet,” but I didn’t know the first thing about writing a book proposal, so I ran out of money and had to plunge myself back into freelance journalism. But when it became feasible to finally write a book, that’s what I returned to.

GS: Would you say that the book grew out of your advantage of



Photo By Kelly Lawrence

being a music journalist, and getting to interview Patrick Haggerty (Lavender Country), Judy Dlugacz (Olivia), and countless others?

BW: “Mighty Real” was indeed facilitated by several decades of interviewing queer and queer-relevant musicians. I dug up old interview tapes I’d recorded, and some I’d never published, like with Liza Minnelli when she worked with the Pet Shop Boys for her 1989 “Results” album. That was for “The Advocate,” and I remember my editor liking the piece, but maybe they didn’t sell enough advertising that month; things like that happen with print journalism.

GS: “Mighty Real” reads like a memoir interwoven with history (i.e., the Bowie, Queen, RHPS, Bronski Beat chapters). Was that how you envisioned the book, or did it evolve?

BW: “Mighty Real” is a history book interwoven with memoir. This book has 60 chapters, and in most of those I discuss several acts, so I cover hundreds of queer and queer-adjacent bands, singers, producers, label owners, you name it. I wrote

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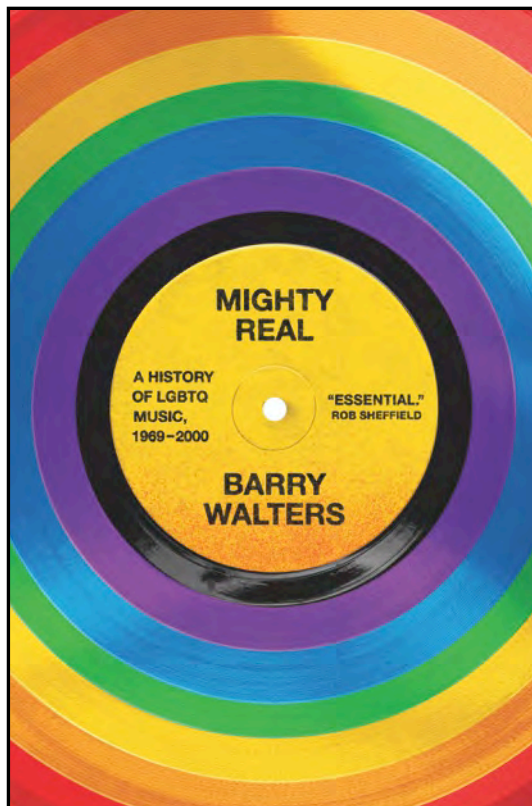
nearly everything for years without using the “I” word at all. But, in one chapter I did write about what it was like reading, as an eleven-year-old, about David Bowie for the first time, and how I learned the word “bisexual” through him. I had to hear whatever that was, so I bought “Space Oddity,” and what followed from Bowie helped me learn about myself. All of us have variations on that kind of story. I realized that if I wrote about mine, the reader might think about theirs. When I chronologically moved through LGBTQ music’s timeline and reached the point where I started writing professionally, I decided to share what it was like, for example, to interview Whitney Houston, and hear her lie about herself, but reveal the truth through her actions. Those chapters gave me the confidence to revisit earlier chapters and sometimes be more autobiographical.

GS: Is one of your goals with “Mighty Real” to inspire readers, especially those new to queer music, to explore artists with whom they might be unfamiliar, for example, Parachute Club, Lavender Country, and Phranc?

BW: Yes. I wrote this book knowing that all kinds of people with all kinds of tastes and familiarity with this music might read it. I tried to select singers and songs that transcend their genre, especially for LGBTQ readers interested in elements of our culture beyond their experience. You might not ordinarily like folk music. You might be, say, a guy who likes synthpop, and you might think you don’t like women who call themselves dykes, but, if you at least look at Phranc’s “I Enjoy Being a Girl” album cover, I practically guarantee that you’ll want to hear what’s inside, and that you’ll find something you enjoy.

GS: Have you heard from, or do you anticipate hearing from, some of the subjects, including Cher, Ray Davies, Patti Smith, Kate Bush, Gary Numan, or Courtney Love?

BW: I hope “Mighty Real” finds its way into the hands of those people, but I didn’t write it for them: I wrote it for us. But before I started “Mighty Real” in earnest, I wrote about Grace Jones just before her memoir was announced. One thing led to another: Grace read the article and wanted me to condense it for her Hollywood Bowl program. I agreed to do it if she’d say hello to me after playing the Fox, because before I



die, I had to meet her. As we approached Grace’s dressing room, my husband and I overheard her manager say that Barry Walters was waiting outside. She thought I was someone else wanting to do an interview, and she responded exactly like you’d expect Grace Jones to react. Then her manager said, “No, no, Barry wrote the article I showed you.” Then we hear, “Oh, I love that article!” She then came out of her dressing room completely naked and holding a towel in front of herself, looking for the assistant who had her clothes. My husband found that person, and then she greeted me. I don’t think even my family and friends have been more enthusiastic over something I’ve written. It was

surreal. Even as we were leaving, she pointed at me and said, “What you have is special, and you must never stop. Ever!”

GS: Because musical theater is an essential component of queer culture for so many, how important was it for you to work musicals, such as “Kinky Boots,” into the book?

BW: An early draft of the book had a line that said something like, “There’s no point in writing about LGBTQ participation and themes in theater because to some degree, it’s all gay.” That’s an exaggeration, but there aren’t multi-billion-dollar corporations keeping theater actors in the closet and making playwrights avoid gay content or forcing them to write about it only covertly, the way there is in rock, pop, R&B, country, hip-hop, and so on. That opposition, combined with queer kids’ hunger to hear themselves represented, is what creates phenomena like Bowie, and why disco had to be invented. So, I decided only to write about theater if it intersects with popular music in a profound way. Is it genuine rock ‘n’ roll, or pop, or R&B? Was it played on the radio? Did we dance to it? That’s the kind of music theater I include in “Mighty Real.” I have a theater degree, but believe the rest of it is a world unto itself, and deserves its own book, not mine.

GS: In Chapter 22, about the B-52s, you wrote that “As of late 2025...like most queer acts [...]” they still haven’t been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Do you think that might change now that an outspoken ally such as Cyndi Lauper has been inducted?

BW: The day after this interview, I received my Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ballot. Melissa Etheridge and Luther Vandross, about whom I write extensively in “Mighty Real,” have been nominated, as they should be, but, once again, not the B-52s. They never have. That goes to show how much antigay sentiment still exists in

the music industry. I don't think our ally Cyndi Lauper, as much as I love and appreciate her, can alone change that. We, as a community, must come together to hold those accountable.

GS: Would you agree that, despite the deep, queer roots of the B-52s and the Village People, it's surprising that their biggest hits, "Love Shack" and "Y.M.C.A.," continue to be played at straight functions, including weddings and political rallies?

BW: No, I don't. So much of what our artists created is so strong and universal that I don't begrudge anyone for enjoying it their own way, even if it was created by and initially for us. I do, however, find it vile that our culture is co-opted and corrupted by those who repress us. I tried to write about every one of my book's subjects in such a way that it's all enticing, no matter if you're L, G, B, T, Q, or even straight. I want metal fans to read the women's music chapter and go "Wow," and hope women's music

fans read about Judas Priest and go "Wow," because both subjects are awe-inspiring. All great art, even if it springs out of pop culture, transcends. Dolly Parton and Queen are perfect examples.

GS: Chapters 15-18 comprise the disco section, concluding with the homophobic and racist 1979 Disco Demolition that took place in Chicago. Is it fair to say that it's karma that shock-jock Steve Dahl has been relegated to the dustbin of history while Chicago became the birthplace of house music, one of the queerest and most enduring styles of dance music?

