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GRAB MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S MONTHLY
LGBTQ+ PUBLICATION

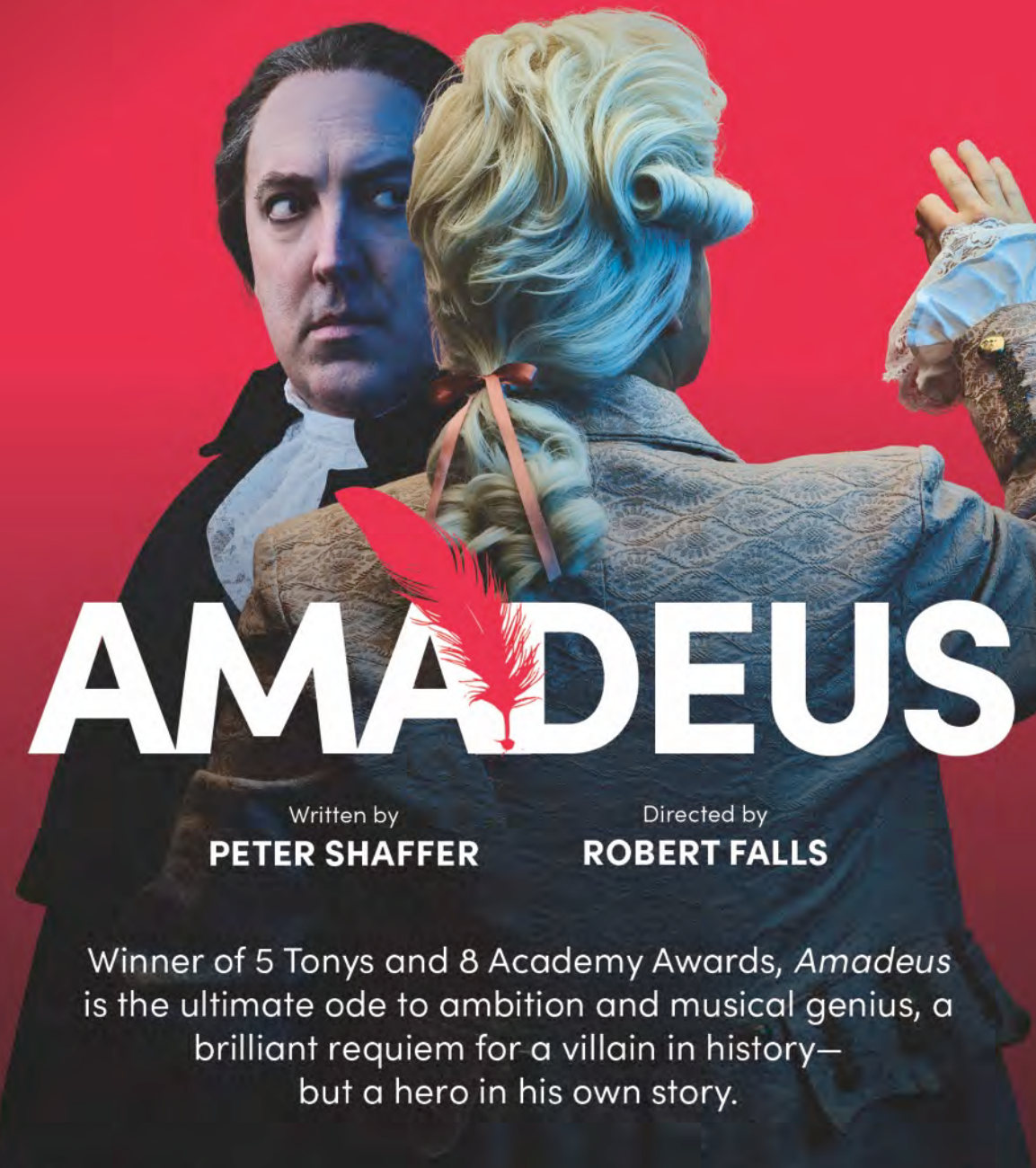


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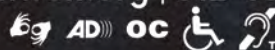
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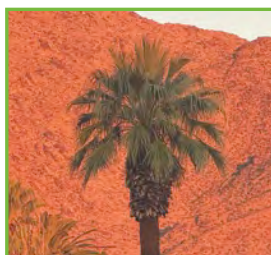
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GRAB MAGAZINE

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GRAB RANDY



Photo Courtesy of Dirty Sugar Photography

The treasure at the end of the rainbow: An interview with Randy Rainbow

By Gregg Shapiro

Not to brag, but we gays do many things incredibly well, including music and comedy. Few gays do both as fabulously as Randy Rainbow. Since the 2016 presidential campaign, and subsequent years, Rainbow amassed a tremendous following via his YouTube videos, with views in the millions, many of which addressed the political situation in the U.S. Not one to rest on his laurels, Rainbow has continued to create content that provides much needed laughter and relief during these increasingly dark times. Currently performing his National Freakin' Treasure tour to delighted audiences across the country, Randy graciously made time for an interview.

Gregg Shapiro: For a considerable number of people, your videos skewering Trump during his disastrous first term were a panacea, a source of necessary laughter in what was a very dark time. Did you ever imagine that he

would not only be elected to a second term, but would be doing far more irreparable damage than we could have dreamed?

Randy Rainbow: Did I ever imagine it? No, I don't think I did. I don't know what I imagine anymore [laughs]. Everything is so fucking crazy. I'm trying to be as genuine as I can, but maybe I did. I don't know. I don't have the most confidence in anything anymore on this planet. I don't think I ever planned to be where we are now; I didn't think in those terms. I'm coming at it from a very interesting perspective, as you mentioned. I've been covering this hot mess since the beginning. The way I thought about it: Trump would just be sort of like a temp job for me, and now I'm gonna end up retiring on the fucking thing.

GS: Your fantastic new "He Just Can't Wait To Be King" video includes a clip of the rainbow crosswalk in front of the future site of the official Pulse Memorial

in Orlando, as well as comedians and late-night TV hosts Jimmy Kimmel and Stephen Colbert, both of whom are under threat from Trump and his followers. Does this give you cause for alarm as a comedic performer?

RR : I'm alarmed about everything. I'm a gay Jew, so I'm scared of every fucking thing there is to be afraid of. I always say, I don't know that I'm really on Trump's radar. It would look pretty foolish for him to come after the song parody YouTube guy. That would be really, low hanging fruit. Of course, you never know. By the fourth term, he might have run out of talk show hosts. It'll be slim pickings. No, I don't have any immediate concern, except for the impending doom of this country on the whole. Otherwise, I feel great!

GS: Yes, you sound like it. As someone who spent his formative years in Florida, Randy, what do you think about Governor DiStractus, as I call him...

GRAM

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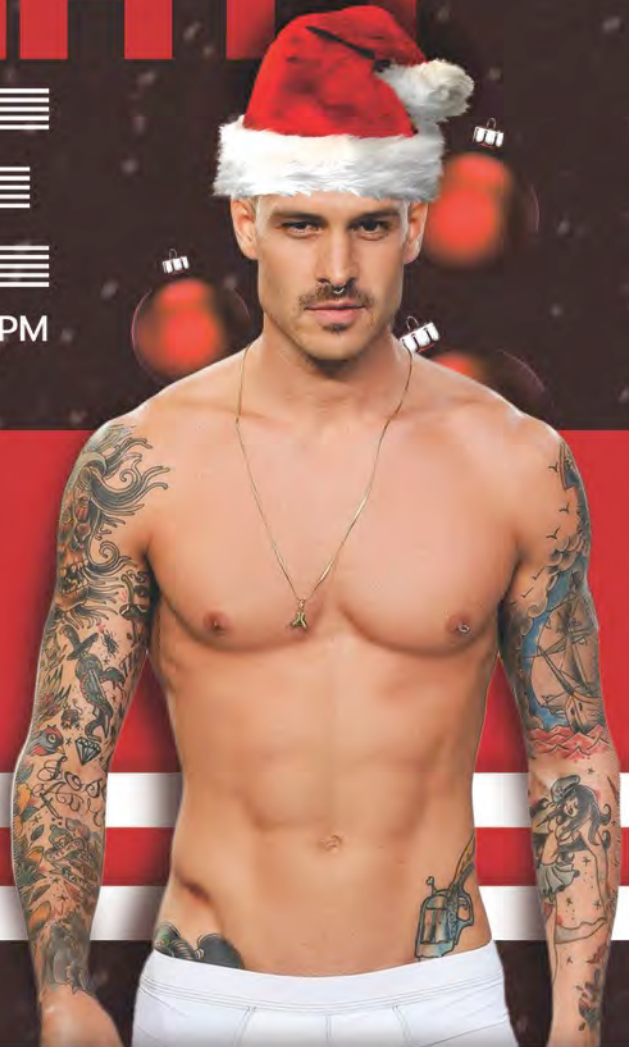
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RR: ... that's a good one.

