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GRAB JULIO



Photo By Zoey Kang

Julio Torres makes it easy to love "Problemista":

By Gregg Shapiro

It should come as no surprise that gay writer and actor Julio Torres' film directorial debut "Problemista" (A24) would not only be quirky and original but also deeply moving, while subtly making a political statement. After all, Torres is the same person behind some of the most unforgettable SNL sketches of the last 10 years, including "Wells for Boys" (which is a favorite of Stephen Colbert's). Additionally, his HBO projects, the special "My Favorite Shapes" and the series "Los Espookys" have garnered Torres raves and a sizeable audience. And who can forget his brief but memorable performance as Jules in "Together Together." With "Problemista," in which he plays struggling toy designer Alejandro, alongside Tilda Swinton, RZA, James Scully, and Isabella Rossellini, among others, he has given viewers the most delightful movie of the season. I had the pleasure of speaking with Julio while he was in Miami Beach.

Gregg Shapiro: The release of

"Problemista" was delayed due to the SAG-AFTRA strike. What does it mean to you that your movie can finally reach its audience?

Julio Torres: It's huge! I didn't really mourn the push at all. Anyone who's made a movie knows how long it takes. To me, personally, it was neither here nor there when it was going to come out, so long as it came out one day. I'm happy that the time is now and that it gets to be not compromised or not subverting any greater effort. Yeah, I'm happy.

GS: "Problemista" features narration and humorous commentary by Isabella Rossellini. What made her the right voice for that role?

JT: Think that it's because she is one of those voices that just echoes in my head and has been in my head for so long. I think the same is true of so many queer people. "And now a warning," from "Death Becomes Her," or "Blue Velvet."

GS: "Marcel the Shell."

JT: Yes, "Marcel the Shell," very

recently.

GS: And the one where she voices the hamster.

JT: Oh, yes! Stephen Dunn's "Closet Monster." Yes, she voices a hamster in that, you're right.

GS: She has a great voice.

JT: Yes, she has a fantastic voice. It just felt like a voice that was commanding, yet fairytale-like, that provokes respect and awe at the same time.

GS: Tilda Swinton is alternately hilarious and terrifying as Elizabeth. Was that part written with her in mind, if not, what was involved in casting her for that part?

JT: I did not have anyone in mind when I was writing it. I love writing for people that I know, but I didn't know anyone personally that could play her. I didn't know Tilda. Sometimes I would think of an actress, and then I would be like, "Well, I don't know these people. Why would they ever be in this?" I



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didn't want to paint myself into a corner. No, I didn't write with her in mind even though I was such a colossal fan of hers for so long. Then the script got to her and she was familiar with "Los Espookys" and the "My Favorite Shapes" special on HBO and she was excited to work with me on something. It was just such a dream come true.

GS: Alejandro has this beautiful and supportive relationship with his mother Dolores (Catalina Saavedra). Do or did you have something similar with your mother?

JT: I do, yeah! It's very based on my relationship with my mother. It's a bit of a thank you card to her.

GS: Has she seen the movie, and if so, what does she think of it?

JT: Yes! She doesn't speak English, but she's a very visually driven person. She really loved it!

GS: A couple of things that stood out to me are Alejandro's cowlick and his distinctive gait. Please say something about those characteristics.

JT: The hair is something that my hair does every now and then.

GS: Lucky you!

JT: [Laughs] That I have that luxury [laughs]? It's also something that my father's hair does a lot. I felt like I was paying tribute to that. It also communicates that he's not on top of it. Then his walk just came about as soon as I put on the backpack. I like to think of him as a little explorer, like a little alien explorer collecting data.



Photo By Zoey Kang

GS: Please tell the readers about your decision to have Craigslist personified as a character, played by Larry Owens in "Problemista."

JT: The incredible Larry Owens. That was a crucial decision that really opened the door to the rest of the movie. At first, I was writing or attempting to write a sort of a bare-bones, slice-of-life version of this movie. I was just so bored by it. I was so disinterested in it, and then suddenly I was like, "What if Craigslist was a person?" That unlocked the tone and style of the movie. It was one of the first pieces that came to me.

GS: "Problemista" is timely in the way that it is also an immigration story.

JT: People keep referring to it as timely, but I feel like this is a subject that's always happening because it's never fixed. The problem gets a different face. People say it's timely, but I say when hasn't it been timely in recent history? I feel like the anguish of feeling trapped in a system that has your fate in its hands, a system that has no face and makes no sense, it's something that feels very relatable to people. It's something that I think that people now experience regardless of whether they're immigrants or not. I've had people connect with it because they're dealing with an

insurance nightmare or bureaucracy or they're in a crazy amount of debt and they're trying to find their way out of that. Immigration happens to be the card that I was dealt, but I think we all share this common frustration for these systems that we are constantly told to just keep our heads down, work really hard, and to overcome them. Even though this story is partially about someone who does that, it's also, I think, a story about someone who questions that well.

GS: I think the queer community can connect to it, too because our lives feel increasingly tenous, especially with Alito and Thomas on the Supreme Court, who want to take away our rights.

JT: Yes, that feeling like you're building a house of cards.

GS: Your boyfriend James Scully plays Bingham, a character who is sort of Alejandro's nemesis.

JT: It's interesting because, yes, I agree with you, but I feel like some people misread it and see it as like a crush or something.

GS: I didn't see it that way at all. What was it like to work with James onscreen?

JT: It wasn't written for him. It was already written by the time I met him. I love working in community. All the people in the movie are either really

old friends or new friends. I think that that is just the type of director that I am. So it really felt very organic and very joyful. My parents have been working together their whole professional lives. They are very much the kind of couple who have blueprints in bed.

GS: So, work never stops?

JT: Work never stops, and I think that creating is a love language for me. Extending that to people that I love is sort of a no-brainer

GS: The final act of the movie takes place 322 years in the future. How did you decide on that specific number?

JT: I think that's one of those numbers where it's like, "Julio, just give us a number!" And I just texted the number. I think because it feels arbitrary.

GS: But also specific -- 3-2-2.

JT: Yes, and it's enough time for it to be extremely disorienting, but not enough time to assume that humanity is completely gone



Photo By Zoey Kang

[laughs]. We're still out there somewhere or another. But (for the scene) I purposely found a space that had no windows.

GS: Thank you for not killing us off.

JT: [Laughs]

GS: Have you started thinking about or working on your next creative project?

JT: Oh, my God, I have started daydreaming of getting the time to work on the next project. I do have a couple of seeds of ideas that I hope to get to.



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GRAB GORAN

Absolute “Beginners”: An interview with gay filmmaker Goran Stolevski

By Gregg Shapiro

The year 2023 was an exceptional one for gay filmmakers. Ira Sachs’ “Passengers” and Andrew Haigh’s “All Of Us Strangers” were well-received by audiences and critics alike and could also be found on numerous end-of-the-year “best of” lists. With “Housekeeping for Beginners” (Focus), gay filmmaker Goran Stolevski didn’t keep us waiting long for the follow-up to his brilliant “Of An Age,” which opened domestically in early 2023. In the same way Stolevski made us laugh and cry (sometimes simultaneously) in “Of An Age,” he achieves the same emotional tug-of-war in “Housekeeping for Beginners.” Suada (Alina Serban), a mother of two daughters – Vanesa (Mia Mustafi) and Mia (Dzada Selim) – by different, absent fathers, is in end-stage pancreatic cancer. Her partner Dita (Anamaria Marinca), the more responsible one in the relationship is suddenly faced with the task of raising a teenager and a kindergartener. Add to that the fact that Dita’s house has become something of a crash pad for outcasts, as well as her gay male housemate Toni (Vladimir Tintor), and his younger lover Ali (Samson Selim), and you can feel the powder keg of her life getting ready to blow. “Housekeeping for Beginners” is an amazing achievement, and it’s all due to Stolevski’s talents as a writer/director. Goran was kind enough to make time for an interview before the film’s release.