BW: The only reason we're still talking about Steve Dahl is because he put a face onto musical racism, sexism, and homophobia. Chicago has one of North America's densest LGBTQ populations, so it makes perfect sense that it would inspire both death-to-disco and disco-lives movements. House music, as you know, was created by overlapping communities of gay and Black people just as disco was. The only

white straights initially attracted to it were those eager to attend Black, or gay, or, particularly, Black gay clubs because that was where they knew they could really let loose and shake it.

GS: What would it mean to you if Mighty Real achieved textbook status, finding its way on college syllabi?

BW: All along, that's been my intention and hope. Through my husband, I have two children, both now adults. My son has a girlfriend, and so does his nonbinary sibling, and she's trans. I want all of them to know, as well as their children, if they someday chose to have them, why this music and culture meant so much to us. I want today's kids to know that, too, and learn about what came before them like I did with "The Celluloid Closet." I want them to feel it, as much as they can, like I did when Vito Russo shared with me what he loved. Because if you have a guide who can inspire both empathy and understanding, that's when you truly learn.

KARAOKE

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GRAB A PLANE



Photo courtesy VisitNapaValley.com

Out in the Vines The Charles Napa Valley is elevating the region's thriving LGBTQ wine scene

By Shane Gallagher

The opening of The Charles Napa Valley feels, at first glance, like the arrival of another beautifully restored boutique hotel in California wine country. But step inside the 1906 mansion and it quickly becomes clear that this isn't just about design, history, or even luxury. It's about visibility. And in a region long celebrated for its wine, that visibility is now shining a brighter light on Napa Valley's quietly thriving LGBTQ scene.

For designer Charles Gruwell, who brings more than four decades of global hospitality experience to the project, the hotel represents a continuation of a vision first realized at The Charles Pacific Grove. There, a 1904 Victorian mansion was transformed into an elegant, welcoming retreat that quickly earned a devoted following—particularly among LGBTQ travelers seeking both style and a genuine sense of belonging. In Napa, that

same ethos carries forward, now intersecting with one of the world's most iconic wine destinations.

Gruwell's approach to design is rooted in layering: fabrics, wallpaper, antiques, and artwork sourced from a range of cultures come together to create interiors that feel both timeless and deeply personal. But it's the philosophy behind the aesthetic that resonates most. Alongside partner Ryan MacCarrigan, Gruwell has built The Charles brand around what MacCarrigan calls "authentic inclusivity," supported by the company's proprietary C.H.A.R.L.E.S. Method—a structured approach to hospitality training that ensures every guest, regardless of identity, feels seen and welcomed.

That intention arrives in Napa at a moment when LGBTQ travelers are increasingly seeking destinations that offer more than scenic beauty.

They want connection, community, and spaces where they can fully be themselves. Napa Valley, it turns out, has been quietly cultivating exactly that.

Just a short stroll from the hotel, downtown Napa offers a vibrant starting point. Deuce's Market buzzes with energy, serving as a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. It offers a wide range of hydration and gourmet food stuffs, all sourced locally and globally from artisan brands. It also regularly hosts LGBTQ meetups and social events.

The Q Restaurant & Bar offers a casual dining destination rooted in Southern fare, a lively bar, and genuine hospitality. Nearby, the Napa Valley Wine Train provides a nostalgic, immersive way to experience the region's vineyards—an experience that has increasingly embraced inclusivity in both its marketing and guest programming.

Beyond the town center, a growing number of wineries are helping redefine Napa's cultural landscape. Ashes & Diamonds Winery, known for its mid-century modern aesthetic and progressive ethos, has become a favorite among LGBTQ visitors for its welcoming atmosphere and thoughtfully curated tastings. Meanwhile, Clif Family Winery pairs organic wines with a strong commitment to sustainability and community—values that resonate deeply with many LGBTQ travelers.

There are also organizations like Out in the Vineyard, whose gatherings (ranging from vineyard parties to winemaker dinners) have helped transform Napa into a destination where LGBTQ culture and wine culture intersect in meaningful ways.

While Napa may not yet have the overtly queer branding of



destinations like Palm Springs or Provincetown, its appeal lies in something subtler: a sense that LGBTQ visitors are not just accommodated, but organically woven into the fabric of the experience.

The arrival of The Charles Napa Valley amplifies that momentum. By

situating an explicitly LGBTQ-friendly hotel in the heart of downtown, Gruwell and MacCarrigan are not only providing a place to stay; they're creating a hub. The hotel's daily social hour, featuring local wine and cheese, echoes the successful formula of its Pacific Grove predecessor while offering guests an easy, convivial way to connect.

It's a small detail, but one that speaks volumes. In a region where experiences often revolve around private tastings and curated itineraries, The Charles introduces a communal element that feels distinctly queer: open, social, and rooted in shared experience.

This isn't about reinventing Napa Valley, but about revealing a dimension that has long existed just beneath the surface. Yes, it remains a place of world-class vintages, Michelin-starred dining, and postcard-perfect landscapes. But increasingly, it is also a place where LGBTQ travelers can arrive not as outsiders, but as part of the story.

For more information, go to www.visitnapavalley.com and www.thecharlesnapavalley.com



GRAB A CROWN



Crowning Beauty

Lo Colby is the new Miss International Queen – USA 2026

By Jamie Booth

Lo Colby, a proud Hawaii-born Thai woman, was crowned Miss International Queen – USA 2026 in a dazzling finale held last month at Harrah’s Resort in Atlantic City. Celebrating the resilience, talent, and beauty of transgender women from across the nation, the competition culminated in a powerful moment as Colby’s extraordinary journey captivated both judges and audience, earning her the coveted title.

A technology professional, accomplished performer, and beauty and fashion creator with a strong following on Instagram and TikTok, Colby brings a dynamic blend of industry expertise and creative artistry to her reign. She plans to use her platform to champion transgender economic empowerment, with a focus on closing the wage gap through education, career access, and entrepreneurship.

Next, Colby will represent the United States at Miss International Queen 2026 in Thailand, where she hopes to shine not only through her

presentation, but through the kindness, confidence, and positivity she brings to the global stage.

We spoke with Colby from her home in Los Angeles.

Jamie Booth: What was going through your mind in the exact moment your name was announced as Miss International Queen USA 2026?

Lo Colby: I was honestly in a state of disbelief. It felt like time stopped for a moment and every emotion rushed in all at once. My mind was moving so fast that my emotions couldn’t quite catch up. It wasn’t until I embraced Zhane’ Dawlings that everything started to feel real. That moment grounded me and allowed me to truly take in what had just happened.

JB: You described the experience as a “once-in-a-lifetime feeling”. How has that moment continued to resonate with you in the days since your win?

LC: That moment was pure joy, and I feel incredibly lucky to have

experienced it. In the days since, I’ve had time to reflect on what the title truly represents. Winning Miss International Queen USA reminded me that everything I’ve worked toward is part of something bigger than myself. I now carry the responsibility of representing a community that I’m deeply proud to be part of, and that realization has made the moment even more meaningful.

JB: You formed a close bond with first runner-up Zhane’ Dawlingz during the competition. How did that friendship shape your overall experience?

LC: The bond I formed with Zhane’ Dawlings and the rest of the contestants was truly special. Being surrounded by such talented and supportive women allowed me to break down any walls I may have had and simply be myself. They embraced my quirky personality and celebrated it, which gave me the freedom to really let my authenticity shine on stage. That sense of sisterhood made the entire



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experience even more meaningful.

JB: As someone who balances a career in technology with performance and fashion, how have these different facets of your life prepared you for this title?