GS: Thank you! About the way he's trying to erase our community?

RR: I think it's just heartbreaking and infuriating. You said it, everything is just a political move and a distraction. It's based in that kind of nonsense. We seem to be a little more fragile as a community than ever before. I don't want to be Debbie Downer because my job is to uplift people with humor, and I'm so thrilled that I get to do that.

But, from my perspective, trying to tackle these episodes with musical comedy and satire becomes more difficult by the day. Because, first, it's already spoofing itself; it's just getting more absurd. And it's a little darker than we've known before, so it is becoming more of a challenge.

GS: Moving on to a happier subject, earlier this year, your third book, "Randy Rainbow and the Marvelously Magical Pink Glasses," for readers of all ages, was published, featuring wonderful illustrations by Jaimie MacGibbon. Were you involved in selecting Jaimie as illustrator?

RR: The publisher brought a few people to me, and I got to look at their work and choose. I loved what I saw from Jaimie from the beginning. Then I got to be kind of a part of her process and submit pictures. It's based on a true story [laughs], as far as being inspired by my grandmother, who was a big inspiration for me. I submitted pictures of all the real people, and cats, who are involved in the book. She drew a lot of inspiration from that.

GS: Bette Midler's "The Saga of Baby Divine" is one of my all-time favorite books for readers of all



ages. Do you have a favorite in that genre?

RR: Do you know what? You can print that I'm saying this, but don't you dare print [laughs] that I don't think I know of it! I don't think I have ever actually seen it.

GS: Did you have a favorite book in the readers-of-all-ages genre when you were growing up?

RR: I loved a lot of things. I had all those Golden Books. I loved "Balloonina" and "Magic Shoelaces" (by Audrey Wood). My mother introduced me to those. Also, the Berenstain Bears were big for me. When I said that, someone said, "Aren't you Jewish?" I didn't realize there was a kind of religious component to them. I guess there is, but not enough [laughs] to deter my mother.

GS: I don't think they were members of the tribe, if I remember correctly.

RR: No. It was just lovely life lessons and things. That was a new revelation to me. When I was a kid, and this won't surprise you, it was all about musicals.

GS: As I mentioned, you now have three books to your name, as well as two albums. Are there more books and albums in the works?

RR: We're in developmental stages

of many things. I will say yes, but I don't have anything to report at this time. Certainly, an album. We're talking about starting that project next year, because it's time.

GS: You have dates from now until mid-November on your National Freakin' Treasure tour. What are you most looking forward to about this tour?

RR: As is always the case with my live shows, people, particularly in my audience, know what they're coming for and they're all there to feel a sense of community and to get a little bit of relief. It really is a lovely experience, aside from hearing the roar of the crowd and the smell of the greasepaint, and all that stuff. It's kind of an added layer of people coming together and being like-minded. Not necessarily left or right. I do actually have people from all across the spectrum in my audience. People who gravitate towards kindness and common sense, and those sorts of things. And musical theater! We're having a lot of fun. I was afraid that, because of the times we're in, that it might be a little bleak feeling, but it's just the opposite. People are being uplifted by the comedy and the music. Music does that to people.

GS: Finally, I still have my Randy Rainbow for President t-shirt.

RR: Good!
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GS: We
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platform be
if you ran
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RR: I would
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supposed to be. I would continue to

gay things up. Whether they know it
or not, people need more of us. We

need a little light and joy.



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What matters most: An interview with gay country artist Ty Herndon

By Gregg Shapiro

Gay country music legend Ty Herndon, who came out publicly in 2014, has plenty of reasons to celebrate. He's been happily married to his husband, Alex Schwartz, since 2023. His forthcoming memoir, "What Mattered Most," is being published by Harper Collins in March 2026. Herndon is also celebrating his 30th year as a country music artist by releasing "Thirty: Volume 1" (Club 44/The Orchard), an eight-song album on which he revisits songs from his career with a host of high-profile duet partners including Kristin Chenoweth, LeAnn Rimes, Ashley McBryde, actress Chrissy Metz (of "This Is Us" fame), and out country artists Brooke Eden and Shelly Fairchild. Ty generously made time for an interview shortly after the album's release.

Gregg Shapiro: I'm intrigued by the way that artists choose to commemorate career anniversaries, in the way your new album, "Thirty: Vol. 1," celebrates your 30 years as a recording artist. How did you come up with the

concept of revisiting some of your biggest hits as duets for the record?

Ty Herndon: When it comes to messing with original songs that were on the radio, because the songs have nestled into people's hearts, you don't want to venture too far from something they love. I read an interview where Ashley said, "When I was just a kid loving country music, 'A Man Holding On,' me and my mom used to sing it at the top of our lungs." So, it was special to her already. One of the cool things we did was I went ahead and produced the track with my producers, and I did my part. I kept it as close to... I didn't change a lot of melodies. In some places, I just made it a little more modern. Then I gave them (the duet guests) free rein to do what they wanted. We sent everything over to their producers and said, "Play with the melodies and make it yours." It gave them the freedom to do what they wanted with it. I didn't want to hear it until they sent it back. I would go and put my harmonies on it. Ashley made some beautiful melody

changes. And LeAnn! We were on tour together when she was 15. Right in the middle of that tour, (her single) "Blue" blew up. She came to me and said, "Mr. Ty, we're gonna have to switch." I said, "I was waiting on this, sweetheart. I'm happy to open for you [laughs]."

GS: You know the famous story that in 1977, Kenny Loggins was headlining a tour with Fleetwood Mac as the opening act. When "Rumours" blew up, they switched, and Kenny Loggins became the opener.

TH: There's no room for attitude or anything like that. You just want to work. If you're out on tour with somebody and you're not happy for them, then you probably made the wrong choice.

GS: Two of the songs on the album, "I'd Move Heaven and Earth" and "A Pretty Good Thing," feature vocals by queer musical guests Brooke Eden and Shelly Fairchild, respectively. Was it important to you to include

members of the community among the performers on the album?

TH: Shelly and I are old friends, and she'd kill me if I didn't call her to be on the album. I wanted "Pretty Good Thing" to be playful. At the very end of the song, you hear Joanna Cotten say, "I still think I can change him." She surprised me with that and it's the cutest thing. This is about two friends saying, "Look at Ty! He tried to date all these girls. He was just being ridiculous." I said, "I want you guys to be campy and have fun with this, as the soulful artists that you are." They both can sing their booties off! That vamp at the end made the whole record for me. (Co-producer) Erik Halbig put a spin on that song that made it country-radio-ready today. I hadn't met Brooke. I respect the work that she's doing. I love that she's married (to Hilary Hoover) and they have this awesome baby. They were over for dinner the other night, and the baby took to my husband like you wouldn't believe. They were just pals! Brooke honored me and said she'd do the song. It's a love song. "Volume 1" is "hits and missed hits." The missed hits were songs that were slated to go out to country radio if we had gone one more single deep on the album. Sometimes the radio people say they don't want anything else from the record. That's kind of heartbreaking. We were getting ready to do a video for "Heaven and Earth," but it didn't happen. But it's a fan favorite. I called Brooke and said, "We're most likely going to put this out for independent radio in the next year. This song is simply this for me. I want you to come into the studio, I want you to sing this to your wife, and I'm gonna be singing it to my husband. We're going to create an anthem, a beautiful love song for our community that speaks loudly of love." I knew Brooke could sing. I was sitting there producing her vocals, and she sang the first and second verse through. I was so stunned that I didn't say anything. She said, "Is that okay? I changed the melodies." I said, "I knew you could sing, child. I didn't know you were Sheryl Crow and Bonnie Raitt!" On that bridge, where she goes up to that C sharp, she asked, "Is it all right if I belt that out there?" I said, "Yes, please!"

GS: Listening to you sing "Heart

Half Empty" with Tony Award-winning Broadway chanteuse Kristin Chenoweth made me wonder if perhaps there might be either a role in a Broadway musical or your own original Broadway musical in your future.

TH: When did you get into my psyche, man? You're asking all the bullet point questions. When this book (Herndon's memoir) hits on March 25 (2026), the readers are gonna go on a ride, and it's gonna be a ride that equals "Steel Magnolias" and "Fried Green Tomatoes" meets "The Kardashians" [laughs]. I'm going to New York right after Thanksgiving to do the audio book. I'm gonna read it myself. We're going to print this week; the final changes were made. We're going out for a possible made-for-TV miniseries kind of thing. But my absolute vision for this book is a live musical. When you hear the audiobook, there's going to be a lot of music in it because there are so many stories behind the songs that wouldn't work putting them in a book. The memoir is laugh-out-loud funny, and it's heartbreaking. The last chapter is called "Some Enchanted Evening," when I meet my husband.