Gregg Shapiro: What was the inspiration for your “Housekeeping for Beginners” screenplay?

Goran Stolevski: The first moment

the idea came to me is when I saw a photograph a friend had posted online from his life, from when he first moved to Melbourne with his boyfriend in the 1970s.

They moved into a house with eight gay women. It was just a random snapshot from their day-to-day life at the time. I remember seeing it and going, “I love this energy, this context.” A kind of cocoon of queerness. I wanted to live within it, essentially, come up with a story that takes me there. I wanted it to be present tense. That story doesn’t quite make sense in Australia anymore. But most of the world isn’t like Australia or like America or like the developed west. As much as Macedonia might seem exotic onscreen, in this context this is closer to what day-to-day life feels like for queer people in most of the world. I feel like a lot of these stories don’t get documented.

GS: One of the things that stands out about “Housekeeping for Beginners” is the way that dialogue and the absence of dialogue have equal weight. For example, early in the movie, there is a dinner table scene in which multiple characters discuss a variety of socio-political topics. Later, following the scene in which Suada, who has pancreatic cancer, tells her daughters Mia and Vanesa to call her lover Dita



Photo By Joel Chamaa

mom and housemate Teri dad (the roles Suada wants the adults to assume), emotions and responses are communicated without dialogue.

GS: It’s also in my older work, and I realized that it didn’t happen by design. It just happened organically in “You Won’t Be Alone” and especially in “Of An Age.” Dialogue is very important to me. I grew up on a lot of ‘30s and ‘40s Hollywood screwball comedies. The dialogue used to be so snappy and perfect. I think that’s difficult to find these days. I think it’s important to aim for the highest that you possibly can. I do love dialogue. But what I realized in making these films is that quite often, the most important lines of dialogue are entirely unspoken. They happen in the eyes. The actors and characters speak to each other silently; I look for those moments. Sometimes they happen in a way that’s unexpected. I often encourage my actors to improvise or rephrase things in a way that feels comfortable for them, feels real for them. I’m not a stickler about these things. Also, when you say improvisation, most people think of dialogue. But improvisation can just

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be a glance or a gesture or someone taking someone's hand and looking at it. Those moments, to me, contain a whole story or put a frame around it that feels very whole and profound. I'm always looking for them. Sometimes an entire scene of dialogue that I love ends up deleted [laughs] because something's happened along the way that is so much more elegant and eloquent and silent that gives me the emotional detail that I'm looking for which makes the dialogue redundant. I'm grateful when I find them.

GS: As the screenwriter, is there a special significance to Suada having two daughters, as opposed to a daughter and a son, or two sons?

GS: Not theoretically. It's quite common that I do end up writing more female characters than male ones in my work. I feel like if you took out my brain cells and analyzed them somehow scientifically in the future, most of them would match that of a girl [laughs]. Even when I was little, I remember in fourth grade, my class of 36 (children) had to be stopped because there was a crisis. Goran's been hanging out with girls for an hour. Everyone had to stop and make sense of this. Why is it happening? It has to stop! It's not an objective, analytical thing. I just connect with girls and women a lot more than I appear to on the outside [laughs]. The only creative work I trust is the stuff that comes instinctively. Not the stuff where I'm trying to make a statement.

GS: Following Suada's death, her widow Dita, who does welfare work, is talking to a co-worker who expresses her condolences for the death of Dita's "cousin," because she obviously can't be out at work. Is that what you were referring to earlier, when you talked about the rest of the world, and how difficult it is to be out in many other places?

GS: Yes. Even if there were legal rights in place to protect queer people in these countries, it barely makes a difference when the legal and social systems don't function. You can have anti-discrimination policies, but discrimination will still exist. You need to hope for a



Photo By Viktor Irvin Ivanov

policeman or a judge to somehow be the kind of person who follows rules rather follows their own prejudices. Most of them will follow the prejudices, and the bribes [laughs]. It's not like that makes Macedonia chaotic or strange to most of the world. That is, genuinely, most of the world. I saw a list where the world's 190 countries got ranked based on GDP, and Macedonia was dead set in the middle. It was like at number 90. This is the average in the world, it's not the exception. In order to function in a workplace and not be seen as something dirty, especially if you're a welfare worker and you have to be around children, she cannot be openly gay anywhere, but especially at work. Even in making this film, one of the most complicated things that we had to be very careful with, even during auditions and finding locations, was how do you introduce the idea that you're making a film that has homosexuals and children in it. Because those two things are not allowed to be around each other. Again, this is not an exception to the rule, this is most of the world. That scene is a reflection of daily, normal life.

GS: You mentioned old movies, and I was thinking about how actor and comedian W.C. Fields was known for his dislike of children, and he had a famous quote about never working with children. So, what was the experience of working with Dzada Selim, who played Mia, like for

you?

GS: The little girl, the five-year-old. I remember we set up a quick shoot of what turned out to be the opening scene of the film, in the end, just as practice, with a crew, to get used to my methods of working on set, for like an hour, before we started shooting the film properly. The three people on-screen in that scene had never been on set before, and I wanted to introduce them gradually, with no sense of pressure. We had to do things in a correct way. It was about us adjusting to their comfort, and also for me to try to figure out how the hell does one direct a five-year-old. The lesson was that one doesn't direct her, she gets to direct you, and you should be grateful and shut up [laughs]. Especially because Dzada speaks two languages fluently, and a little bit of English on top of that. And she's five! She's not a kid from a privileged background, so this is a brain that has caught on to so much. The other thing is, you don't want to manipulate a child and don't get a chance to with Dzada. She's in charge. She's too smart. She's on to you at every point. Every single day we had to create this environment on-set where she was going to enjoy whatever she was doing. There aren't actually child labor laws in Macedonia, which is problematic on many levels. Luckily, Dzada comes with her own child labors which are she'll give you six minutes and then she's going to go play with her dolls. And then her double takes over [laughs]. The way she approached it was like role-



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playing, and then she was commenting on things that were going on. Every day felt wonderful, but then the next day we were like, how are we going to get through this? Because every day had to be different.

GS: Throughout “Housekeeping for Beginners,” I kept finding myself drawn to Ali, Dita, and Vanesa, who come across as the most sympathetic characters. I know you created all of them, but would you agree with the three I named, that they’re sort of the heart of the movie?

GS: Ultimately, at its core, it's about a mom, a dad, and a child. Dita is dad, Ali is mom, and Vanesa is the child. That was apparent to me at script level, but also in the shooting of it. A lot of this story is my brain split between two women, and that's Dita and Vanesa, quite frankly. There are a lot of emotional notes from my own life that are transposed in it, although it's not an autobiographical film. There's a reason that the final image of the film is Vanesa in the end. That part wasn't written, that sequence, but it was in the prepping of it that I was like, this is the key to my story. This is where my heart lies. I'm especially drawn to people who are complicated, and even a little bit abrasive. I don't like idealized, traditionally loveable characters. The ones that make sense to me, that I connect to, are people like Vanesa. Then, Ali, you can't help but love, even me. Dita is the rest of my brain, transposed through (actor) Anamaria Marinca, who usually gets to play me onscreen, quite often [laughs].

GS: What do you think the denizens of Shutka would think of the way it is portrayed in “Housekeeping for Beginners”?

GS: Obviously, they need to answer that more than I do. But I think they're happy with it because there's a range of people and experiences. I teared up in Venice (at the Venice International Film Festival in 2023). When we first enter Shutka itself, onscreen, a lot of the actors in the film live there, and they were there,

watching the film. The look and the gasps that came from them when they saw it was just so profoundly moving. Shutka's been depicted in little documentaries and other films within the region, before. A lot of the time it's very exoticized and it doesn't feel like real life. Whereas I wanted it to feel like what everyday life feels like. And in a lot of the locations we shot in, we were vaguely controlling traffic, but it's impossible to do in that place. It's just real life going on around it. It's a



gift to me, as a filmmaker, that I get to capture this, and that I had actors who were happy to work in this kind of way that isn't very controlled, that is like an unfolding situation in real-time. I hope the reactions continue to be as they've been so far.