LC: Each part of my life has taught me something valuable. My career in technology has taught me discipline, strategy, and how to navigate professional spaces with confidence. Performance and fashion have taught me creativity, storytelling, and how to connect with people. Preparing for the competition required intense training. I spent countless hours perfecting my runway, interviews, and stage presence so that when I stepped on stage, I could perform without overthinking. Holding this title is the biggest responsibility I've ever had, and I know the work is only just beginning. I want to use this platform to inspire other trans women to pursue their dreams and show the world just how incredible our community truly is.

JB: This competition celebrates resilience and empowerment. What part of your personal journey do you feel most defined your path to the crown?

LC: One of the most defining parts of my journey has been learning to fully embrace my authenticity. Like many transgender people, there were moments in my life where I questioned whether I would be accepted or whether certain opportunities would ever be available to me. But I realized that my authenticity is actually my greatest strength. The moment I stopped trying to fit into expectations and started fully embracing who I am was the moment I stepped into my power. That mindset carried me all the way to this crown.

JB: You've spoken about advocating for transgender economic empowerment. What specific changes or initiatives would you like to see implemented?

LC: One of my main goals is to support initiatives that expand career access and professional development for transgender individuals. This includes mentorship programs, career training

opportunities, and partnerships between LGBTQ + organizations and companies that are committed to inclusive hiring practices. I also believe workplace education is incredibly important. Many organizations want to be supportive but don't always know where to start. By building stronger pathways into professional spaces, we can help ensure transgender people have the same opportunities to succeed and thrive in their careers.

JB: Can you share a moment in your professional life where you felt those barriers and how you pushed through them?

LC: Early in my transition, I experienced situations where my professional qualifications were overshadowed by confusion about my gender identity. I remember going into interviews where the focus shifted away from my experience and toward questions about my presentation as I hadn't updated my legal documents. What helped me push through was focusing on my work and continuing to build my skills and expertise. I made a commitment to let my professionalism, knowledge, and results speak for itself.

JB: Representing the United States in Thailand is a full-circle moment for you as a Hawaii-born Thai woman. What does it mean to bring both of those identities to the global stage?

LC: It's incredibly meaningful to represent both parts of my heritage on the international stage. Growing up in Hawaii, I was surrounded by a culture that values family, respect, and community. My Thai heritage connects me to the country where Miss International Queen is held. I have never been to Thailand, nor met my family there so it feels like a huge missing part of my life will finally become whole. Being able to bring both identities with me to Thailand feels like a full-circle moment.

JB: You mentioned bringing the "aloha spirit" to the international competition. How do you plan to translate that into your presence



and platform?

LC: The aloha spirit is about kindness, humility, and genuine connection. When I compete at Miss International Queen, I want people to feel that warmth in how I carry myself and how I connect with others. If I can represent Hawaii through compassion, authenticity, and positivity, then I know I've truly brought the aloha spirit to the global stage.

JB: As you begin preparations for Miss International Queen 2026, what areas are you most focused on developing, both personally and competitively?

LC: Competitively, I'm continuing to refine my runway presentation, interview skills, and stage performance so I can represent the United States with confidence. Personally, I'm also focusing on deepening my platform work and strengthening my advocacy efforts around economic empowerment for transgender women. Competing at Miss International Queen is about more than performance. It's about representing your country, your values, and your community. I want to make sure I step onto that stage as the most prepared and authentic version of myself.

For more information on Lo Colby, follow Miss International Queen – USA on Facebook and on Instagram @MissInternationalQueenUSA.



photo by Jonathan Hernandez



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FASHIONBAR *Photos By Anthony Meade*
THE SHOWS ★
THE TRANS MEDIA FASHION SHOW





INTERNATIONAL GRABBY AWARDS- EUROPE
April 25,2026
Torremolinos,
Spain
Photos Courtesy GRABBYS Europe





INTERNATIONAL GRABBY AWARDS- EUROPE April 25,2026
Torremolinos,
Spain
Photos Courtesy GRABBYS Europe



I M L W E E K



THURS, MAY 21, 4PM-4AM
BOYZ NIGHT IML WEEKEND EDITION
GUYS UNDER 25 GET IN FREE

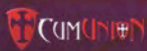
THURS, MAY 21, 8PM-2AM
ROUGH TRADE/CUMUNION
THE NOTORIOUS FISTING EVENT WITH THE MEN OF M.A.F.I.A.
FEAT **DJ HARRY CROSS**

FRI, MAY 22, 10PM-6AM
WRECK'D PRESENTED BY SECOND RING PARTIES
WITH XXX HOSTS: **DAMIEN ROUX, OZ DADDY**
& **JORDI MASSIVE** & FEAT **DJ HARRY CROSS**

SAT, MAY 23, 1PM-6PM
WET & WILD THE IML BEARS PLAY PARTY
FEAT **DJ JESSE MERCADO**

5
EST

WITH OUR PARTNERS



CARNAL+

STEAMWORKS BATHS 3246 N HALSTED

END 2026



SAT, MAY 23, 10PM-6AM
SKIN XXX THE IML PLAY EVENT
WITH CARNAL MEDIA EXCLUSIVE XXX HOSTS:
Q MOORE, ZANDER WOODZ, & ZAC STEELE
& FEAT DJ J-DADDY



SUN, MAY 24, 2PM-8PM
SUNDAY SERVICE IML EDITION
FEAT DJ JANKY

SUN, MAY 24, 10PM-4AM
CARNAL MEDIA EXCLUSIVES EVENT
WITH XXX HOSTS: **ADAM SNOW, & SERG SHEPARD**
& FEAT DJ J-DADDY

MON, MAY 25, 6PM-2AM
MEMORIAL DAY RELAX & RECOVER WITH DJ WOLFY!



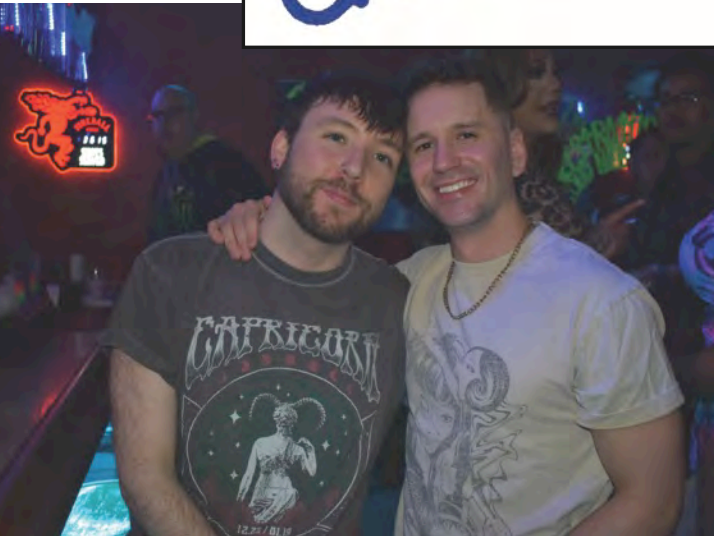
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 Steamworks Chicago  @SteamworksCHI

CHICAGO 416.925.1571 **STEAMWORKSBATHS.COM**



Charlie's



Photos By Anthony Meade

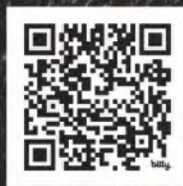
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SATURDAY
MAY 23, 2026



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Presented by:

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'PORN STARS'

SAT, MAY 23

**AT THE METRO
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Touche



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OUT OF TOWNERS

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MAY 22



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7-10PM



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GUEST DANCERS
MATT COVEN & OZ DADDY
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ALL DAY BEER BUST

\$2.50 DRAGHTS
\$2 SODAS

MEMORIAL DAY COOKOUT
3-6PM FRESH OFF THE GRILL EATS

MON MAY 25

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+ RAY DALTON
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GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials;

MONDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. **Cell Block:** Open 1pm-2am. **Charlies:** Half off Hennessy and Patron 7pm - 11pm ABC Bingo, 11pm Charlie's Live. **Hydrate:** Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. **Shakers on Clark:** Comedy Night \$1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, \$5 Tecate Tallboys, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend. 5/25 Beer Bust Cook Out 3-6pm Survivor Party.

TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 1pm-2am. **Charlie's:** \$4 You Call It's 5pm - 9pm, 7pm - 11pm BS Karaoke, 11pm Baddies Block Party. **Hydrate:** Tat Tuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 4-6pm \$8 WINE, \$9 APPS, \$10 Martinis. Live Instrumentalists. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. **Shakers on Clark:** \$3 Domestic Beers. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. **Steamworks:** Every Tuesday 4 pm - 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi, 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock.

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **Cell Block:** Open 1pm-2am. **Charlie's:** \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 7pm - 11pm SCCDA Country Dancing, 11pm Boys and Booze. **Jackhammer:** \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 4-6pm \$8 WINE, \$9 APPS, \$10 Martinis. Live Broadway Vocalists. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$4 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Stoli Cocktails (All Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. **Shakers on Clark:** Karaoke Night \$1 Off Long Islands. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Dua & Ariana last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. **The Sofo Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$5 Stoli Cocktails (All Flavors), \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm-4am Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check, 5/20 Best of Chicago Welcome Party Hosted by MCL2026 Joey Metler.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. **Cell Block:** Open 1pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm Mother Rebirth, 10pm - Power up Reloaded. 2nd Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Scissor Sisters. 4th Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Vinyl. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 4-6pm \$8 WINE, \$9 APPS, \$10 Martinis. Live Ballet. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks, Karaoke 10pm-1am. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, "Let's Go! Thursday" Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am. In Main Bar: Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month, other Thursdays are "Let's Go! Latin" or "All Things K-Pop. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Stoli Mules (All Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music & Porn By Bijou Video. 5/21 Bear Corruption.

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 1pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st Friday of the Month 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Charlie's Presents. 2nd Friday: 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Glow Up. 3rd Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Thirst Trap. 4th Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars 11pm Haus of Charlie's. **Jackhammer:** \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** All Day Brunch All Drag, Brunch Seating Times 11am and 1:30PM. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **Meeting House Tavern:** HAPPY HOUR (5-8 PM): \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 Tito's Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR (3-6 PM): \$4 Signature Margaritas, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. 5/15 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA. 5/22 Ray Dalton Presents Forplay. 5/29 Porn Poker Party. 6/5 Man'Nipple'ate nipple fetish play night, 6/12 FRIDAY FUNDER benefit for Pride Chicago.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 12pm-3am. **Charlie's:** 7pm - 11pm SCCDA Country Dancing, 11pm Under the boots tonight. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots, \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** All Day Brunch All Drag, Brunch Seating Times 11am and 1:30PM. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** HAPPY HOUR (2-5 PM): \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$8 WYNK THC, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Post-Brunch SaturGay Fun 1pm-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR: (12-3 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 5am. 5/16 GEAR night with BLUF/Chicago IML Send Off Party for MCL2026 Joey. BNC 6pm. 5/23 SUBMIT to yo9ur dasrk fantasies 10pm, CWB 4pm, 5/30 Pride Month Kick off & Full Moon Party. 6/6 BEAR NIGHT Midnight Pizza Panic, 6/13 DUNGEON MASTER NIGHT S&M Demo at Midnight, CWB 5pm.

SUNDAY FUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$6 Chicago Handshakes, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 12pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st and 3rd Sunday of the Month 5pm - 7pm Queeriod, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo, y Perreo. 2nd Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Drag U 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. 4th Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Boyfriend Material, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Jackhammer:** HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** All Day Brunch All Drag, Brunch Seating Times 11am and 1:30PM. Sunday Tea Dance DJ Janky and Friends 4pm-10pm \$9 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm. **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Tito's Mules, and \$1 off all Revolution beers. **Sidetrack:** Open at Noon, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR (1-3 PM): \$3 House Shots, FREE Hotdogs (while supplies last) ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust \$2 Draughts & Sodas Clubroom opens 6pm Movie Night 7pm. 5/24 Super Ripe hot Go-Go Dudes & DJ Harry T.

The Next Issue of GRAB hits the streets and online
Tuesday June 16th, 2026 (Pride Issue)

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GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of May 2026



Visit nexusradio.fm

	Artist	Title
1	San Holo	I Wanna Show You Ft. Rj Pasin x Alice Aera
2	Kshmr x Jason Ross x Brianna Grace	Ultra Love
3	Odium	When The Lights Go Low (Radio Edit)
4	Honeyluv x Muni Long	Don't Stop
5	Kastra & Josh Rubin	Wait
6	Harry Styles	Aperture
7	Felix Jaehn x Cascada	Boy You Turn Me
8	John Summit x The Chainsmokers x Ilsey	All The Time
9	Seven Lions & Brianna Grace	Free
10	DJ Pauly D	Feel It
11	Le Youth x Angrybaby x Ellee Duke	To Be Honest
12	Alesso & Pendulum	Fade
13	Sébastien Tellier	Thrill Of The Night Ft. Slayyyter X Nile Rodgers
14	The Archer & Romy Dya	Never Hurt Me (Radio Mix)
15	Josh Baker x Silver Bumpa x Paige Cavell	Feel This Way (Radio Edit)
16	Fisher x Tones And I	Favour
17	Danny L Harle & Dua Lipa	Two Hearts
18	Bebe Rexha	New Religion
19	Above & Beyond And Zoe Johnston	Carry Me Home
20	Notd & Libby Whitehouse	Found Your Love
21	Armand Van Helden x Mark Knight x D. Ramirez	You
22	SLANDER ft. John Martin	Do You Feel Loved
23	Afrojack x Sia x David Guetta	Awake Tonight
24	Fisher	Rain Radio (Edit)
25	Kygo ft. Khalid & Gryffin	Save My Love
26	Twinsick & Emyrson Flora	One Touch
27	Tritonal x Harlee	Walk Away
28	Adriatique x Elderbrook	Lost In The Woods
29	Lavern	In My Head
30	Jennifer Lopez & David Guetta	Save Me Tonight

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GRAB ROGER

Ways to Avoid the High Cost of Probate

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.



Q: I have been reading some estate planning books and they all suggest avoiding probate. I have a will that leaves everything to my partner but I worry that my assets will be tied up in Probate Court forever. Should I put his name on everything now to avoid that problem?

A: Some people have become concerned about avoiding probate at all costs. But you don't need to take extreme steps to avoid probate such as divesting yourself of direct ownership of all your property. Preserving control over your finances and property while alive and reducing the expense and complexity involved in transferring your property upon death should be the primary goal of your estate plan.

Probate is the legal process which begins at death when all your earthly possessions – from your home, car and investments down to

your wrist watch – come under the control of the local probate court. The court's job is to make sure all debts and death taxes are paid and that your directions as set forth in your will are carried out. If you have no will, the law in Illinois will step in and write one for you, but everything still goes through the probate process.

Although probate should only take six months, more often than not it will go for at least a year and often for several years. Before the court process turns over your property to your heirs and loved ones it will extract five to 10 percent of its value in court costs and legal fees.

Joint Tenancy. With joint tenancy two or more people equally own an asset whether it is a car, house or bank account (actually any property can be owned in joint tenancy). After the death of one joint tenant, the remaining joint tenant will continue to own the entire property.

One drawback is that if you create a joint tenancy bank account by putting your lover's name on the account, he or she can take all the money and spend it for whatever they want. You must have complete confidence in the integrity and good faith of the person you are adding to your account. Try adding your partner's name to one account at a time and see how it goes.

Name a Beneficiary. If you name someone other than your estate as beneficiary of your life insurance, IRAs and employee benefits – such as 401(k) and pension and profit-sharing plans – that

asset won't be subject to probate. And you keep complete control while you are alive.