GS: A Broadway musical reference!

TH: [Laughs] I sat on the floor as this Southern voice was reading the last five chapters to me. I told (co-writer) David Ritz, "I don't want it, I don't want to hear the wrap up till the very end." I'm going to cry (Herndon chokes up). I basically fell down on my knees in the kitchen. It was a Holy Spirit moment. It's so beautifully written. I told David, "Gosh, if I had done this book 20 years ago, I



wouldn't have to have all this therapy." He said, "Yes, but you wouldn't have this book!"

GS: "Thirty: Vol. 1" closes with the song "Big Hopes," which features vocals by your husband Alex Schwartz. What was it like for you to record a song with Alex?

TH: Are you really gonna make me keep crying?

GS: I'm sorry! Here, have a tissue.

TH: It's happy tears, man. I spent 20 years of my life not able to cry, so I welcome it. Wide open heart. Alex's mama, my mother-in-love – we don't say mother-in-law – Charlotte Medley is a renowned songwriter and an amazing woman. I'm actually recording a song that she and I co-wrote for the rerelease of (the album) "Journey On" for its 15th anniversary. Alex has been around it his whole life, but he's not a singer. He's creative and brilliant, but he did not want to do this. I said, "Here was your fatal mistake, husband." He got up at karaoke one night, the first time he did karaoke, by the way, and nailed a Talking Heads song! I'm sitting there with my eyes crossed. Another little hidden secret. He said, "Don't even think about it." I said, "Too late!" I dragged him, kicking and screaming, into the studio. He stayed for about 45 minutes. He sang, and asked, "Happy?" I said, "Yes, very. Thank you."

GS: It sounds like you were having fun doing it.

TH: He didn't hear it until it was done. To be honest, he was on the fence about releasing it until we finished it. He was like, "OK, that's really special."

GS: Are you at liberty to share with the readers what songs will be featured on "Thirty: Vol. 2"?

TH: The rest of the radio singles will be featured. "Living in a Moment," "No Mercy," "It Must Be Love," "I Want My Goodbye Back," and then we're going to let the fans, and the winners will be the next three songs. I'm a little scared of that [laughs]. I looked at my manager and producer and said, "Really?"

GS: As we mentioned, your memoir "What Mattered Most" is coming out in March of 2026. Why was now the time to do this?

TH: Honestly, I had had a few folks shopping a book deal for the last 10 years. Not because I think I'm important; I think the story is important. I'm not supposed to be here, but I am, and I'm healthy and I'm happy. It's a story, especially now, that our youth and, even if you're 90 years old, that you need to hear. Because anything's possible with hope and love. I'm a God guy, so a whole lot of God. I think the real reason was because everybody would say, "Country doesn't sell," and I think that was somewhat of a of an excuse that people were using because they didn't know a lot about my story. The book proposals weren't really going that deep. This amazing person, David Ritz, who's 84 years old, had, I think, 51 number one bestsellers. Aretha Franklin's story, Aerosmith, Willie Nelson, all these great stories. He's bisexual, and he sought me out after seeing the People Magazine article. Talk about the chips falling where they're supposed to. He goes, "I want to



write your story. I've been following you for a long time. I got arrested at Stonewall, man. I want to take your story and insert some pivotal moments." We met two years ago. He's a family member now. His vitality and his heart; he found my voice. Doing a timeline is one of the hardest things I've ever done. It all gets jumbled up. But laid out so perfectly beautiful, and everything makes sense. That's the journey readers are going to take. I start this book out saying, "As much as I want you to love me, by the middle of this book you're not going to like me. But the hope is that you'll come back to me by the end of it."

GS: Finally, in the 30 years since the release of your major-label debut album, What Matters Most, and the 10 years since you became the first male country artist to publicly come out, the country music world has undergone a transformation when it comes to the LGBTQ community. What advice would you give to a country artist, whether new or established, struggling with

coming out today?

TH: Put it in your music. I say this all the time. If you're coming to this town, the number one thing that you need to know is your country music history. If you don't know who Loretta Lynn is, or little Jimmy Dickens, you might as well stay at home. You've got to know your generations of country and then pour your heart and soul into your authenticity in your music. Once you're successful and you get there, you'll be amazed at how happy you are. I always say this, "Let your authenticity shine through your heart and your music. I'm giving you advice that I wish someone had given me. It wasn't necessarily that I had to change the pronouns. I've looked back over my volume of 30 years of recording; I've been telling the story all along. Maybe the pronouns were different, but I was telling the story. David Ritz pointed that out to me. He goes, "Dude, you've chronicled your entire life in this music." He started connecting the dots, and I was like, "Well, I'll be damned!"

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GRAB A GIFT

Mikey Rox's Guide to Queer Gift Giving 2025

By Mikey Rox

Some gifts scream practical, others whisper luxury, and a few flat-out blur the lines. From cocoa that feels ceremonial to a cologne that linger like a suggestive smirk, this year's ultimate gift picks prove that thoughtful (and occasionally naughty) presents don't have to be prosaic. Welcome to your holiday cheat sheet for festive tangibles that get noticed, remembered, and maybe even result in a peck of gratitude planted under the mistletoe. Consensually, of course.

Amber Glass Champagne Flutes

Pop the champs – but make it vintage. These tulip-shaped stunners in amber-tinted glass brings all the Gatsby vibes without the jazz-age drama. Whether you're toasting a milestone or celebrating a Tuesday, their seven-ounce capacities and hand-wash-only care make 'em as practical as they are pretty. Pair with a thoughtful bottle of bubs and gift with a glittering wink. \$18, [**NantucketLooms.com**](https://www.nantucketlooms.com)



Disaster Playbook by Here Comes the Apocalypse

Because the end of the world shouldn't be a solo act, this spiral-bound guide is your step-by-step roadmap to surviving and thriving when everything else goes sideways – which might be sooner than you think. Packed with checklists, drills, and a healthy dose of humor, it's like a survival manual written by your most prepared (and slightly snarky) friend. Whether you're prepping for a zombie apocalypse or, more realistically, REVOLUTION!, this playbook's got your back. \$40, [**HereComesTheApocalypse.com**](https://www.herecomestheapocalypse.com)



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You a ’hood queen who considers lawn care performance art – or just wants to rule the cul-de-sac in quiet, emission-free glory? Greenworks’ zero-turn electric mower has the muscle of a 24-horsepower gas engine but none of the fumes, drama or maintenance. Six 60V batteries and a 42-inch deck mean you can mow up to two-and-a-half acres on a single charge – then plug in, recharge, and ride again. It’s whisper-quiet, slope-ready, and smooth enough to make you wonder why you ever pushed anything besides your queer agenda. The perfect gift for the homeowner who loves sustainability, symmetry, and showing off their freshly striped yard like that fresh fade you get on Fridays. \$5,000, GreenworksTools.com





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Grab Local

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<http://www.ShopTheMensroom.com>



Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has published in more than 100 outlets across the world. Connect with he/him on Instagram @mikeyroxtravels