GS: “Housekeeping for Beginners” is your third film after “You Are Not Alone” and “Of An Age,” both of which are certified fresh on Rotten Tomatoes, while “Housekeeping for Beginners” is currently at 100% on the site. What does that kind of response mean to you?

GS: To me, a critic is a viewer, first and foremost. Ideally, not always, looking at your work very closely.

That means that someone is coming at your story so openly that the depths of them are available to you when they're watching it. It's someone you would hope loves cinema in the same way that I do. I wanted to be a movie critic before becoming a filmmaker [laughs]. I was a film nerd, first. I discovered movies through reading reviews. A friend of mine sent me a link that one of my favorite critics just put “Housekeeping for Beginners” in his top 10. To me, top 10s mean so much more to me than the Oscars [laughs]. The Oscars are also important to me. I don't love that sense of being reduced to a number. I think that's really confronting and sometimes can be misleading, as well. That's how life is today. I don't think it's limited to film criticism or movies in general. It's still early days, there's not that many reviews, so I don't want to get too carried away. I hope it continues for this film. Ultimately, you want people to find your film. Films like this don't exist without critics championing them. I don't have the budget of “Barbie” [laughs] to advertise myself. Without critics and festivals, I don't get to make films.

GS: Have you started working on or thinking about your next film project?

GS: The next two films are a little bit more expensive, so they're trickier to finance. Not a lot more, but slightly. I'm told to be optimistic, but I don't believe anything until I'm on set [laughs]. I'm told to expect to be shooting in the middle of this year. I don't want to talk about the details of those until I know they're going to be something that's real. I'm also writing something at the moment; and talking to an actor that I love who's very generous and expressed interest in working with me. That's kind of what's keeping my brain occupied. I have the kind of brain that starts eating away at itself unless it's got something bigger to lose itself in. Right now, that screenplay is serving that purpose until I get the budget to shoot

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GRAB JONNNY



JONNY MCGOVERN IS GAY AF As the host of Hey Qween! and his dishy new podcast show

By Larry Olsen

Jonny McGovern's career in entertainment launched twenty years ago with Dirty Gay Hits, his collection of gay themed songs that received over five million downloads before YouTube even existed. It caught the eye of Rosie O'Donnell, who cast McGovern as a lead player on her comedy show, The Big Gay Sketch Show alongside Oscar nominee Coleman Domingo and SNL's Kate McKinnon.

Today, Jonny McGovern is best known for his popular television shows including GoGo for the Gold (second season streaming now on OUTtv) and Hey Qween!, his talk show streaming new episodes now, exclusively on World of Wonder's SVOD platform WOW Presents Plus. For even more gay laughs and hijinks, you can catch him in Jonny McGovern is Gay AF, the comedian's new weekly podcast show where he puts a homo spin on all of the latest celeb news. We spoke with Jonny McGovern from his home in LA.

Larry Olsen: What is like to be gay AF in Hollywood today?

Jonny McGovern: There's never been a better time to be gay AF!

LO: Gay comedians are hot right now! There's Fortune Feimster, Matteo Lane, Tig Notaro, Bob the Drag Queen... the list goes on and on.

JM: Yes, it's great. I think apps like TikTok have really helped make this possible. The take a lot of the gatekeeping away. It's no longer some straight person telling you what you can and cannot talk about. The audience can decide for themselves what they find is funny, and when something or someone gets a big reaction from a digital audience, comedy clubs and the industry take notice.

LO: Were you always gay AF?

JM: I may have tried to hide it in my younger years, but when I stopped trying to be what society told me was proper and started fully expressing my true self is when I started to make a name for myself.

LO: What inspired you to launch your new podcast, Jonny McGovern is Gay AF?

JM: I started podcasting in 2006 and my podcast audience has been my

most devoted audience. I have people that have been riding with me for almost twenty years and that's really special.

LO: Gay Pimpin' was a real pioneer in LGBTQ podcasting!

JM: We were the first gay show to crack the top 10 of iTunes podcasts.

LO: How is Jonny McGovern is Gay AF different from Gay Pimpin'?

JM: Spiritually, they are both from the same place.. Format wise, they are different. Gay Pimpin' was a snapshot of my life at the time with a very large group of friends on the mic with me. Gay AF is more intimate. It's created to be like you, as the listener, are sitting down with me one on one to gossip, throw shade, kiki about which OnlyFans accounts are good and which are not worth our coins. We break down the stories of the day and deep dive into DL gay celebrity scandals and blind items.

LO: Where do you find the topics?

JM: I keep a list of everything that I see that stands out as "of homosexual interest" on social media, in magazines, movies, TV, and

music. From diva rap battles like Nicki vs. Megan to the gay couple airport meltdown to Diddy's alleged gay sex parties; no topic is off limits!

LO: How did your podcast shows prepare you for Hey Qween!?

JM: I was working in nightlife while recording The Gay Pimpin' shows and I spent a lot of time with drag queens and ballroom legends. It was a natural evolution to make Hey Qween! a place where queens share their journeys.

LO: Congratulations on the show moving to Wow Presents Plus!

JM: This season, we have access like never before to the world's top queens! We are the first sit down TV interview for the eliminated queens of season 16 of RuPaul's Drag Race, so we get the tea piping hot! Not only do I have some of Drag Race's Emmy winning producers working with me on the show, but we're also able to get call-ins from Drag Race legends and we regularly feature actual iconic props from the season. The girls' elimination airs on Friday

and Hey Qween comes out on Monday afternoons at 3:30 PM on WOW PresentsPlus! There's so much Drag Race conversation, it feels great to be in the eye of the storm and on the mother ship of WOW.

LO: No doubt the late Lady Red Couture is smiling down from heaven at your success.

JM: It's bittersweet to have finally gotten to this place that we always dreamed of traveling together and not have Lady Red beside me. She's with me in spirit and I keep a candle with her picture on it next to me on the desk so she's always represented. I miss her and I know



she's up in heaven cheering me on.

LO: Speaking of legendary angels, what would Dorian Corey or Pepper LaBeija think of the state of LGBTQ+ representation in entertainment today?



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GRAB A GETAWAY



Land of Lincoln: Your Visit to Historic Springfield, Illinois

By Bill Malcolm

The central Illinois town of Springfield is not only the state capitol, but also the home of Abraham Lincoln, one of America's greatest presidents. Lincoln's legacy is everywhere including the National Park Service run village just south of downtown. The downtown area is very walkable and full of signs describing details about the history and role the 16th President played in the city.

WHAT TO DO

Mr. Lincoln's neighborhood (aka Lincoln Home National Historic Site) is a National Park Service run tribute to the late President. The pedestrian only area highlights the famous homes of Mr. Lincoln and others. NPS also runs a film on the history of President Lincoln. You will find it at 426 S. 7th Avenue. There is no admission charge. Try and schedule a free tour if you can. Some fun facts about Lincoln and the Lincoln Home in Springfield from the National Park

Service brochure:

- Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809. He died April 15, 1865.
- Abraham Lincoln was 6 feet, 4 inches tall.
- The first time Abraham Lincoln ran for public office, he lost. He finished eighth of thirteen candidates.
- Before becoming president, Abraham Lincoln held the following political offices: Seat in the Illinois State House of Representatives (1834, 1836, 1838, and 1840) and Seat in the U.S. House of Representatives (1846)
- Lincoln was to participate in a duel with James Shields on September 22, 1842, until it was called off at the last minute by friends on both sides.
- Lincoln did not receive the nickname "Rail Splitter" until the Illinois Republican Convention held in Decatur on May 9-10, 1860.