Always verify who the named beneficiaries are for each asset that does not pass through a will. Individuals will often name someone other than their partners as beneficiaries on employee benefits such as life insurance or 401(k) plans. It is extremely common for clients simply to forget that a previous unmarried partner or parent is still named on an IRA or life insurance policy.

Totten Trusts. A Totten Trust is simply the name for a kind of bank account where one person deposits money in his or her name as trustee for another. The depositor reserves the power to withdraw all or part of the money at any time. Upon the death of the depositor, the money in the bank account is paid to the named beneficiary of the trust, which could be the surviving lover, friends or family members. And you keep complete control while you are alive.

Lifetime Gifts. Property you give away during your lifetime can't come under the probate court's control. Rather than waiting for death for the transfer of your assets, make gifts while alive so that you can see your life partner, friends family members or charities enjoy the benefit of your gifts. One drawback is that you may have to pay gift taxes.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at RVMLawyer@aol.com. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH

You Are Not Alone



It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
4. Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing social connections/situations.
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

Text or call 988 or chat 988lifeline.org, or reach out to a mental health professional.

988
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LIFELINE

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GRAB HOLLY

An NDA for ChatCafe

By Holly Maholm

A start-up chain of coffee shops had made Cindy, Xandra and me an offer to buy Donut Time; their intent being to permit our simple little establishment to be “transitioned” (something the three of us understood better than anyone in Silicon Valley) into a completely new and unique “retail format” for the sale of coffee/donuts. Eric (representative of the start-up) was giving us a tour of the new format under construction in a nearby city, and he was about to take us into the kitchen to show us how they produce their donuts. He spoke.

“I’m going to take the three of you into the back, but since you’re not an owner or employee, I have to ask you to first sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement. We’ve received huge investments from billionaires in Silicon Valley, and they don’t do anything without getting an NDA first. So please read and sign this.” (He handed each of us a three-page legal document printed in some of the smallest type I – a lawyer for 30 years – had ever seen.)

I immediately saw on the first page the name of the start-up, which was “ChatCafe.” Eric explained. “Everything we do here is based on AI. And the ‘value proposition’ we promise to our stockholders is that our first priority is the collection and

preservation of valuable Intellectual Property. Which means: NDAs are vital to our business, even more so than the recipes for our donuts.”

We signed the NDAs and handed them back to Eric. He explained, “OK, this is where we have the ovens and fryers we use to produce the donuts. Now, we don’t actually mix the flour, eggs, sugar and other ingredients here. No. There’s a commercial kitchen two hours from here where we pay them to do that. Every morning a truck will arrive here with that day’s donuts in big trays, and all we do is slide them into the oven to do the baking.”

Xandra interjected, “So you don’t need an actual chef or baker?” Eric responded, “No, we just hire a high school student and train them for a couple of hours, and they can bake everything we sell.” (An expression of sadness and loss came across Xandra’s face.)

Eric went on. “But don’t think we don’t care what goes into our donuts! No, our process for choosing the ingredients is totally ‘data driven.’ We’ve found that the more sugar we put in the icing or filling, the better our sales for that item. So we are always pushing the upper limit of how much sugar we can add.” (He smiled with evident pride.)

Eric continued. “Everything we do here is designed to facilitate the collection of data. You’ve seen how we use Facial Recognition Software (‘FRS’) and license plate readers, but there’s much more. Our AI compiles an ‘avatar’ of each customer, and that includes recording when that person visits, how long they stay, and who they interact with – you know, who their friends and acquaintances are. And here’s the genius of this app: When our customer opens his laptop and logs on to our Wi-Fi, we keep a record of what sites he visits, who he communicates with, and – if he goes on any shopping websites – what ads we can target him with.

“Plus, as long as he’s logged on, we push ads to him every 15 minutes, and we record his responses. We use FRS to sync-up his visible facial reactions to the ads we are pushing. It might



be hard to believe, but our business model would permit us to give away all our coffee and donuts for free, and we would still make a profit from data collection!”

He drew closer and lowered his voice. “Here’s the truth. Our whole purpose here is to justify the use of AI. Our investors have sunk so many billions of dollars into AI that we have to come up with ways to prove that investment has value. Our true ‘profit motive’ here is to do all we can to keep our stock price from crashing.”

Eric looked around to be sure no trainee or other person was near. “This is super-secret,” he resumed, “but here’s the most important reason for us using FRS. You see, all the employees here wear cameras and microphones at all times, and all that digital video coverage is reviewed by AI. We’re strictly non-union here, so if our AI catches any employee talking about a union or how ChatCafe is exploiting the workers, we just quietly let that person go. No one knows about our 24/7 video surveillance, and no one’s the wiser about why that employee got fired.”

A look of quiet admiration came over Eric’s face as he concluded, “Our billionaire owners – and our all-knowing AI – have thought of everything.”

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly’s book *Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns* (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly’s adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at www.hollymaholm.com.

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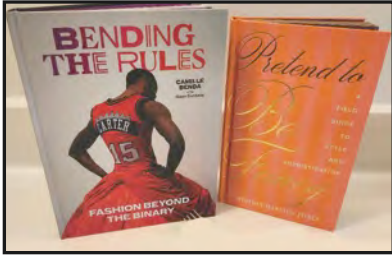


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GRAB A BOOK

"Books about Fashion and Style" by various authors c.2026, various publishers \$19.95 - \$29.95 various page counts



Don't look now, but your legs are showing.

It's okay, it's almost summertime and you want to show both skin and style. So how about a few hints for looking your best? Check out these great books and get stylin'.

Who says there are rules about fashion? Wearing white before Memorial Day is okay; socks with sandals... not so much? Fine, but in "Bending the Rules: Fashion Beyond the Binary" by Camille Benda with Gwyn Conaway (Princeton Architectural Press, \$29.95), you'll see that any guidelines that hint about gendering clothing are oh-so-last century. Along with lively, fun narrative, there are lots of photos in this book, ads for how clothing used to be worn along male-female lines, and short biographies of some of today's best designers. Here, you can check out prom dresses from the 1950s and new haute couture gowns practically right off the runway – and see how one parallels with the other. The timeline reaches back centuries, so you get a nice idea of where certain kinds of clothing originated and how it's relevant today – making what's inside here perfect for browsing.

Pick up this book, in fact, and you might also pick up some ideas for filling your closet and creating your very own style.

The fashion you wear on your body isn't all you'll find in "Pretend to Be Fancy: A Field Guide to Style and Sophistication" by Whitney Marston Pierce (Chronicle Books, \$19.95). You'll also read about other nice things you can have.

So you're not a pinky-in-the-air kind of person, whatever. You can easily hang with those who are, once you read and absorb this book.

Tongue-tied at fancy soirees? Not anymore, there are tips for talking here. What do you know about canapes, hors d'oeuvres, and the kind of foods you don't get at the corner c-store? How do you make a charcuterie that

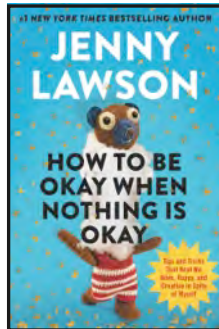
everyone will Ooooooh over? And how do you give a gift for the person whose taste seems scads better than yours? That's all in here, along with what to drink, how to dress, and how to make every corner of your home look like something right out of a high-end magazine.

Will this book make you chic? Possibly, yes. Will it help you get invited to all the best parties? Maybe, but for sure, it'll make you laugh, it'll make you feel fabulous, look fabulous, and live your best life with the surroundings you deserve. Out May 5, so put it on your list.

But let's say you need more ideas. You have questions or thorny issues with fashion that you really need answering. That's when you ask for a talented fashionista at your local bookstore or library. That knowledgeable someone knows books and knows how to get what you need to be your most dazzling, best-dressed, finest-appointed self in a home you can be proud of, with comfortable furniture that will be the envy of everyone who sees it.