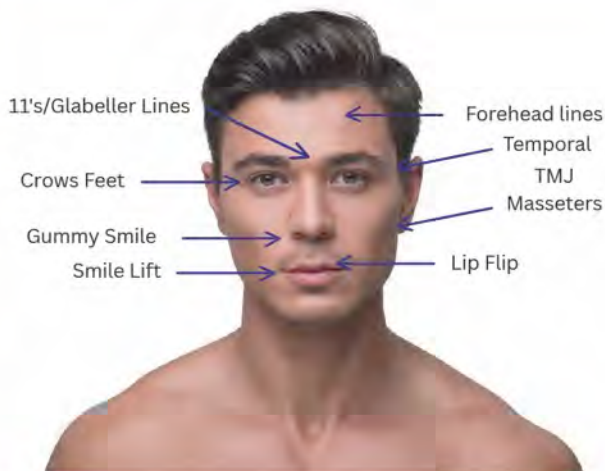


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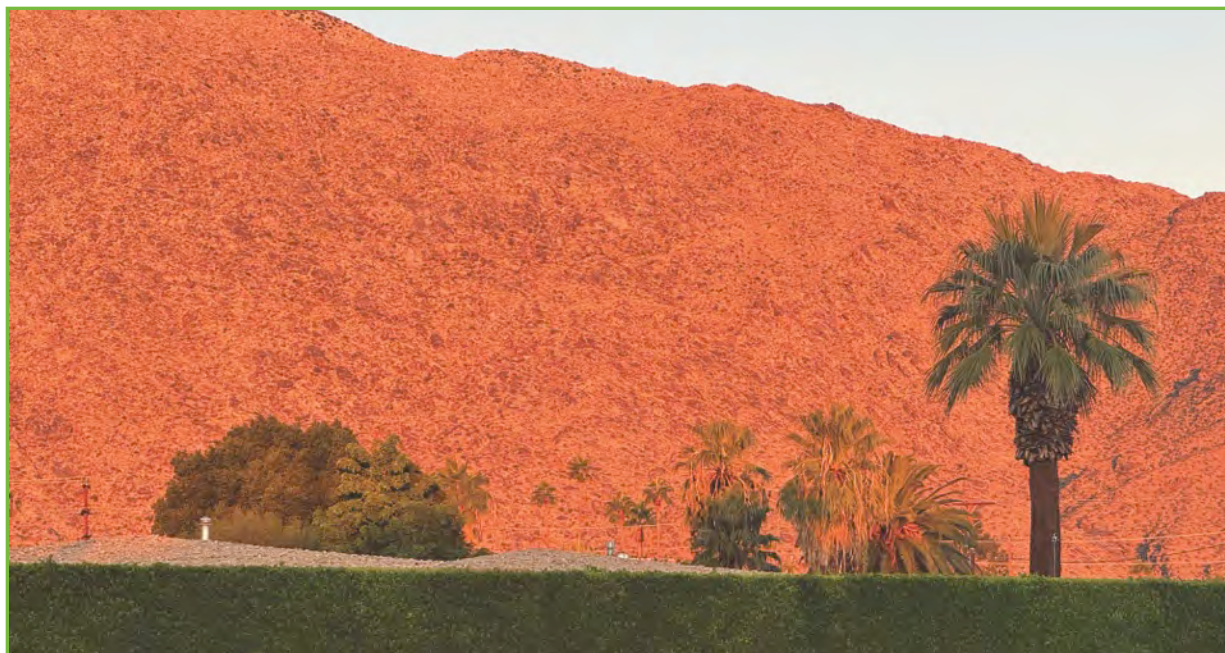
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GRAB A PLANE



What's New in the Desert: Your Palm Springs Getaway Guide and IGLTA Highlights

By Bill Malcolm

I was in Palm Springs for the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association Global Convention. More than 750 attendees from 32 countries attended – a new record. And this is despite the drop in large corporate sponsorship support (as has also been seen at Pride events). A highlight was the IGLTA Foundation fundraiser at the Dinah Shore estate (owned by Leonardo Di Caprio). It sleeps 16 and has six bathrooms and can be yours for around \$5,000 a night.

WHAT TO DO

See the new “Section 14: The Untold Story” at the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum and Cultural Plaza downtown 140 N. Indian Canyon. This and other exhibits give a frank assessment of their fight to hold onto their land and culture. They also have a spa and casino.

Swim at the Palm Springs Swim Center. The \$16 nonresident fee is steep but worth it.

Walk with the Frontrunners at 8

a.m. daily. They go through the new Prescott Reserve, formerly a golf course. They meet at the Mizell Center Parking Lot.

Thursday night is Village Fest downtown. It's a farmers market/art show and more. The Museum is also free that night.

Rent a bike at Bike Palm Springs and ride on the new CVLink trail all the way to Cathedral City and beyond. (www.bikePSrentals.com)

Enjoy a drag show tour of the city. Drag & Fly presents “A Love Letter to Palm Springs.” Drag queens are your guide on a minibus tour of the city. It combines fact-based storytelling with the colorful art of drag blending music, narration, and videos while you see the city. Details and tickets at dragandflytours.com. You will learn something new about the city from a unique perspective.

WHAT TO EAT

Townie Bagels (650 East Sunny Dunes) has great soft bagels and a

cult following. Try to build your own sandwich on a pumpernickel bagel with a café Americano to wash it down.

Peninsula Pastries has great French pastries including a lemon tart that is to die for. In the same plaza (south of downtown across from Motel 6), try freshly squeezed carrot juice and Teriyaki Bowl with salad at the Palm Greens Café (611 S. Palm Canyon).

Bongo Johnny's has great burgers and salads. You will find them just north of downtown.

WHERE TO STAY

I always stay at the Motel 6 Palm Springs downtown (660 South Palm Canyon Drive). The room rates are lower than the resort fees at some of the other hotels. The location is across the street from the French bakery, health foods café, Revolution Theater and wrap restaurant. Around the corner of Sunny Dunes is the Townie Bagel shop and Tool Shed bar. And you can walk downtown

and the bars on Arenas. Catch the #2 bus from City Hall across the street from the airport to the motel. Rates at the Motel 6 are lower during the week (as the LA crowd comes over on the weekend). I met two new friends at their pool. If you get hungry, the Jack in the Box is two doors down. I love their tacos and Breakfast Jacks (two for \$3.50). I also checked out the Hilton which is downtown and has a great pool scene. The Renaissance (where IGLTA was held) was also nice.

Twin Palms

(<http://www.TwinPalmsResort.com>) is my favorite resort, and I also like the Descanso (<http://www.DescansoResort.com>). Both offer a fun pool scene and free bikes. But check (and avoid) hotels and resorts with junk fees (aka resort fees).

NIGHTLIFE

The V Bar is a lot of fun. Most of the bars are on Arenas Road downtown. Check out the Monday happy hour at my favorite, Hunters, of Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale fame. Do check the prices at all the bars. One wanted \$14 for a glass of wine.

GETTING THERE

I took Southwest. They now charge for bags and are about to charge for and assign seats. No more checking 24 hours in advance to get an A group boarding pass which assures a window seat at no

extra charge. Worse, they have now outsourced their staffing to a third party at Palm Springs so what remains of the Southwest spirit (and great customer service) is long gone. I also connected on SW through noisy and expensive Las Vegas International Airport (\$5.50 for a Diet Coke). I might also author a book: "How to destroy a brand and alienate your loyal passenger base: The demise of Southwest Airlines." Southwest founder Herb Kelleher must be rolling into his grave. It's now a race to the bottom of the carrier that once was the model of transparent pricing, on time departures, extremely low fares, and service into less congested airports. And great customer service with top notch employees.

INSIDER TIPS/FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out KGAY radio and the Gay Desert Guide for up to minute



events. My friend Brad Fuhr does an amazing job.

Fly directly into Palm Springs Airport. It's super cute and you can sit outside and work on your tan before boarding. Skip LAX at all costs. You'll need a rental car to get to Palm Springs and the trip out on I-10 can be congested (not to mention the endless sprawl).

Before you book a hotel, check for junk fees (resort fees, destination fees, amenity fees, energy surcharges, and more). About half the hotels seem to have them and they often are hidden under "government taxes and fees" or otherwise not transparent.

You won't need a rental car if you stay downtown Palm Springs. Rely on UBER or Sunline Transit instead. Or walk or bike.

GED Magazine (gedmag.com) is the monthly publication. It has great ideas and events.

The Coachella Valley Independent is the weekly alternative voice. It has great hike ideas and community events.

Palm Springs is always a great visit. I go there often.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated value travel columnist. He pays his own way and avoids hotels which charge resort or related junk fees (aka amenity fees, destination fees, etc.). His opinions are his own.



GRAB A FILM



Photo By Christian Geisnaes

Steamy Sauna Queer Love Heats Up in this Foreign Drama

By Shane Gallagher

Sauna, the highly anticipated debut feature from director Mathias Broe, makes history this month as the first Danish film to cast a transgender actor in a leading trans role. Adapted from the acclaimed book by writer and activist Mads Ananda Lodahl, the film offers an intimate reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*, exploring themes of love, belonging, and identity within Copenhagen's queer community. At its heart is the story of Johan, a gay man yearning for connection, and William, a trans man embracing his gender transition. What begins as a Grindr hookup blossoms into a relationship that both heals and challenges them, unfolding within the charged, transformative space of a gay sauna. Starring Nina Rask as William and Magnus Juhl Andersen as Johan, the film brings a fresh and deeply human perspective to queer storytelling.

Shane Gallagher: Nina, what did it mean to you personally to step into the role of William?

Nina: I'm extremely proud! I've mostly played characters that had a specific function in a film. It was a humbling experience to create a

more complex character that was far away from my own personality.

SG: What specific qualities did you like about William?

Nina: In William, I found a person with a lot of power. But in his meeting with Johan, he holds back. Whether it's about control or self-protection, I'm not sure. I was very drawn to his ability to observe the world.

SG: Magnus, what drew you to the character of Johan?

Magnus: What I thought was really interesting about Johan was the vast hole of loneliness inside of him. The 'anti-hero' aspect of him. The wanting to do good, but in the pursuit of doing so, doing wrong. I thought it was very interesting to look at Johan as someone who is just desperate to be loved and accepted. It's something I think we all can relate to.

SG: The director, Mathias Broe, has said that when you two met in the casting room, the chemistry was undeniable.

Magnus: We actually met in another production; a Danish series called

'Carmen Curlers'. We hadn't played in any romantic scenes before, but we knew each other from being on set.

Nina: At the casting *Sauna*, they tested our sexual and romantic chemistry, which I think surprised us both!