The Lincoln Home

- The Lincoln Home was built in 1839 for Reverend Charles Dresser, who later married Abraham and Mary Lincoln, then a few years later, sold them the house. It was a one-and-a-half cottage at the time. The Lincolns paid \$1500 for the house. Other details:
 - The Lincoln Home has almost burned down two times since its construction in 1839. The first fire occurred over the Christmas holiday of 1854/1855. This fire may have encouraged the Lincolns to add the full second floor. The second fire was the result of a lightning strike, which burned the roof near the north chimney.
 - The first telephone was installed in the Lincoln Home between 1878 and 1879.
 - Electricity was first used to light the home in 1899.



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Lincoln home National Historic Site

Other things to do:

Tour the beautiful Illinois State Capitol.
 Visit the Lincoln Presidential Museum and the Lincoln grave site known as Lincoln's Tomb.
 Enjoy the wildflowers and trails just south of downtown along Lake Springfield.
 The Illinois State Museum (502 S. Spring Street) is free and showcase's the state.

NIGHTLIFE

The Clique Bar downtown is your LGBTQ+ bar. They have a great happy hour and a friendly crowd of locals. Check their Facebook page for events. You will find them at 411 East Washington right downtown. **PRIDEFEST IS MAY 18**
 Mark your calendars. Springfield's Pridefest will be May 18. It features the 11th Annual Club LaCage Drag Show as well as Drag Queen Bingo. Details at springfieldpridefest.com.

GETTING THERE

Springfield is served by rail from both Chicago and St. Louis as well as a train that goes south to Texas on the Texas Eagle which features a dome car. The trains in Illinois now operate at 100 mph + and service is frequent. The station is right

downtown. Book your trip at www.amtrak.com. Springfield is just 2-3 hours south of Chicago and just ninety miles north of St. Louis. Flying is an option right into Springfield or you can fly to St. Louis and drive up.

WHERE TO STAY

I stayed at the Carpenter Street Hotel (525 N. 6th Street) Inn just north of downtown. It's basic and affordable and walkable to the attractions. They even offered me a lower rate than the one I booked at when I checked in – unheard of in the industry. It's near a nice locally owned grocery store, County Market (210 E. Carpenter), which has food to go and a great salad bar. Work out at the nearby new YMCA that sells day passes until 4 p.m. Check your bill, though. They charged me three nights instead of two and also charged the incorrect rate the second night. (Yes, I got it corrected.) Also, they charge the full amount at check in (not at check out like most hotels).

Other options are available but check the Trip Advisor reviews of them before booking. Especially the Wyndham (the white circular high

rise downtown) as well as the property across the street which both get dubious reviews. The only other hotel I recommend downtown is the State House Inn. There are other hotels east of downtown along the freeway. I have stayed at the Crowne Point but get a room not facing the freeway (I-55).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Illinois Times (Illinoistimes.com) is your weekly with local events and happenings.

VisitSpringfieldillionis.com and **capitalcityvisitor.com** have details on all of the above attractions.

Springfield is rich in history and has a fun gay bar. It is worth a visit. *Bill Malcolm is an award winning LGBTQ+ syndicated travel columnist whose column is carried by publications around North America. He recently finished second in the Excellence in Journalism Awards in the Florida Press Association for travel writing for his Chicago and Milan columns published by Embrace Magazine of Ocala. He is a native of Peoria, Illinois and his family is from Morton and Pekin.*

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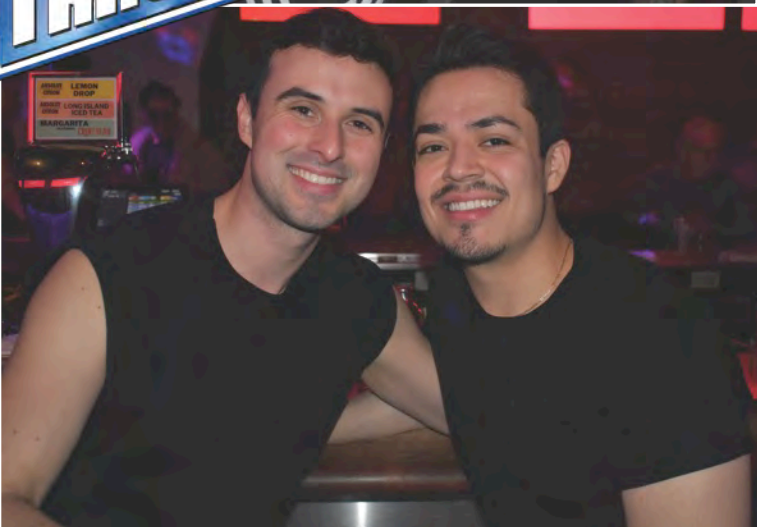
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
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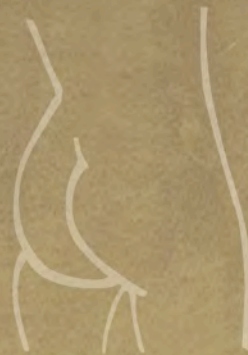
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
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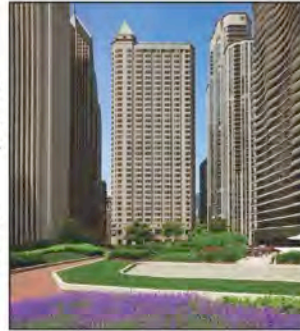
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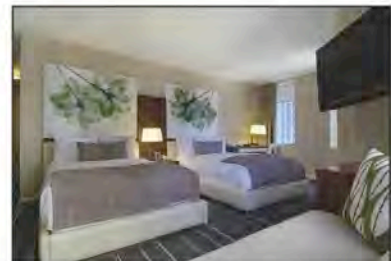
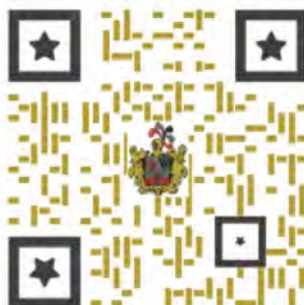
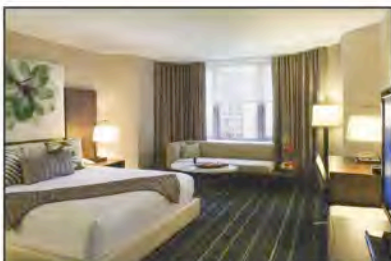
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TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Tune Up Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. **Hydrate:** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm–8pm: \$5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. 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 Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Tallboys Everyday Specials, \$5Jager, \$5 Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am.Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi.

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$ New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Tallboy Beers Specials: Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$4Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Stolis (All Flavors). Happy Hour Specials 7pm–10pm: \$6 Any BIG drafts Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. 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 & Ariana 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Britney & Rihanna 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 Tito's Cocktails, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)FreeDarts **Touche:**Open 5pm - 4am.Jockstrap Night. Free Clothing Check.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons . Everyday Specials:\$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. **Charlie's:** Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lit Tallboys Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Tito Cocktails, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursdays with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails\$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am.Throwback Thursdays70's & 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo. 70's & 80's Music.

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), 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 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p-1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p-1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p-1am, 5th Fierce Fridays - Strut 10p-1am, Dancing until close. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys \$8 New Amsterdam & Redbull Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Tito's Cocktails \$7.50 Big Miller Lites. Happy Hour Specials 5pm-8pm: \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. **SideTrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **The Sofu Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. **Touche:** 4/19 Cowboy Round Up.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: 1/2 Off All Drafts \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), 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 2pm-3am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7-10pm, The Main Event 10pm-1am Dancing until Close. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 Miller Lite TallBoys Happy Hour Specials: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons. Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 Signature Margaritas Happy Hour Specials 2pm-5pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$12 Mimosa Carafes, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **SideTrack:** Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games with Sasha & Zamora Love 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. **The Sofu Tap:** \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, \$5 Signature Margaritas, Happy Hour Specials: 12pm-3pm: 1/2 Off All Drafts. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 5am. 4/20 Gear Night Dress Code in Club Room, BNC 6 pm. 4/27 Ripe Party Dim Lights, Deep Bets Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T.

SUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$6 Chicago Handshakes Happy Hour Specials 2pm-5pm \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), 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 2pm-2am **Charlie's:** Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm-7pm, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm-11pm Mas Leche 11pm-1am, Dancing until close. **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Jackhammer:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands Happy Hour Specials: 1st Sunday: \$7 Planter's Punch 2nd Sunday: \$5 Dog Bowls (Premium Well) 3rd Sunday: \$3 Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's Tallboy Beers 4th Sunday: \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor) 5th Sunday: \$6 New Amsterdam & Red Bull Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$12 Mimosa Carafes. Happy Hour Specials: 7pm-10pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And \$1 off all Revolution beers. **SideTrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Fun Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Fun Day After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am **The Sofu Tap:** \$6 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 12pm-2pm: \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 1pm-3pm: \$3 House Shots FREE Chicago-style hot-dogs (while supplies last) Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, \$2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm.

GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of April

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	Artist	Title
1	Juany Bravo	Stay Close
2	Sophie Ellis Bextor	Murder On The Dancefloor
3	Casso x Raye x D block Europe	Prada
4	Brando	Too Close
5	Seven Lions & Above & Beyond	Over Now ft. Opposite The Other
6	Kylie Minogue	Tension
7	Tate McRae	Greedy (Alok Clean Radio Edit)
8	Niel Degas X Ricardo Geldres	LA Nights ft. Drew Tyler
9	Snakehips & Muni Long	My Body
10	Different Heaven	Chasing Stars (Radio Edit)
11	The Knocks & Sofi Tukker	One On One (Radio Edit)
12	Dom Dolla	Saving Up
13	Kris Kross Amsterdam x Sofia Reyes x Tinie Tempah	How You Samba
14	Loud Luxury & Two Friends	If Only I Ft. Bebe Rexha
15	Pet Shop Boys	Loneliness
16	Robin Schulz & Rita Ora & Tiago PZK	I'll Be There
17	Hayla	Fall Again (Radio Edit)
18	DVBBS	This Moment
19	PARISI	Believe In Myself (US Dance Radio Edit)
20	PS1	Out For 1
21	Electric Polar Bears X Bertie Scott	Animals
22	Yves V & Aaxis & Axel Cooper	Derniere Dance (With Shanguy)
23	DJ Sammy	Have You Seen The Rain
24	Ariana Grande	Yes ... And
25	Notd	Ampm Ft. Maia Wright
26	Haliene & Elephante	Hollow
27	Vassy	Krazy
28	Morgin Madison & Ryan Lucian & Jas.	Tell Me Who You Are
29	Blanke & Grant	Heavy Heart Ft. Your Friend Polly
30	Mike Williams	Could It Be Love

FRIDAY. APRIL 26

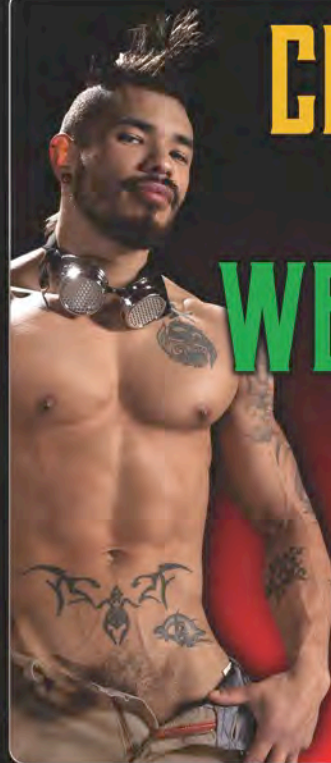
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GRAB ROGER

Disinherited from an Estate Plan

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

The following are five factors that I've seen that lead to people being disinherited from a relative's or friend's estate plan. Knowing these factors will hopefully help ensure that you will avoid being disinherited:

1) Never Call or Visit. This is far and away the most significant factor that leads to disinheritance. It should be so obvious that it goes without saying. Unfortunately it's not. I've seen countless scenarios where children or other relatives expect that they can go years without visiting a relative, or months without calling a parent, and still expect to be provided for in their estate plan.

2) Threaten Not To Visit. Many relatives subtly threaten or pressure other relatives in various ways, including by extremely subtle insinuations that they're "too busy to visit" unless XYZ occurs. The problem arises in two scenarios: first, where subtle threats are successful and they embolden the threatener until the parent reaches a breaking point and reacts by

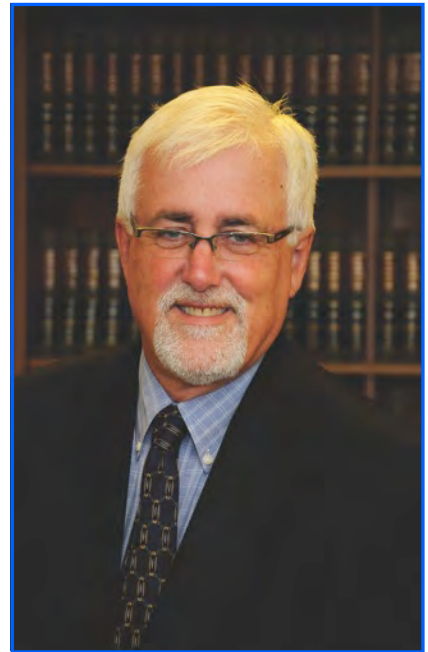
disinheriting the threatener; or two, where an elderly relative's physical and emotional capacities for patience have degenerated due to natural aging processes, and therefore he's much more easily "ticked off" than before, and reacts by disinheriting the threatener.

3) Be Judgmental About The Relative's Money. As a relative ages, some unsavory people start to see dollar signs behind everything the relative does with his money. For example, if an elderly parent in his late 80s buys a new car, a child may think: "what a waste; he doesn't need a new car because he'll probably pass away in a few years." Keep something important in mind: it's your relative's money and he can do whatever he darn well pleases with it up until the moment he's dead.

There's no need for children to make remarks about how things are "too expensive" or ask "do you really need that." Now, I'm not talking about scenarios where a parent has fallen under the undue influence of another unethical person, or where a parent has lost the mental capacity to make prudent decisions with his

money (in those cases relatives should intervene). My point is that many acts of disinheritance could be avoided if children and other relatives showed the same deference to elderly relatives (who are still of sound mind) with regards to finances as they did when the person was younger.

4) Argue About Minor Things. Who cares what color mom painted her family room? Who cares if dad decided to give nephew Jimmy an extra \$20 for gas money when he came to visit because Jimmy recently lost his job? Are any of these really life-altering events worth triggering a conflict with a relative about? Many times it's wiser to just let the small things go



rather than trigger an argument about them with a relative. Almost every argument about minor things arises as a result of someone speaking angrily in the heat of the moment, whereas if the person paused for a moment, took a deep breath, and thoughtfully reflected for several seconds, he would realize the wisdom of holding his tongue.

5) Prematurely Clean Out Your Parent's House. I'm talking here about scenarios where a parent is declining and will likely pass in the next year or two, and a child tries to get a "jump start" on making the estate administration process easier by removing items from the parent's house. Usually, it's not so much the removal of the items per se that leads to the anger; rather, it's the signal that the child is acting presumptively, or that he sees his parent's passing as a "imminent" reality (which it may in fact be, but the message being communicated to the parent by the child is one of disrespect).

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 HOLLY

The Revenge of the Unicorns

By Holly Maholm

Sassy Pants and I were keeping company with Queen Penelope in the apple orchard when it occurred to me to ask, "Your Majesty, you have been so kind as to have shared with Dot and me several fables, more than one of which record the efforts you and other members of the Species Unicorn have made to act as 'mediators' when conflicts arise between one species of animal and another. But I wonder, do you take on those same responsibilities when an animal species has a grievance with the Species Human?"