In the meantime, grab the above titles, because these books got legs.

"How to Be Okay When Nothing is Okay" by Jenny Lawson c.2026, Penguin Life \$29.00 288 pages



So what are you gonna do next? You can't decide. There are so many choices and you know you're going to pick the wrong one. That's the problem, you never do anything right and you don't know what to do next. So here: take a deep breath, take another, read "How to Be Okay When Nothing is Okay" by Jenny Lawson, and hit "reset."

As someone who's always been open about her mental health issues, depression, ADHD and anxiety, Jenny Lawson has purposefully collected bits of advice to help her keep her head and her heart on-track throughout her adult life. That random guidance has gotten her through a lot of days, and she shares it in this book.

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

First of all, remember that we're all weird in one way or another. You're not alone.

Forget people who rain on your parade; if there's something you enjoy doing and it's not hurting anyone, just do it, even if it's "childish." Know that learning to love your flaws is something magical, and humorously admitting them can be truly priceless.

Keep a list of things that make you happy. Add to it, revise it, but keep it close; if you don't know where to start, look at Lawson's list for ideas.

Remember that everybody deserves applause, and that includes you.

Make a playlist of the music that makes you want to dance – and then dance. Keep in mind that "Depression lies" and that you are always and forever "worthwhile." Give yourself permission to take solitary breaks now and then. If you're feeling overwhelmed, do something that's easy to accomplish. Teach others to help you by helping yourself. Revive your creativity by trying something new.

Never be afraid to ask for help, even if it's just having someone listen awhile. Prioritize sleep. Explore using color noises to help you focus or chill.

And know that rules are often optional, so just be you.

We've all had them: a whole week's worth of One of Those Days, where everything turns south and you just want to go to bed for life. You need a reset. That's when you need "How to Be Okay When Nothing is Okay."

From comfort and self-care to mood-boosts to confidence generators, author Jenny Lawson offers advice for anyone with any kind of mindset. Doubts are sent packing with this book. Self-flagellation can turn into a pat on the back here. And the theme, over and over, is that you're not alone and that you can find help – which is underscored, even if you already know it to your core. Lawson hammers it home, along with all the right things to say, plus well-placed profanity, camaraderie, and plenty of her signature humor.

This book is the perfect size to tuck in your desk drawer, your lunchbox, briefcase, or glove box. It's helpful, funny, and easily browse-able, so if your mental health isn't so healthy today, find "How to Be Okay When Nothing is Okay." Look over your TBR pile, and make it next.

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2026 SEASON, KICKING OFF
MAY 23-24 WITH THE 23RD
ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY**

RANDOLPH
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The Randolph street Market Festival returns to Chicago's West Loop for the launch of its 2026 season with the 23rd Annual Garden Party Market on Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24, from 10 AM to 5 PM at 1341 W Randolph St. This indoor-outdoor treasure hunt will feature more than 200 dealers, delicious global eats, and nonstop live entertainment, rain or shine..

Since 2003, Randolph Street Market has been recognized as one of the country's premier urban antique and vintage shopping destinations. Dealers from across the nation will showcase a curated mix of art, antiques, indie fashion, vinyl, estate jewelry, decorative objects, and global goods, offering something for collectors, designers, and casual shoppers alike.

"We've always believed in creating a space where people can discover something unexpected, connect with local creatives, and just have fun," says **Sally Schwartz**, founder of Randolph Street Market. "It's more than a market, it's a celebration of style, community, and Chicago's incredible spirit."

Tickets are available now at randolphstreetmarket.com.

**GRABBY AWARDS AND
EVENTS THURSDAY MAY 21-
SATURDAY MAY 23, 2026**

THE
GRABBY
AWARDS

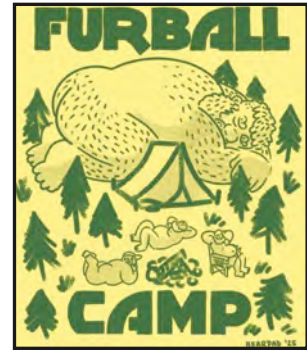
The 27th Annual Grabby Awards (The Gay Porn Awards) hosted by **ChiChi-LaRue, Sister Roma Adam Snow and Sean Xavier** will take place Saturday May 23rd at the Metro Theater, 3730 N Clark Street in Chicago. Doors open at 6pm show starts at 7pm tickets Available online at grabbyAwards.com.

Thursday May 21st kicks off Grabby weekend with Legendary DJ Chi-Chi LaRue's Skin Trade Party at Hydrate Nightclub 3458 N. Halsted Party Starts at 9pm \$10 Cover.

Friday Night May 22nd Meet the Men of Carnal+ at Lark 3441 N. Halsted 9-11pm No Cover.

Saturday Night May 23rd GRABBY After Party bringing porn stars & go-go dancers to Charlies Chicago 3726 N Broadway, Party starts at 10pm \$10 Cover if tickets are purchased online at grabbyawards.com or \$15 at the door.

**@ THE DUNES June 12-14,
2026 Saugatuck, MI**



Furball, the global bear dance party brand produced by **Joe Fiore**, brings its signature energy to The Dunes Resort for Furball Camp—a three-day destination weekend celebrating the bear community at one of the Midwest's most iconic LGBTQ+ playgrounds. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, The Dunes offers sprawling outdoor spaces, multiple bars, poolside action, and nonstop nightlife just minutes from Lake Michigan.

Known for its high-energy DJs, inclusive vibe, and body-positive crowd, Furball has become a global staple of queer nightlife, with standout events including its legendary Chicago IML and Market Days parties.

Bears, cubs, and admirers alike come together for a weekend where community takes center stage—and the vibe doesn't let up.

Expect sun-drenched poolside hangs, packed late-night dance floors—including an underwear + gear party—cabaret performances, and the legendary Sunday Tea Dance. Chicago DJs Tim Arnold and Jesse Mercado soundtrack the weekend, delivering high-energy sets that keep things moving from day into night.

Beefyboy Underwear will host a pop-up shop (in case you need a late-night jock or crop top), and Furball will feature a limited-edition weekend tee designed by acclaimed San Francisco artist Bearpad.

For Reservations, Tickets or more information visit www.dunesresort.com

**The Next Issue of GRAB hits the
streets and online**

**Tuesday June 16, 2026
(Pride Parade Issue)**

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SUNDAY **JUNE 7**

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Touche'

PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER NAMED AS “OUT FRONT” GROUP FOR 2026 CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE



PRIDEChicago, the all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization behind the iconic Chicago Pride Parade, is proud to announce the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) as the “Out Front” community group for the 2026 Chicago Pride Parade.

Positioned at the head of the June 28th procession, the PRCC is being recognized for its tireless work in Chicago’s Humboldt Park neighborhood to dismantle homophobia and transphobia while integrating LGBTQ+ advocacy into the core of public health and housing justice.

“The Puerto Rican Cultural Center embodies the spirit of our 2026 theme, Free to Be Proud,” said Terra Campell, Director of Community Engagement for PRIDEChicago. “Through their life-saving work at El Rescate and Vida/SIDA, they have proven that freedom is only real when it includes a safe place to sleep, culturally relevant healthcare, and a community that affirms your right to exist authentically.”

For decades, the PRCC has been a cornerstone of Chicago’s grassroots activism. Their LGBTQ+ initiatives are national models for intersectional care, most notably El Rescate Transitional Living, which provides essential housing for homeless LGBTQ+ and HIV+ youth. Through their Vida/SIDA program, the PRCC delivers culturally competent health and prevention services, ensuring that LGBTQ+ equity remains a central pillar of the broader Puerto Rican and Latine communities.