SG: Magnus, how did you internalize Johan's relationship to the Sauna?

Magnus: Personally, I saw the sauna as a symbol of endless possibilities for Johan. Behind every corner, there might be someone who can finally love him. I found it interesting how he uses himself as sexual currency, thinking that by offering his body, he may get the love and attention that he craves.

SG: What was the most challenging scene for you to film emotionally?

Nina: I remember the break up scene being pretty difficult emotionally.

Magnus: For me, it was the scene in the sex swing! I was naked, except for a very small modesty garment, and I was surrounded by a bunch of naked male extras. I felt vulnerable. It made the scene crazy intense. I



Photo By Nicolai Lok

was emotionally drained when we finished.

SG: On the flip side, what was the most joyful or affirming moment you had during production?

Magnus: The whole film was a pleasure to shoot, from start to finish. By the end of the production, I think we all could feel that we had made something special. The response from the queer community has made it worth every drop of sweat.

SG: Both of your characters are written as beautifully flawed. How important was it for you to show imperfection in queer love stories rather than polished ideals?

Nina: I think it is important that we move from queer characters always being the saints or “the good guys”. Queers can be selfish and lovable at the same time!

Magnus: All relationships, queer or straight, are incomplete and flawed. It's never the Disney fairytale we dream of, and honestly, I think that kind of story is boring. Showing love

as it really is - messy, imperfect, and full of struggle - makes it powerful. That's what makes us cheer, cry, and really care when we watch a good love story.

SG: What conversations do you hope *Sauna* sparks among LGBTQ + audiences, and also with mainstream audiences who may not be familiar with these experiences?

Magnus: For queer audiences, I hope it sparks recognition. That feeling of, “yes, this is me, this is us, this is complicated but it's real.” For mainstream audiences, I hope it opens the door to empathy. Even if the details of queer life are unfamiliar, the emotions of love, shame, desire, and forgiveness are universal.

Nina: I hope the film helps to broaden the horizon of queer cinema. There's a younger group of filmmakers entering the industry at the moment and they bring new and exciting perspectives to the table. Hopefully, they will create the next chapter of stories that are even more diverse and aren't afraid to break the norms.

***Sauna* is available now on all major digital platforms.**



Photo By Nicolai Lok



Photos By Anthony Meade



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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.
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: Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check,
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, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. 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. Thanksgiving open 8pm. 12/4 Full Moon Party and contest.

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. 9/19 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA. 10/24 Halloween Maze Opens in Club Room, 10/31 Halloween Party Costume Contest. 11/21 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA Harvest of hope food drive for groceryland Kickoff, 11/28 Spanksgiving Spanking Fetish Night. 12/5 Man Nipple'ate nipple fetish play night. 12/12 Latin Leather Night Feliz Navidad.

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. 11/22 RIPE PARTY Dim Lights, Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T. 11/29 GLORY HOLE'D. 12/6 Night of 1,000 San ta's Bear Night 12/13 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 1pm, 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.

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GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of November

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	Artist	Title
1	Kshmr x Nilsix x Ryos	Radiate Ft. Hayley May
2	Sonny Fodera & Jazzy	All This Time
3	Richard Durand x York x Lea Key	Sunrise (Radio)
4	Shouse & Cub Sport	Only You
5	Marshmello X Ellie Goulding X Avaion	Save My Love
6	Tate MCrae	Revolving Door (Lavern Remix Clean)
7	Laszewo	3am
8	Mintd X Mesa & Boss	Right Here
9	David Guetta x Olivier Giacomotto x Kiko	After You
10	Jain x Solomun	Tout Le Monde Est Fou
11	Victoria Nadine x Kygo	Can't Get Enough
12	Emma Louise & Flume	Whenever You Want
13	Younotus x Cascada	Beautiful Odyssey
14	ILLENIUUM x Norma Jean Martine	Refuge
15	Ryan Ennis x Carla Monroe	Blow My Mind
16	Felix Jaehn x Nasri	Wake Up (With You Mine)
17	Stryv x Malachiii x Adam Port	Positions
18	Pls&Ty & Nu La	Carry The Light (Radio Edit)
19	Zevy x Jordin Sparks x David Schocke	Who Cares
20	Vic Latino	Fall Right Back Ft. Georgiaxe
21	Armnhmr & Lockbox	Free Ft. Sara Benyo & Gabriel Eli
22	Hugel X David Guetta X Kehlani & Daecolm	Think Of Me
23	RscL & Vassy	Beg
24	Lucas & Steve x Oaks x Jaimes	Love On Hold
25	Voltage	Break 'm With You
26	Diego San Diego x Alec Monopoly	Tequila (Radio Edit)
27	Sigala x Leigh Anne x Jonita Gandhi	Hello
28	Alesso x Sentinel x Sick Individuals	Upside Down (Radio Edit)
29	Aki Nair	Alibi (Edit)
30	James Alexandr & Autone	Boys & Girls Ft. Penelope



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Saturday, Nov 29 11am - 6pm

Bears, the Baths & Beyond Thanksgiving edition

Saturday, Nov 29 11pm - 5am Saturday Night @ the Baths

with DJ J-Daddy

Sunday, Nov 30 2pm - 8pm Sunday Service

with DJ Club Chow

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GRAB ROGER

Getting Married – Know Your Property Rights

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

The question I am frequently asked by newly married couples is whether a stay-at-home spouse could quit work, adopt children with their spouse and be protected financially if the parties should divorce. The question I hear is, “do I get half of everything?”

In the world of heterosexual marriage, there is an established history of divorce terms, broad experience with breakup rights and duties that are different from the rules that LGBT couples have lived by. Unfortunately, these rules are new to LGBT couples getting married. They are important and everyone who plans to “tie the knot” should be aware of them.

First, Illinois is an equitable distribution state which means property is not necessarily divided equally or 50/50 – there is no guarantee you will get half. The Court considers relevant factors in determining how assets are to be divided, such as length of the marriage, age, health and

employability of the spouses, contribution, both financial and non-financial, to the acquisition of property.

Second, in a divorce action, the spouses only have rights to the marital property of the couple. Whatever you thought was your sole property before marriage changes. When married, spouses have rights to the marital property of the couple. Marital property is any property acquired by the parties during their marriage except for property which is specifically excluded as non-marital property. The burden is on the party claiming non-marital property to prove through clear and convincing evidence that the property falls under one of the definitions of non-marital property.

Third, if there is a divorce, one of the couple may be entitled to maintenance (formerly known as alimony) from their spouse. Be aware that there are no percentage guidelines. The amount and duration of maintenance is determined based upon relevant factors including age,

income and property of each party, education, length of marriage, and whether the recipient's ability to earn income has been impaired due to absence from the workforce to attend to domestic duties, and lifestyle of the parties.

If you divorce, you may have to pay attorneys' fees for yourself and you may have to pay the legal fees of your spouse. The law says that attorney's fees are the primary responsibility of the party incurring fees. However, if your spouse does not have any money, you may be required to pay his/her fees.

Contribution of attorneys' fees from one party to the other is available where the payment of attorneys' fees would undermine a



partner's economic stability.

And if you die, your spouse has legal rights to certain retirement accounts you have regardless of who you named as the beneficiary.

Last, a spouse may be entitled to child support for the children of the couple. In most cases a percentage of net income guideline child support is 20% for one child, 28 percent for two children, 32 percent for three children, 40 percent for four children, 45 percent for five children, 50 percent for six children.

Instead of letting a Judge decide these issues in case you divorce, you should have a Premarital Agreement to establish your own financial agreements. Premarital Agreements must be in writing and signed by both parties. They must be entered into freely and voluntarily. And they require fair and reasonable financial disclosures. They also require each spouse to have their own attorney represent them and be signed well before the marriage so no claim can be made that the Agreement was forced onto one of the spouses.

These are established general rules that apply to heterosexual marriage. Unfortunately, these rules are new to LGBT couples entering marriage. They are important and everyone who plans to “tie the knot” should be aware of them. Please consult with your own attorney to see if these will apply to you.

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.

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GRAB
MAGAZINE
CHICAGO'S MONTHLY LGBTQ PUBLICATION



GRAB HOLLY

Schrodinger's Domestic Cat'Astrophy

By Holly Maholm

I was sitting at my kitchen table, having just finished an eggs-n-bacon breakfast and struggling with a dilemma (Glazed or Powdered? Powdered or Glazed?) when Scallywag boldly walked in. He advised, "You need to get going. Our Majesty wants to see you toot sweet." Having delivered this message, he remained motionless, staring at the open box of donuts on the table and thereby giving me to understand that his little errand on behalf of Her Majesty deserved to be reciprocated with a tip. I fed him a powdered token of my gratitude, and we left.