The Queen turned to me with a bemused glance, as if to say, "If we did that, we unicorns would have exterminated your species a long time ago." She responded, "No, Holly, and for two very good reasons. First, if we were to attempt to assist every species of animal – wild or domesticated – having a grievance with the Species Human, we would have time for nothing else. And second, if we were to take such retributive action – often constituting little more than revenge – our involvement would soon be noticed, and the existence of the Species Unicorn would be revealed. Nevertheless," she went on, "there was one occasion in which members of my frolic helped one member of the Species Horse obtain justice, which I

will share with you.

"Many years ago, there was a horse racing track located just outside the city limits, and one member of my frolic – Feather – was a frequent visitor to the stables there. You have heard that Feather had a soft spot in his heart for disabled Civil War veterans, who were prominent among patrons of that track. But also, he considered the racehorses, themselves, to be another category of 'war veteran,' inasmuch as the lives of racehorses were so short. There were many who sustained injuries on the track, and since it was usually their legs that were injured, they were almost always quickly put down. Accordingly, Feather often visited the stables, to see what help he could give to the racehorses.

"Then, it happened one night that when he arrived at the stables, all the racehorses rushed out of their stalls to tell him of the disaster which had befallen one of their number. One horse – Thunder – spoke up, "Feather," he began, "you must help us! Only you can give us justice for our loss!" He explained.

"Last night, the stable boy – Miguel, who shovels out the stalls and sleeps here in the stables as a watchman – got up and went into the stall with Chestnut. You may know that Chestnut has been winning many races recently, and we believe some human wanted to make money betting against him. So, Miguel took with him into the stall a small glass bottle and hypodermic. We have all had the vet give us shots, so we know what we saw. But tragically, this morning Chestnut was found dead in his stall, and Miguel swears he slept through the night and did nothing. This afternoon, the vet who works here at the track declared Chestnut died of 'natural causes,' and now it seems Miguel will escape justice!

"Feather!" he begged. "You unicorns have horns! You can make yourselves invisible to humans! Please! Give us our revenge upon this human who murdered our friend. And don't forget, as long as this human continues living here in the stables, we are all in danger. We have nowhere else to turn!"



Queen Penelope continued, "Afterwards, Feather came to me, and we discussed what we could do to satisfy the anger of the racehorses. Here is what we did..."

"The next night, when all in the stable – including Miguel – were asleep, Feather appeared at the door to the stables, where he led all the racehorses silently to a place of hiding behind a nearby barn. Then, I led eight members of my frolic into the stables, and one by one we unicorns took our places in those stalls previously occupied by the racehorses. After that, Feather took up his position in the stall previously occupied by Chestnut.

"Finally... Feather used his Unicorn Magic to disguise himself as Chestnut, but not Chestnut as we knew him, but Chestnut as he might appear after a year in his grave – his flesh putrid, black and falling off his bones, his eyes rotted out, his lower jaw hanging slack from a decaying sinew. This zombie Chestnut banged his hoof on the wall, and Miguel came out to find the source of the noise.

"He was astonished to be confronted by the skeletal Chestnut! He screamed out in terror, transfixed by the hideous apparition appearing before him, following which the other unicorns – each one disguised, like Feather, as the decomposing corpse of Chestnut – exited their stalls and converged upon him. He ran screaming from the stables, and that night confessed what he had done."

(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

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GRAB JOEY



Diamond Shines Bright Joey Diamond Reworks “Waiting for Tonight”

By Skip Sheffield

Out singer Joey Diamond and his producer, Jace M, made waves last year with their remake of *NSYNC favorite “Tearin’ Up My Heart”. Now, with the help of Toy Armada, they are taking on JLO, re-imagining her 1999 classic, “Waiting for Tonight”.

Diamond fondly recalls bopping along to Jennifer Lopez’s original as a child and credits the diva with empowering a young generation of people of color like him; encouraging them to have hope for the future. “The song is a huge inspiration as my goal, with both my covers and original tracks, is to see people vibing, dancing, and having the time of their lives on the dance floor,” he says.

Jace M and Toy Armada infuse lots of drums and full synths into the new version, but Jace feels it is Joey’s vocals that really drive the beat home. “Joey’s range is stunning and the passion he exudes in the

song is intoxicating.”

We caught up with Joey Diamond at his Miami home to learn more.

Skip Sheffield: How did you, Jace M and Toy Armada come together to re-make “Waiting for Tonight”?

JD: After the success of “Tearing up my Heart”, we thought it might be fun to do another nineties classic.

We looked for something with an up-tempo Latin vibe that still had that nostalgic feel to it.

SS: What did you think the first time you heard Jace M and Toy Armada’s production of the song?

JD: I’m convinced that Jace and Toy are actually warlocks and that every song they create is embedded with a spell that makes listeners crave chocolate pudding.

SS: What is a typical day for you?

JD: Typically, I’m hitting the studio in

the morning for about five hours. Then, in the afternoon, I start my second job which is producing subscription-based video content. Depending on the day, that could mean meeting up with another content creator and filming magic together or it could be my fiancé and I traveling and documenting our adventures.

SS: Where do you go?

JD: We go everywhere from cities to mountains. I especially love going to the beach and dipping my toes in the water. I especially love Haulover nude beach.

SS: Do you have a guilty pleasure?

JD: I binge eat the Unicorn ice cream from Walmart. It’s so delicious. I could go through a pint a day.

SS: What book is on your



nightstand?

JD: It's been a hot minute since I've had the time to open a book for enjoyment but the last one was Dr. Michael Bennett's F*uck Feelings.

SS: Who is someone you follow online?

JD: I follow Bad Bunny. I love him and I'm super intrigued by his fashion.

Jace M and Toy Armada's "Waiting for Tonight" featuring Joey Diamond is available on all digital platforms via Queen House Music.

Follow Joey Diamond on Instagram @ jdiamondisme

Follow Jace M on Instagram @ JaceDJ

Follow Toy Armada on Instagram @ djtoyarmada



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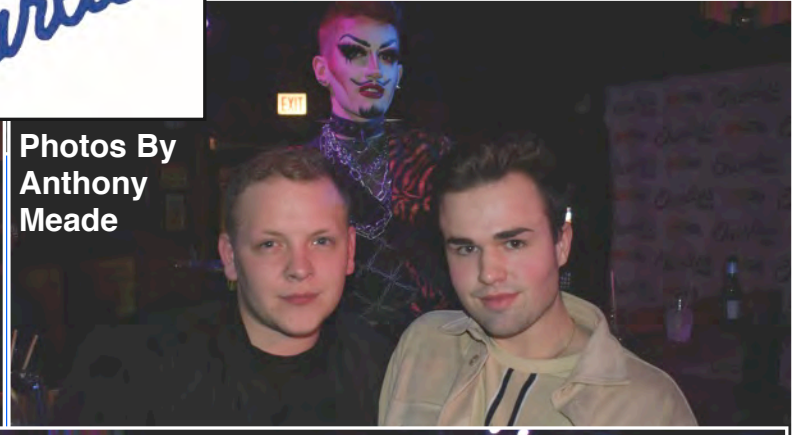


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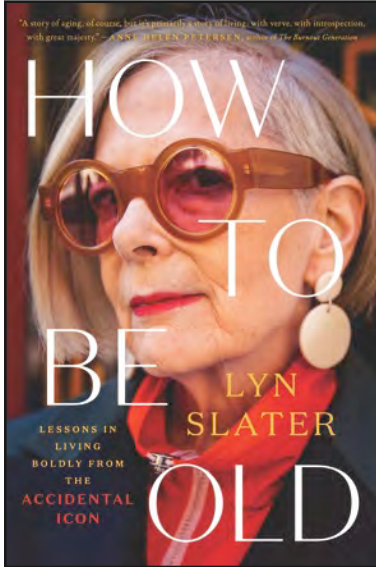
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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"How to Be Old" by Lyn Slater
c.2024, Plume \$28.00 272 pages



There's an alternative, but it's not always a good one.

You can grow old or... well, you could die. Other choices: remain grumpy in your chair, or look out the window and see what's outside. You can have joy or regrets. Gather your years or deny them, keep the gray or dye your hair, live or die. You can read these great books on aging, and ignore what's inside or *carpe diem*.