“This recognition is especially meaningful as our Puerto Rican People’s Day Parade on June 13, 2026, carries the theme Celebrando Orgullo Boricua: Puerto Rican Gay Pride, Aquí y Allá,” said **Juan M. Calderon**, Deputy Executive Director for the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. “We are proud to celebrate the diversity and strength of our community, including leaders such as Miguel Méndez Pérez, the first openly gay Mayor of Isabela, Puerto Rico,

and Jessie Fuentes, 26th Ward Alderperson, an openly lesbian leader making an important impact in our community.”

“We receive this honor with gratitude and reaffirm our commitment to uplifting the full diversity of our people,” Calderon added.

The 55th annual Chicago Pride Parade steps off at 11 a.m. (CST) on Sunday, June 28, 2026, beginning at the corner of Grace and Broadway and traveling through the landmark Northalsted neighborhood.

This year’s theme, “Free to Be Proud,” honors the hard-won progress achieved by generations before us while recognizing that freedom is not equally experienced by all—and must be continually protected and expanded.

Get Involved To march, volunteer, or support the parade’s mission of sustainability and advocacy, visit pridechicago.org.

STAR-STUDED LINEUP ANNOUNCED FOR 25TH ANNUAL CHICAGO PRIDEFEST June 20 AND 21



The Northalsted Business Alliance has officially unveiled the highly anticipated entertainment lineup for the 25th annual Chicago Pride Fest, set to transform the city’s historic LGBTQ+ neighborhood on June 20 and 21, 2026.

Taking place on Halsted Street between Addison and Grace, the two-day street festival promises a vibrant weekend of advocacy and celebration, anchored by a diverse roster of musical acts and performers.

A Powerhouse Musical Lineup The milestone 25th anniversary celebration will feature a headline stage packed with fan-favorite artists, including: **Durand Bernarr, G Flip, Alex Chapman + Zoe Gitter** present: **GAG, Willa Ford, and MNEK**.

Attendees can also look forward to performances by Caroline Kingsbury, Flyana Boss, Nini Coco, Miz Cracker, Anthony Rapp, and Wic Whitney. Additionally, the festival will feature “Black Girl Magic,” a special

event hosted by The Vixen, featuring performances by Yvie Oddly and Heidi N Closet.

More Than a Festival

Beyond the three stages of live music, the festival will feature drag artists, dance exhibitions, guest speakers, and over 150 local art, merchandise, and service vendors. The festival runs from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. both days.

For festival organizers, this year’s event carries a weight of profound significance.

“Chicago Pride Fest is a celebration of who we are and a reminder of why visibility still matters,” said **Mark Liberson**, Festival Chairperson. “While we honor the progress our community has fought for over the years, Pride remains as vital as ever. Across the country, we see a rise in legislation rooted in prejudice and harmful rhetoric, particularly impacting transgender individuals and BIPOC members of our community. This moment calls for unity, visibility, and continued advocacy, and Northalsted is proud to be the home of that spirit.”

Community Impact

Chicago Pride Fest is organized by the Northalsted Business Alliance and serves as a major lead-up to the 55th annual Chicago Pride Parade, which is scheduled for Sunday, June 28, and organized by PRIDEChicago.

A \$20 suggested donation is requested for festival entry. These funds are used to pay performers and festival staff, and to support essential local non-profits and community programs. Notably, proceeds help maintain the landmark Chicago Pride Crosswalks—a series of 14 rainbow-paved intersections that currently stand as the longest installation of its kind in the world.

Organizers noted that the complete daily schedule for the festival will be released in the coming weeks.

To learn more about Chicago Pride Fest, visit northalsted.com.

Mark your calendars
Chicago Pride Parade Sunday
June 28th 11am
PRIDEChicago.org

CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 | 11AM



FREE ^{TO} BE PROUD

PRIDE CHICAGO 2026



Wear Your Pride with the
official Chicago Pride Parade T-Shirt

PRIDE
CHICAGO
★★★★



Celebrate Pride throughout Illinois!
The Pride Calendar on PRIDEChicago.org.

show your pride.

Take note of these Pride Events across Illinois and join in spreading love, inclusivity, awareness and pride in every corner of the state!

- May 16 | Springfield PrideFest
- May 30 | Jacksonville Pride
- May 30 | Mt.Vernon Pride in the Park
- May 30 | Waukegan Pride Festival
- June 3 | Joliet Slammers Pride Night
- June 5 | Highwood Pride
- June 5 | Pride in Park Ridge
- June 5 | Rochelle Pride Night
- June 5-6 | Quad Cities Pride Festival
- June 6 | Downers Grove PrideFest
- June 6 | Elgin Pride Parade
- June 6 | Logan County Pride Fest
- June 6 | Macomb Pridefest
- June 6 | Niles Pride
- June 6 | Rockford Pride Parade & Party
- June 6-7 | NWI PrideFest
- June 7 | Crystal Lake Pride Walk & Social
- June 7 | Buffalo Grove Pride
- June 7 | Kankakee Pride Picnic
- June 7 | Lombard PrideFest
- June 7 | St. Charles Pride
- June 11 | Oak Park Pride Night Out
- June 12 | Homewood-Flossmoor Pride Fest
- June 12-14 | Andersonville Midsommarfest
- June 13 | Aurora Pride at the Plaza
- June 13 | Carbondale Pride on the Strip
- June 13 | Dixon Pride
- June 13 | Metro East Pride Block Party
- June 13 | Michigan City Pride
- June 13 | Ottawa Family Pride Festival
- June 13 | Pride Richland County
- June 13 | Pride at Shedd Aquarium
- June 13 | Springfield CORAL Pride Picnic
- June 13 | Vermilion County Pridefest
- June 13 | Wheaton Pride
- June 13-14 | Woodstock PrideFest
- June 14 | Aurora Pride Parade
- June 14 | Grayslake Pride Parade
- June 14 | Interfaith Family Pride Fest
- June 14 | Prairie Pride Coalition Pride Picnic
- June 14 | South Side Family Pride
- June 18 | Carol Stream Pride Concert
- June 18 | Morton Grove Pride in the Park
- June 19 | Hawthorne Pride Vernon Hills
- June 19 | Vernon Hills Pride
- June 20 | All My Relations Pride Event
- June 20 | DeKalb Pride Fest
- June 20 | Des Plaines Community Pride
- June 20 | Elmhurst Family Pride Fest
- June 20 | Lake County (IL) Pridefest
- June 20 | Whiting Pride
- June 20-21 | Chicago Pride Fest
- June 26-27 | Pride Metal Fest
- June 27 | Pride at Navy Pier
- June 27 | Slay the Lake Pride Book Fest
- June 27 | Yorkville Pride
- June 28 | Chicago Pride Parade
- June 28 | Pride Ride Batavia
- June 28 | Skokie Pride
- July 3-5 | Chicago Black Pride
- July 5 | Pride South Side
- July 11 | Belong Fox Valley Pride in the Park
- July 18 | Peoria River City Pride Festival
- July 25 | Bloomington-Normal Pridefest
- August 7-9 | Northalsted Market Days
- September 12 | Decatur Pride
- September 19 | Joliet Pride
- October 3 | Metro East Pridefest
- October 17 | Plainfield Pride

www.pflagillinois.org | www.thepridesquad.com

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August 9, 2026

20
YEARS

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Buffalo Grove's 8th Annual *Family Friendly* Pride Parade



Sunday, June 7th at 11 am

Buffalo Grove Road & Deerfield Parkway

Information available at pintaprideproject.com





DURAND BERNARR



G FLIP



ALEX CHAPMAN + ZOE GITTER PRESENT: GAG



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MNEK



FLYANA BOSS



CAROLINE KINGSBURY



NINI COCO



MIZ CRACKER



ANTHONY RAPP



WIC WHITNEY



BLACK GIRL MAGIC WITH THE VIXEN

JUNE 20 & 21



BLACK GIRL MAGIC WITH YVIE ODDLY



BLACK GIRL MAGIC WITH HEIDI N CLOSET

FULL LINEUP + INFO HERE!!