When I arrived at the Horse Rescue, Dot directed me to the orchard, where Queen Penelope was lolling about in the cool, morning grass. With her was Sassy Pants and two others I didn't know. One was a vixen and the other a nondescript looking housecat. These two sat quietly while Sassy explained. "Holly, Our Majesty needs your participation in a little ceremony the Queen is obligated to perform. She is 'sitting' (as it were) in Judgment of a Complaint brought before her in her capacity as Chief Justice of the Court of All Animals. You see, this housecat has brought to Our Queen a claim on behalf of Housecats Everywhere, and this vixen has been called upon to speak on behalf of the feline, seeing as how neither you nor any unicorn is capable of speaking 'Cat.' And just so

you know, you are here to represent the Species Human, generally, inasmuch as we are told the Complaint of the housecat is laid against all humans, generally. I will let the vixen explain the nature of the Complaint."

The vixen stood up and addressed the Queen. "May it please Your Majesty. I speak on behalf of this housecat, who avers that he has a grievance against both the Species Human, generally, and a man by the name of Schrodinger, specifically. The Plaintiff claims that this man – Schrodinger – has published a cruel, hateful and pernicious slander which impairs the dignity and reputation of he and his feline species-mates, and which therefore constitutes an actionable 'Disparagement of the Species Housecat.'

"The facts are these: This Schrodinger claims to be employed in that scientific endeavor known as 'Quantum Physics,' but in fact, what he has done is to invent what he calls a 'hypothetical thought-experiment.' Unfortunately, this 'hypothetical' gives every appearance of having been designed to encourage humans to find amusement, even humor, in a story that necessarily implies the painful and gruesome death of a housecat.

"That cruel narrative invented by Schrodinger is this: That he has put a cat into a locked box (from which the cat cannot escape), and together with the cat is a mechanism which – at some random and unpredictable moment – will release a poison that kills the cat. Hence, looked at from the outside, no one can say with any certainty – as of whatever moment you care to choose – whether the cat is alive or dead; a fact which can only be ascertained by opening the box.

"Now, admittedly, this 'hypothetical housecat' will suffer no more than a 'hypothetical death,' but nevertheless, the story authored by Schrodinger encourages humans to find the death of this harmless creature to be a mere triviality." The vixen turned to me and spoke. "This Plaintiff is offering

a



means by which you members of the Species Human might mitigate your guilt; which requires, first, that you hear and acknowledge this grievance, and second, that you likewise hear what else this creature has to declare."

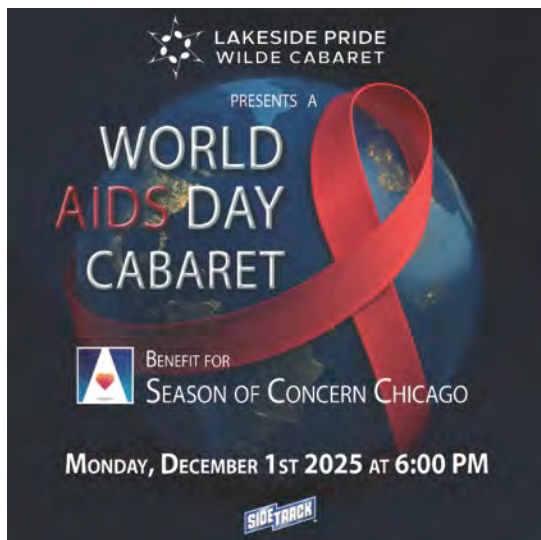
The vixen continued. "Having been sworn, this Plaintiff – now testifying on behalf of the Species Housecat – wishes to place in evidence a different story, to wit: That Schrodinger was married, and from time-to-time his wife visited him in his study, where he claimed to be 'doing physics' (which being entirely a mental process, shows nothing to an observer). Now, the wife trusted that her husband was working – and earning the money they needed to pay their bills – but despite her repeated visits, she could never see what her husband was accomplishing.

"Accordingly, in time, the wife began to develop a... grievance against the sloth and evident unproductivity of her husband, but she said nothing, and when Schrodinger asked her 'Is something wrong, dear?' she always replied, 'I'm fine.' They went on in this way for months, she never confessing her grievance, and Schrodinger never so bold as to press for an honest response. And the only witness to Schrodinger's inability to resolve this dilemma (by obtaining an answer to the question, 'Does my wife harbor a grievance against me?') was their housecat."

The vixen fell silent, and I had to ask, "What happened next?" The vixen consulted with her client, then turned and explained, "After the elapse of some random and unpredictable period of time, their marriage died."

(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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Photos By
Anthony Meade



November 18, 2025

GRAB Magazine

35

GRAB KENNEDY

Kennedy Davenport Competes for the Crown In *Pageant Queens*, a new Drag Series

By Shane Gallagher

Kennedy Davenport, the dazzling powerhouse celebrated for her show-stopping performances on RuPaul's Drag Race and her reign across the national pageant circuit, is once again commanding the spotlight. This fall, she stars in *Pageant Queens: Our Story Behind the Crown*, a groundbreaking new 12-episode docuseries that redefines what it means to compete, create, and connect through drag. Directed by Travis Stancil and featuring Michael Silas as Artistic Director, the series brings together ten of the most decorated queens in drag history as they move into a glamorous South Florida mansion to vie for the ultimate crown: "The Queen of Drag" and a \$50,000 grand prize.

But *Pageant Queens* isn't your typical drag competition. Instead of cutthroat eliminations, the series celebrates collaboration, replacing the drama of lip sync battles with heartfelt storytelling and creative unity. Together, the queens design every element of their own pageant - from judging criteria to final performances - offering viewers an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at the artistry, resilience, and sisterhood that define drag culture.

For Kennedy Davenport, the opportunity to join *Pageant Queens* felt like a homecoming. "Pageantry has always been my life," she shares. "When they asked me to be part of *Pageant Queens* and mentioned there was \$50,000 on the line, there was no question that I was in!"

She laughs, then leans in to explain more.

Shane Gallagher: *Pageant Queens* is described as "not a race, but a revolution."

Kennedy Davenport: When I hear the word revolution, I think of a battle, but I don't see pageantry as a battle. It's more of a friendly competition. Pageantry is built on camaraderie. We push each other to be better, to stay sharp, and that mutual support keeps everyone operating like a well-oiled machine.

SG: The series brings together ten legendary pageant queens that hold over thirty-eight national titles.

KD: Thirty-eight, is that all? Those thirty-eight titles are probably all mine! (Laughs) Honestly, that number should be way higher because some of these queens, like Shae Shae Laree, have so many titles. Being under one roof with so many veterans and legends who inspired my career was magical. I was excited to make new memories with them.

SG: South Florida serves as a



powerful backdrop for the show, especially at a time when LGBTQ+ visibility there matters more than ever.

KD: I actually lived in Florida for eight years, so it felt like coming home. Despite all of the anti-trans legislation going on at the moment, I didn't feel any opposition from Floridians at all. Florida was full of love, joy, and peace. When we visited The Palace, people welcomed us with open arms. Love is always the answer, especially in Florida's LGBTQ+ spaces.

SG: How did you challenge yourself artistically during *Pageant Queens*, especially with the self-designed elements like

choosing judges and scoring systems?

KD: It was all about strategy for me. When it came to choosing judges, I cast my vote, then sat back and let my sisters duke it out because at the end of the day, I'm my own competition. No matter what others decide, I'm going to show up and show out. It's about working smart, staying focused, and always leading with heart.

SG: What truths about your life do you hope this series helps illuminate?

KD: Most people already know the story of Kennedy Davenport because I've always been transparent about my life. I think this show will finally solidify everything I've been saying for years. It'll show another side of me: the real, raw truth. You can talk all day on Drag Race, but this show strips away the polish and shows us as we are. We all have stories, and that's what draws people to us. My story isn't fabricated, it's real. And Pageant Queens captured that authenticity in one take.

SG: What parts of your personal story are you most excited or nervous for audiences to see?

KD: This show dives deep into why I do what I do, and it's all rooted in my family. I take care of them, and that's my driving force. I'm a little anxious about inviting people into my home, because that space is sacred. But if my story can inspire someone else to keep going after their dreams, then it's worth it.

SG: What would winning this competition mean to you personally?

KD: It would mean everything to me. Winning would solidify my place in the world and put a stamp on my purpose. But win or lose, this show marks a new chapter for me, and I know it will hold a special place in my legacy.

The first ten episodes of Pageant Queens: Our Story Behind the Crown begin streaming this fall, with the two-part finale to follow.





Photos By Anthony Meade



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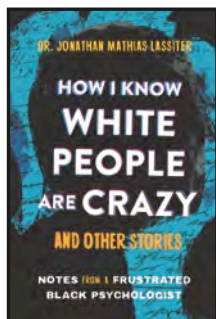
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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"I Know White People are Crazy and Other Stories" by Dr. Jonathan Mathias Lassiter
c.2025, Legacy Lit
\$30.00 320 pages



It's enough to make you lose your mind.