The year before she entered her sixties, Lyn Slater says she "couldn't find anything to wear." Nothing "inspired" her, which seemed to be a metaphor: what she put on her body "always helped me tell stories about myself."

She was excited to enter a fresh new decade of life, though, despite being inundated with reminders of her age, which only "served to provoke me." She decided to return to school, to take classes for fashion design, to create a new wardrobe and a new story, and in

On her first day of classes, Slater noticed that she was "the oldest person in the room" but nobody cared; they were more interested in what she wore. As time progressed and she learned that her experiences mattered, someone mentioned that she should have a blog. Slater began to dream. Soon, she began to blog.

"How to Be Old" is a delight that mixes a passion for fashion with glee for a second career and love at a later age. Readers will be well-served by heeding Slater's advice: "It's one thing to think about doing something; it's another to actually do it."

"Nothing Ever Just Disappears: Seven Hidden Queer Histories" by Diarmuid Hester c.2024, Pegasus Books \$29.95 358 pages



Go to your spot.

Where that is comes to mind immediately: a palatial home with soaring windows, or a humble cabin in a glen, a ramshackle treehouse, a window seat, a coffeehouse table, or just a bed with a special blanket. It's the place where your mind unspools and creativity surges, where you relax, process, and think. It's the spot where, as in the new book "Nothing Ever Just Disappears" by Diarmuid Hester, you belong.

Clinging "to a spit of land on the south-east coast of England" is Prospect Cottage, where artist and filmmaker Derek Jarman lived until he died of AIDS in 1994. It's a simple four-room place, but it was important to him. Not long ago, Hester visited Prospect Cottage to "examine the importance of queer places in the history of arts and culture."

So many "queer spaces" are disappearing. Still, we can talk about those that aren't.

In his classic book, Maurice, writer E.M. Forster imagined the lives of two men who loved one another but could never be together, and their romantic meeting near a second-floor window. The novel, when finished, "proved too radical even for Forster himself"; he didn't "allow" its publication until after he was dead.

"Patriarchal power," says Hester, largely controlled who was able to occupy certain spots in London at the turn of the last century. Still, "queer suffragettes" there managed to leave their mark: women like Vera Holme,

chauffeur to suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst; writer Virginia Woolf; newspaperwoman Edith Craig, and others who "made enormous contributions to the cause."

Josephine Baker grew up in poverty, learning to dance to keep warm, but she had Paris, the city that "made her into a star..." Artist and "transgender icon" Claude Cahun loved Jersey, the place where she worked to "show just how much gender is masquerade." Writer James Baldwin felt most at home in a small town in France. B-filmmaker Jack Smith embraced New York – and vice versa. And on a personal journey, Hester mourns his friend, artist Kevin Killian, who lived and died in his beloved San Francisco.

Juxtaposing place and person, "Nothing Ever Just Disappears" features an interesting way of presenting the idea that both are intertwined deeper than it may seem at first glance. The point is made with grace and lyrical prose, in a storyteller's manner that offers backstory and history as author Diarmuid Hester bemoans the loss of "queer spaces." This is really a lovely, meaningful book – though readers may argue the points made as they pass through the places included here. Landscapes change with history all the time; don't modern "queer spaces" count?

That's a fair question to ask, one that could bring these "hidden" histories full-circle: we often preserve important monuments from history. In memorializing the actions of the queer artists who've worked for the future, the places that inspired them are worth enshrining, too.

Reading this book may be the most relaxing, soothing thing you'll do this month. Try "Nothing Ever Just Disappears" because it really hits the spot.

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LINEUPS TO CHICAGO IN
2024**



Dan Savage (creator of the Savage Love sex advice column, the popular Savage Lovecast podcast, and the It Gets Better Project) is excited to announce the first of two all-new *HUMP! Film Festival* lineups for 2024, screening in Chicago May 10 & 11, 2024.

"This year the HUMP! selection jury faced an unprecedented challenge," says Savage. "With nearly 200 submissions making it to the final round of cuts, we knew we would have to cut dozens of amazing dirty films HUMP! audiences would love, or...we could grow the festival! This means the 2024 HUMP! Film Festival will feature not one, but two distinct and equally remarkable lineups in a single calendar year. It's double the sex, double the kink, double the fun!"

The first lineup – 2024 HUMP! PART ONE – is presented by Sniffies, and features 23 all-new short subject films. From the wickedly funny Not Safe for Church, to the ultra-creative stop motion animation Table Top Tango, and the visually breathtaking Human Chandelier, Part One is packed with all the boundary-pushing fierceness HUMP! fans have come to expect. Tickets for Part One are on sale now.

The second lineup, featuring another 25 brand new films and also presented by Sniffies – 2024 HUMP! PART TWO – will screen in Chicago in the fall. Tickets for Part Two will go on sale July 1, 2024.

Dan Savage's HUMP! Film Festival is renowned for its daring showcases of short subject erotic films, created by real people for real people. Captivating and exhilarating audiences since 2005, HUMP! takes pride in presenting hot, creative, kinky, and downright hilarious adult content that explores the spectrum of human desires and pleasures. HUMP! celebrates a cornucopia of body types, shapes, ages, colors, sexualities, genders, kinks, fetishes, and an overall spirit of sex-positivity. Find out more about the festival's history at <https://www.humpfilmfest.com/home>

**RAVINIA FESTIVAL
ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING
FOR 2024 SEASON, JUNE 7-
SEPTEMBER 15**



Ravinia President and CEO **Jeffrey P. Haydon** announces Ravinia Festival's complete 2024 summer lineup, offering 60 artist debuts and more than 100 concerts ranging from rock/pop, R&B, classical, jazz, and country, to movies with live orchestra, dance performances, Fiesta Ravinia, and more. Summer 2024 also features the annual six-week summer residency by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) with Chief Conductor Marin Alsop and a range of classical offerings from solo recitals and chamber music to semi-staged opera and dance.

"With an extraordinary range of concerts and artists, we are excited to offer an inspiring and captivating season for everyone who comes to Ravinia," said Haydon, Ravinia's President and CEO. "Whether in Bennett Gordon Hall, Martin Theatre, Pavilion, Lawn, or Carousel, concertgoers will surely experience the spirit of summer with incredible music under the stars."

For more information visit <https://www.ravinia.org/>

**WHO'S THAT GIRL?
REUNION SHOW SATURDAY
MAY 18, 2024**



Between 1995–2005, Who's That Girl was an extravagant Las Vegas Revue style variety show spotlighting performers who impersonated your favorite musical divas like Cher, Tina Turner, Pat Benetar, Liza Minelli, Annie Lennox, Cyndi Lauper, Beyonce and many more. Each production number was rounded out with teams of backup dancers from Chicago's dance communities along with elaborate sets, luscious costumes and

exciting lighting effects. Memorable highlights included the DRAG Makeover LIVE Auction where audience members would out bid each other to be put into drag and perform their own lip sync number as part of the finale!

This year, **Patrick Russo**, aka Patricia Roberts, is back to produce an unparalleled experience of new numbers and some of the most loved performances reimaged with impersonating divas channeling Cher, Tina, Judy, Adele and many more.

Early productions benefitted AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Open Hand Chicago, then ultimately Howard Brown Health where the event became a yearly partnership. Patrick was honored in 2003 by Howard Brown at their yearly gala receiving their FRIEND FOR LIFE Humanitarian Contributions Award during their almost decade long collaboration.