CHICAGO PRIDE FEST



COMMUNITY PRIDE

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MAY 31–JUNE 6

A special week focusing on and celebrating the LGBTQIA+ Community with social gatherings, outdoor activities, educational presentations and live entertainment.

- 5/31: **PRIDE Week Tea Dance at The Dunes Resort**
- 6/2: **PRIDE Paddle Boat Dance Cruises on Lake Michigan**
- 6/3 & 6/4: **PRIDE Special Guest Speakers/Presentations**
- 6/5: **PRIDE Jazz for Justice Block Party**
- 6/6: **PRIDE 2 Mile Color Run/Walk**
- 6/6: **PRIDE Parade & PRIDE in the Park Celebration**
Featuring Chicago bands, *Hello Weekend* & *Sixteen Candles*
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Sat, June 6
Pride In The Park
Featuring
Sixteen Candles
& *Hello Weekend!*

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www.communitypridemi.com

For more information about the area, places to stay & things to do, visit www.saugatuck.com

Show Off Your Pride in Kalamazoo

June 5 - 6

Experience the magic of **Pride** in downtown Kalamazoo! Enjoy two days' worth of fun, with performances by hip-hop soul artist Infinite Coles, glam-rock band Tony and the Kiki, savor delicious food and explore plenty of exhibitor booths. Join us and celebrate in Kalamazoo!

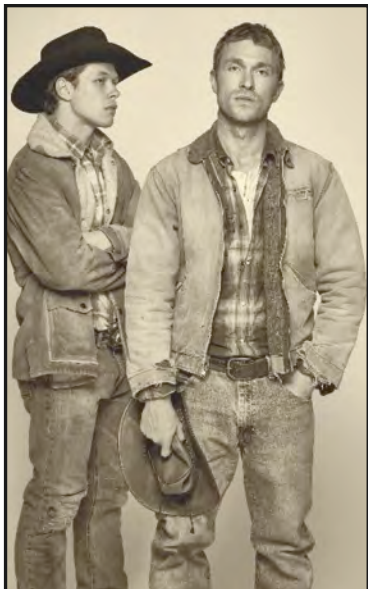
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**CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE
THEATER ANNOUNCES CAST
AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR THE
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
PRODUCTION OF
BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
MAY 28- JUNE 28 IN THE
COURTYARD THEATER**



Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) announces the cast and creative team for *Brokeback Mountain*, the North American premiere production of Ashley Robinson's adaptation of the captivating novella by **Annie Proulx** that inspired the Academy Award-winning film. The production is directed by Jonathan Butterell and plays May 28–June 28 in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater. *Brokeback Mountain* stars **Harrison Ball** as Ennis Del Mar and Jack Cameron Kay as Jack Twist, leading an ensemble cast that also features **Thomas Cox**, **Cordelia Dewdney**, **Kat Eggleston**, and **Alina Jenine Taber**.

Wyoming 1963: a wild landscape of extreme rural poverty and insular conservative communities. When Ennis and Jack take jobs on the isolated *Brokeback Mountain*, all their certainties of life change forever as they flounder in unexpected emotional waters of increasing depth. This intense tale of an irresistible and hidden love spans twenty years and is interwoven with soulful, original Country Western songs by **Dan Gillespie Sells**, performed live onstage.

"It's a huge pleasure to launch this beautiful love story in the Midwest, so close to its spiritual home," said Artistic Director Edward

Hall. "Audiences will enjoy a truly immersive experience watching this in the intimacy of the Courtyard Theater, where every glance, every breath and every absence deepens what is unsaid and felt beneath the surface."

Playwright Ashley Robinson said, "I'm thrilled that Chicago Shakespeare will host the US Premiere of *Brokeback Mountain*. Chicago is the perfect city in which to premiere this working-class story of star-crossed lovers. I'm looking forward to bringing the play home, at a time when this beloved story feels more resonant and needed than ever."

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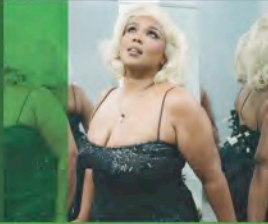
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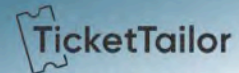
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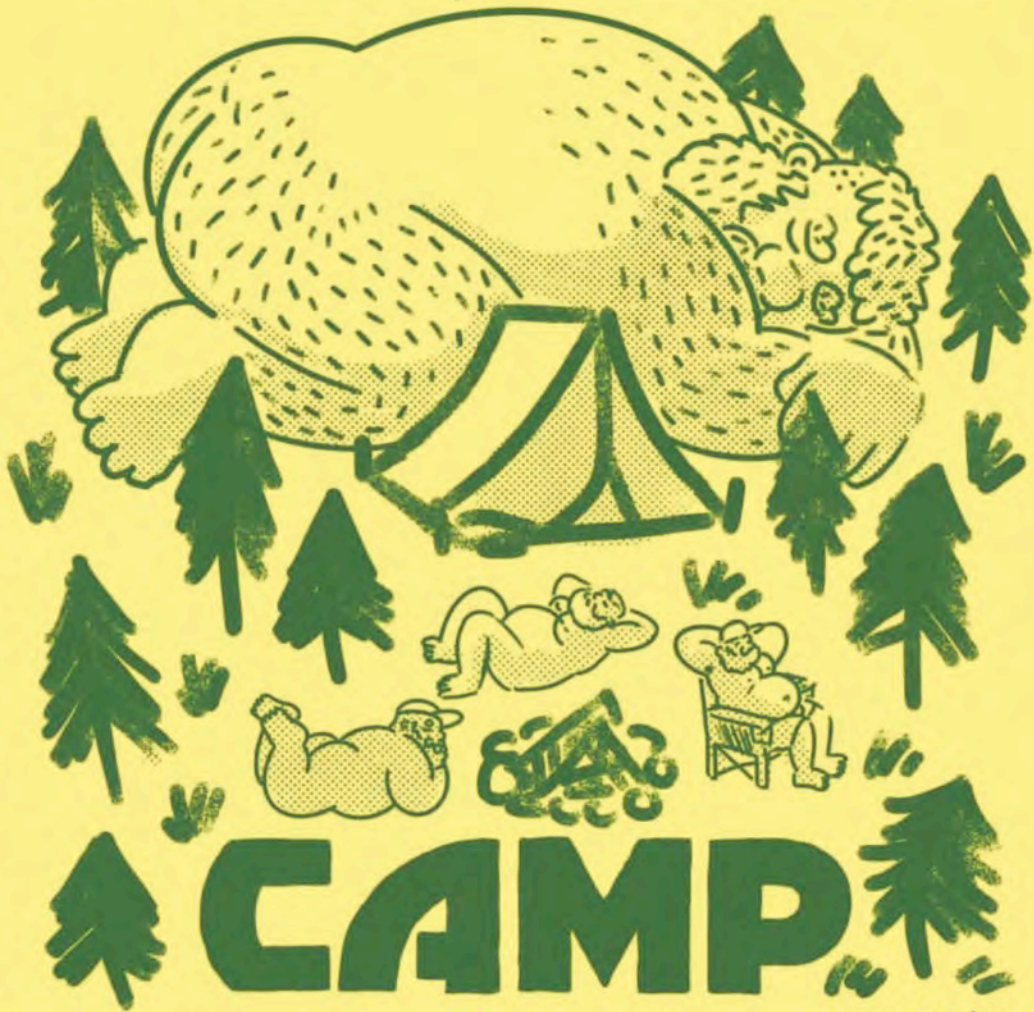
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