You see your goal, but there's a barrier in front of it, a barrier that makes no sense. Other people don't have to jump through hoops or over walls to succeed, feel safe, or get help so why do you? In "How I Know White People are Crazy and Other Stories" by Dr. Jonathan Mathias Lassiter, you'll see that an old nemesis has a new name. He says he is not angry.

Dr. Lassiter is just really, really frustrated and for good reason: throughout most of his life, his father's life and his grandfather's, through his college years and his career, Dr. Lassiter says that "whiteness mindset" – defined as a condition that causes people of any race (but most often white people) to assume that their lives are more important than others, which allows them to justify oppressing those who are different – has never been far away.

Sadly, Lassiter says, anyone can be on the receiving end of whiteness mindset, but it happens most often to the majority-minority including Black people, Asians, woman, and to gay people like him.

He says that his grandfather lived under racism and it showed: he loved his children, but didn't feel that he could demonstrate it. Lassiter's father parented similarly because that's all he knew. Living low-income also affected Lassiter's mental health, as did the barriers he was forced to overcome in college due to racism and the oppression he felt because of his sexuality. Seeing what could be, if there were no such things as racism and oppression, didn't help.

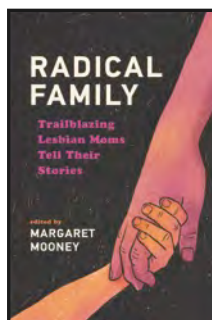
Through his work as a licensed clinical psychologist and the patients he's treated, he knows his experiences are not unique. He also knows that whiteness mindset is not limited to higher education or the workplace and to combat it, we first have to admit

that whiteness is not the concern. The mindset itself and what it does to mental health are bigger issues, and becoming educated is a great way to combat them.

Don't be surprised if you're a little confused at the outset of "How I Know White People are Crazy and Other Stories." It is confusing; Dr. Jonathan Mathias Lassiter writes quickly with a whirlwind of ideas that circle back to one another like ripples in a pond on a windy day. It might make you want to just back away.

Instead, stick around and trust that the meat of the book is coming through stories of real-life counseling and of Lassiter's own life, experiences, and family history. These tales eventually settle the chaos down, offering the clarity missing in the opening pages and allowing readers to see "whiteness mindset" in action and to understand the conflicts within it. You'll be able to clearly see where Lassiter's frustration lies, and what can be done about it. Just know that to get there will take some doing and patience with "How I Know White People Are Crazy and Other Stories." Try it, though. Persevere, and you might not mind.

"Radical Family: Trailblazing Lesbian Moms Tell Their Stories,"
edited by Margaret Mooney
c.2025, Wisconsin Historical Society Press \$20.00 150 pages



You don't have a white picket fence with an adorable gate. The other parts of the American Dream – the house in the suburbs, a minivan, and a big back yard – may also be beyond your reach. You've never wanted the joyous husband-wife union, but the two-point-five kids? Yeah, maybe that's possible. As in the new book "Radical Family," edited by Margaret Mooney, it's surely more so than it was in the past.

Once upon a time, if a lesbian wanted to raise a family, she had two basic options: pregnancy or adoption. That is, says Mooney, if she was willing to buck a hetero-centric society that said the former was "selfish, unnatural and

radical" and the latter was often just simply not possible or even legal. Undaunted, and very much wanting kids, many lesbians ignored the rules. They built "chains" of women who handed off sperm from donor to doctor to potential mother. They demanded that fertility clinics allow single women as customers. They wrote pamphlets and publications aimed to help others become pregnant by themselves or with partners. They carefully sought lesbian-friendly obstetricians and nurses.

Over time, lesbians who wanted kids were "emboldened by the feminist movement and the gay and lesbian rights movement" and did what they had to do, omitted facts when needed, traveled abroad when they could, and found workarounds to build a family. This book tells nine stories of everyday lesbians who succeeded.

Denise Matyka and Margaret McMurray went to Russia to adopt. Martha Dixon Popp and Alix Olson raised their family, in part and for awhile in conjunction with Popp's husband. Gail Hirn learned from an agriculture publication how to inseminate herself. MC Reisdorf literally stood on her head to get pregnant. Mooney says that, like most lesbian parents then, she became a mother "without any safety nets..." Such "struggles likely will feel familiar as you read about [the] desire to become parents..." says Mooney. "In short, these families are ordinary and extraordinary all at once."

In her introduction, editor Margaret Mooney points out that the stories in this book generally take place in the latter part of the last century, but that their relevance is in the struggles that could happen tomorrow. There's urgency in those words, absolutely, and they're tinged with fear, but don't let them keep you from "Radical Family."

What you'll see inside these nine tales is mostly happy, mostly triumphant – and mostly Wisconsin-centric, though the variety in dream-fulfillment is wide enough that the book is appropriate anywhere. The determination leaps out of the pages here, and the storytellers don't hide their struggles, not with former partners, bureaucracy, or with roadblocks. Reading this book is like attending a conference and hearing attendees tell their tales. Bonus: photos and advice for any lesbian thinking of parenthood, single or partnered.

If you're in search of positive stories from lesbian mothers and the wall-busting they did, or if you've lived the same tales, this slim book is a joy to read. For you, "Radical Family" may open some gates.

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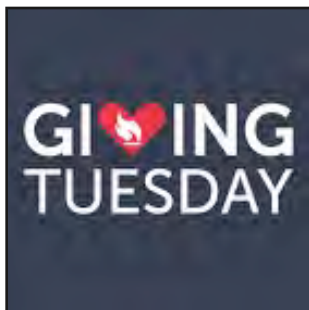
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The eagerly anticipated Santa Speedo Run Northalsted is back Saturday, December 6, 2025, promising a day filled with laughter and goodwill. The annual event will kick off at noon, with an entertaining afternoon of festivities that culminate in a fun 1-Mile run for a great cause. All proceeds from this annual gathering will once again benefit Center on Halsted, a cornerstone of support for the LGBTQ+ community in Chicago. For more information or to register to run visit <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>.

**GIVING TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 2ND**



Giving Tuesday is an annual day of giving held on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving. This year, Giving Tuesday will be held on December 2, 2025. Following traditional days of spending, including Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday stands in contrast.

GRAB readers & followers can show your generosity in a variety of ways during Giving Tuesday—whether it's helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue, sharing a skill, or giving to causes, everyone has something to give, and every act of generosity counts. Check with your local charity to see how you can help.

**PRIDECHICAGO INVITES
COMMUNITY GRAND MARSHAL
NOMINATIONS FOR 2026 CHICAGO
PRIDE PARADE**



PRIDEChicago, the all-volunteer nonprofit organization that has produced the iconic Chicago Pride Parade for more than 50 years, has announced that nominations are officially open for the Community Grand Marshals who will be honored during the 55th annual Chicago Pride Parade on June 28, 2026.

Beginning with the 2025 parade, PRIDEChicago launched a public nomination process to honor individuals who embody the spirit of Pride, elevate voices, and expand opportunity for all. That tradition continues in 2026, inviting the community once again to help recognize those whose leadership, advocacy, and dedication reflect the values at the heart of the Chicago Pride Parade.

"We're seeking the changemakers whose everyday leadership lifts our community," said **Terra Campbell**, Director of Community Engagement, PRIDEChicago. "From health and wellness to education, civil rights, and economic equity, we're inviting Chicago to help us spotlight the leaders who keep our city moving forward."

Nominations for this once-in-a-lifetime recognition opened on October 1, marking the start of LGBTQ+ History Month, and will run through December 31, 2025, through the form at pridechicago.org/nominate. Both self-nominations and nominations submitted by organizations or individuals are welcome.

The final selection for Community Grand Marshals will be made by the PRIDEChicago Board of Directors and announced in April.

"Pride is a year-round commitment to showing up for one another," said **Steve Long**, PRIDEChicago Board Chair. "Join us in celebrating the quiet heroes who make a difference every day by nominating a Community Grand Marshal."



NOV 21 - DEC 28

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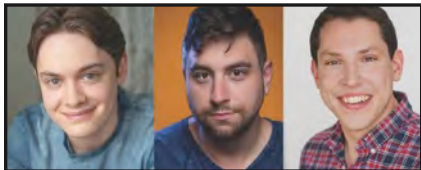
Matters of the Heart

JANUARY 31 | THE AUDITORIUM




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**OPEN SPACE ARTS TO
STAGE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF
DORIAN, A MODERN REMIX OF
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY
FUSED WITH THE STORY OF
OSCAR WILDE'S PROSECUTION
FOR HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY,
NOVEMBER 28- DECEMBER 14**



Open Space Arts has announced it will stage the Chicago Premiere of *DORIAN*, by Phoebe EclairPowell and Owen Horsley, from November 28 through December 14, in its hyper-intimate 25-seat theater at 1411 W. Wilson.