For Tickets and more information visit <http://www.WTGChicago.com>

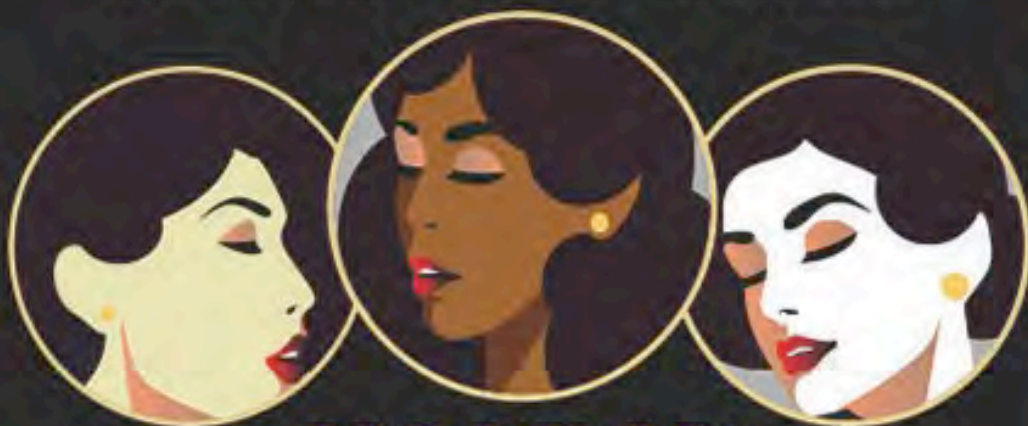
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MONDAY
MAY 20, 2024 - 7 PM

Post Show Reception

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The Studebaker Theater

- Fine Arts Building -

410 S. Michigan Avenue

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TICKETS - \$100, \$50, \$25

To Reserve Your Seats: Call (312) 753-3210 x102

or go to: seasonofconcern.org

**PRIDE FILM FEST, NOW
QUEER EXPRESSION,
ANNOUNCES QUEEN TUT
AND BEST OF FEST**



Pride Film Fest celebrates its second decade with a new name - QUEER EXPRESSION - and has announced its slate of LGBT-themed feature, mid-length, and short films for in-person and virtual events in April and May.

QUEER EXPRESSION continues in-person screenings at FACETS on the last Wednesday of each month with QUEEN TUT, starring Chicago's **Alexandra Billings**, on April 24. And our quarterly series of BEST OF THE FEW new films will stream online from May 1 to 19.

QUEEN TUT was nominated for three Canadian Film Awards, including one for Alexandra Billings as Best Lead Performance in a Comedy Film.

For more information check out openspacearts.org.

**SEASON OF CONCERN AND
SHE INSPIRES PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS SECOND CITY
DIVAS—IN CONCERT May 20,
2024, AT THE STUDEBAKER
THEATER CHICAGO**



In a once in a lifetime opportunity to see Chicago's leading ladies of musical theatre on stage together, Season of Concern (SOC) and She Inspires Productions presents *Second City Divas—In Concert* a benefit performance Monday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Studebaker Theater/Fine Arts Building, 410 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

Season of Concern is the Chicago theatre community's fundraising effort to provide financial assistance to

those in the community impacted by illness, injury, or circumstance.

A virtual who's who of Chicago's musical theatre, the performers who have committed to date include: **Isabella Andrews, Ariana Burks, Dara Cameron, Sharon Carlson, Roberta Duchak, Mary Ernster, Lara Filip, Emily Goldberg, Cory Goodrich, Marya Grandy, Sophie Grimm, Anne Gunn, Rebecca Hurd, Angela Ingersoll, Rebecca Keeshin, Clare Kennedy, Heidi Kettenring, Iris Lieberman, Donica Lynn, Amber Mak, Ann McMann, Johanna McKenzie Miller, Susan Moniz, Liz Pazik, Harriet Plump, Mary Robin Roth, Peggy Roeder, Allison Sill, Malkia Stampley, Erica Stephan, Bethany Thomas, Keely Vasquez.**

Created nearly 40 years ago, Season of Concern has raised more than \$3 million to benefit hundreds of people in the entertainment industry—actors, directors, designers, technicians, playwrights—who are unable to work due to illness, injury or circumstance. SOC's vision: "A future where no member of the Chicagoland Theatre community Struggles alone."

For Tickets or more information visit www.seasonofconcern.org.

**GRABBY AWARDS AND
EVENTS THURSDAY MAY 23-
SATURDAY MAY 25, 2024**

THE
GRABBY
AWARDS

THE 25th Annual Grabby Awards (The Gay Porn Awards) hosted by **ChiChi-LaRue, Dillion Diaz, Drake Von, Milo Miles** and Chicago's very own **Honey West** will take place Saturday May 25th 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 23rd 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 24th Meet the Men of Carnal+at Sidetrack 3349 N. Halsted 9-11pm No Cover.

Saturday Night May 25th Grabby After Party at Charlies Chicago 3726 N Broadway Party starts at 10pm \$10 Cover if tickets are purchased online at grabbyawards.com or \$15 at the door.

**INTERNATIONAL MR.
LEATHER 46 -
MAY 23-27, 2024**



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Opening Ceremonies Florentine -
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Friday May 24th - IML Pecs
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Sunday May 26th -
6:00pm - 9:00pm. International Mr.
Leather Contest McCormick Place
Skyline Ballroom
9:00 PM - 4:00 AM IML Victory
Celebration Concord Music Hall

Monday May 27th -
9:00 PM - 4:00 AM Black and
Blue Ball- Chop Shop

Leather Recovery Meetings 12-
step recovery meeting that
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environment during all IML
festivities. Guest Room 700 North
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- Thursday 11:00 PM - 12:00 AM,
- Friday 11:00 PM - 12:00 AM,
- Saturday 11:00 PM - 12:00 AM,
- Sunday 11:00 PM - 12:00 AM,
- Monday 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

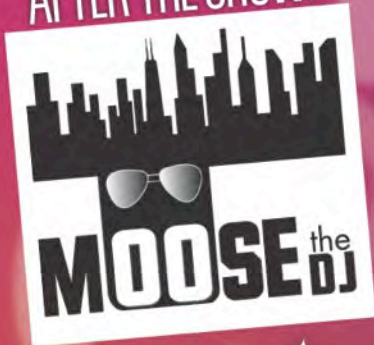
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WHO'S THAT GIRL? CHICAGO24

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024

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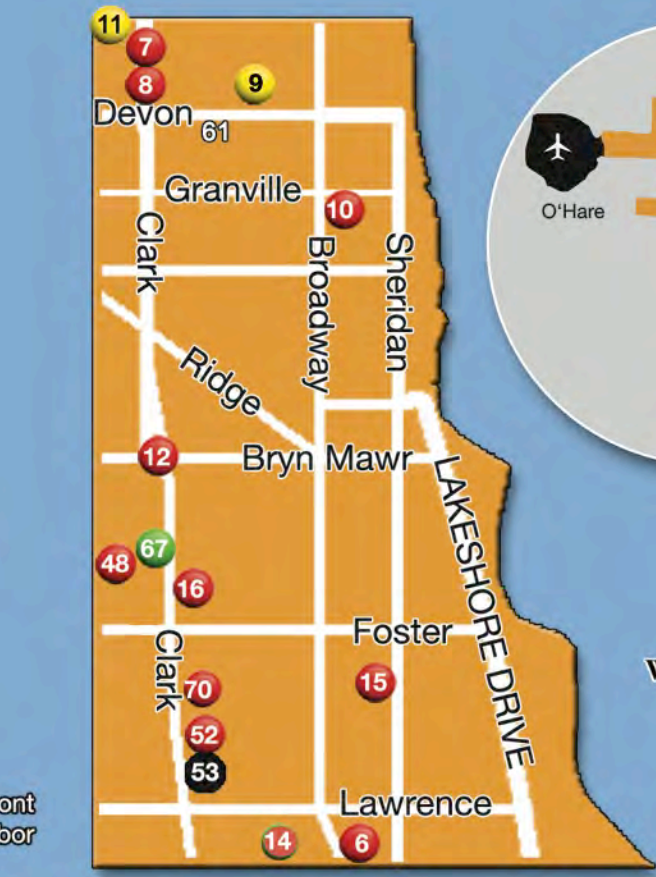
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