The play dramatizes the story of Oscar Wilde's novel *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* in the present day club scene, alongside the historical record of Wilde's prosecution and conviction for the "gross indecency" of his gay relationship with the much younger Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas in 1895. This juxtaposition demonstrates the timeliness of Wilde's *DORIAN GRAY* theme of obsession with youth and beauty, an obsession that would later prove fatal for Wilde himself.

Open Space Arts' *DORIAN* will be directed by 20-year veteran Chicago director, actor, and playwright **Aaron Holland**. Holland's performance career includes roles at Chicago theaters ranging from the Goodman and Steppenwolf to TUTA and Chicago Children's Theater, as well as his drag alter-ego Shalita Cake. Holland's three-actor cast will play a multitude of roles in both the *Dorian* Gray and the Oscar Wilde plotlines. **Luke Gerdes** (TANGO at PrideArts) will play Dorian, Bosie, and others; **Anthony Kayer** (WAR OF THE WORLDS at Lifeline) will be **Henry Wotton**, Oscar Wilde and others; and **Brian Kulaga** (YANK! A WWII LOVE STORY at Pride Films and Plays) will play Basil Hallward, James Vane and others.

DORIAN will play from November 28 through December 14 at Open Space Arts, 1411 W. Wilson in Chicago. Tickets are \$30 and are on sale now at www.openspacearts.org.

**HELL IN A HANDBAG
PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCES
CASTING FOR WORLD PREMIERE
OF THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF
THE NORTH POLE
NOVEMBER 20, 2025 –
JANUARY 4, 2026**



Hell in a Handbag Productions presents the world premiere of *The Real Housewives of The North Pole*, a holiday parody written by Artistic Director **David Cerda**, directed by **Tommy Bullington**, playing November 20, 2025 – January 4, 2026 at The Clutch, Handbag's boutique performance space at 4335 N. Western Ave. in Chicago's North Center neighborhood.

The North Pole is in trouble. Santa and all the North Pole power players are indicted for fraud and it's up to the women to try and save their families from financial ruin. But how? Years of wealth and privilege have left them with a lot of designer clothes and jewelry, but little else.

Santa's wife, Ruth Claus (**Honey West**), is newly sober and juggling finances, with only her suave sobriety coach Carlos (**Taylor Owen Mercado**) to lean on. Enter Andy Cohen (**David Lipschutz**) from the Bravo network, who whisks her into reality TV stardom with *The Real Housewives of the North Pole*.

Ruth joins a frosty lineup of holiday divas: Mrs. Samantha Frosty (**Robert Williams**), Suzy Snowflake (Britain Shutters), Mrs. Gladys Dasher (David Cerda*) and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer's wife, Clarice (**Anna Rose Steinmeyer**) – all ready to share holiday spirit – and actual spirits.

Rounding out the chaos: an anonymous Production Assistant (**Kelly Opalko**) and Cookie (**Terry McCarthy**), the unapologetic make-

up guru. There will be plenty of cameo appearances by some of the North Pole's most famous (and infamous) citizens, as well – thanks to magic of technology.

Tickets are now on sale at handbagproductions.org or buytickets.at/hellinahandbagproductions/ 1836141

**AMERICAN BLUES THEATER
PRESENTS IT'S 24TH ANNUAL
PRODUCTION OF IT'S A
WONDERFUL LIFE: LIVE IN
CHICAGO NOVEMBER 21-
DECEMBER 28**



American Blues Theater Has announced its 24th Annual Production of *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* from Frank Capra's film and directed by Executive Artistic Director **Gwendolyn Whiteside** with musical direction by Ensemble Member **Michael Mahler**. *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* will run November 21 – December 28, 2025.

For almost 25 years, American Blues has treated audiences to a live retelling of the Frank Capra classic in a 1940s radio broadcast tradition, making *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* the second longest-running holiday play in Chicago!

George Bailey – the Everyman from small town Bedford Falls whose dreams of escape and adventure were stopped by family obligation and civic duty – has fallen onto desperate times. Only a miracle can save him from despair. Told as a radio play with original music and classic holiday carols, it's "the don't miss show of the season" (Chicago Tribune). The annual production will feature favorite American Blues actors.

Tickets are available at www.americanbluestheater.com or by calling (773) 654-3103

**PATTI LUPONE
IN HER CRITICALLY
ACCLAIMED THEATRICAL
CONCERT MATTERS OF THE
HEART SATURDAY JAN 31, 2026
AT THE AUDITORIUM THEATER**



Three-time Tony Award® winner Patti LuPone brings of her critically acclaimed theatrical concert **MATTERS OF THE HEART** to The Auditorium – Chicago's Landmark Stage at 50 E. Ida B. Wells Drive - on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at 7:30 PM for one performance only.

In **MATTERS OF THE HEART** LuPone takes the audience on an exploration of the crimes, affairs and the mysteries of the heart, with electrifying performances of over two dozen love songs ranging from Broadway favorites to works by today's top contemporary songwriters.

Tickets now on sale at auditoriumtheatre.org or by calling The Auditorium's Ticket Service Center at **312.341.2300**.

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**WHERE PIROUETTES MEET
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CARLO TAKE THE ECC ARTS
CENTER STAGE ON
JANUARY 31, 2026**



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo brings its internationally acclaimed troupe of male dancers to the ECC Arts Center on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at 7 pm, for a dazzling mix of skillful pointe work and hilarious parodies of classical ballet favorites including *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Don Quixote*, and *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux*.

Founded in New York City in 1974, the world's leading gender-skewing comic ballet company, affectionately known as the Trocks, began performing in intimate off-off-Broadway lofts, delighting small audiences with its bold, irreverent humor. Over the past 50 years, the company has won over mainstream audiences around the globe, drawing theatregoers each season to experience these extraordinary performers.

Renowned for their satirical takes on classical ballet, the Trocks combine slapstick comedy with extraordinary technical skill, creating performances that celebrate, poke fun at, and breathe new life into beloved ballets. Whether you're a long-time ballet aficionado or discovering the art form for the first time, their shows offer laughter, surprise, and unforgettable artistry.

The ECC Arts Center is located at 1700 Spartan Drive, Building H, Elgin, IL 60123.

Tickets are now available at eccartscenter.org or by calling **847-622-0300**.

**STEPPENWOLF THEATRE
COMPANY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY
SEASON CONTINUES WITH
AMADEUS**



Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the nation's premier ensemble theater company, is pleased to continue its 50th Anniversary Season with **Peter Shaffer's** Oscar and Tony Award-winning masterpiece *Amadeus*, directed by Tony Award winner **Robert Falls** in his Steppenwolf debut. Due to popular demand, *Amadeus* has added one additional week of performances, extending through Sunday, January 11, 2026 in Steppenwolf's Ensemble Theater, Vienna: a cacophony of music and intrigue. The emperor's composer, Antonio Salieri, holds court until the flamboyant entrance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: prodigy and wild child. The two artists begin a vicious and thrilling duet, a rivalry that will define their lives and legacies for years to come. Winner of 5 Tonys and 8 Academy Awards, *Amadeus* is the ultimate ode to ambition and musical genius, a brilliant requiem for a villain in history – but a hero in his own story. Vi saluto!

Steppenwolf Artistic Directors **Glenn Davis** and **Audrey Francis** comment, "We're thrilled to welcome so many ensemble members back to their artistic home, as well as this team of extraordinary performers who round out this remarkable cast. To serve as the company's artistic leaders during Bob Falls's Steppenwolf directorial debut is an honor and feels like a true commitment to recognizing the incredible history of Chicago's theatrical landscape." 1646 N. Halsted St. in Chicago.

Tickets are now on sale at <http://www.steppenwolf.org> or the Box Office at **(312) 335-1650**.

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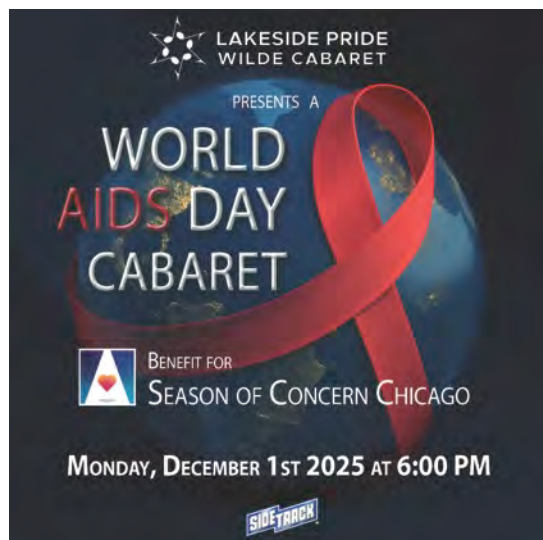
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