

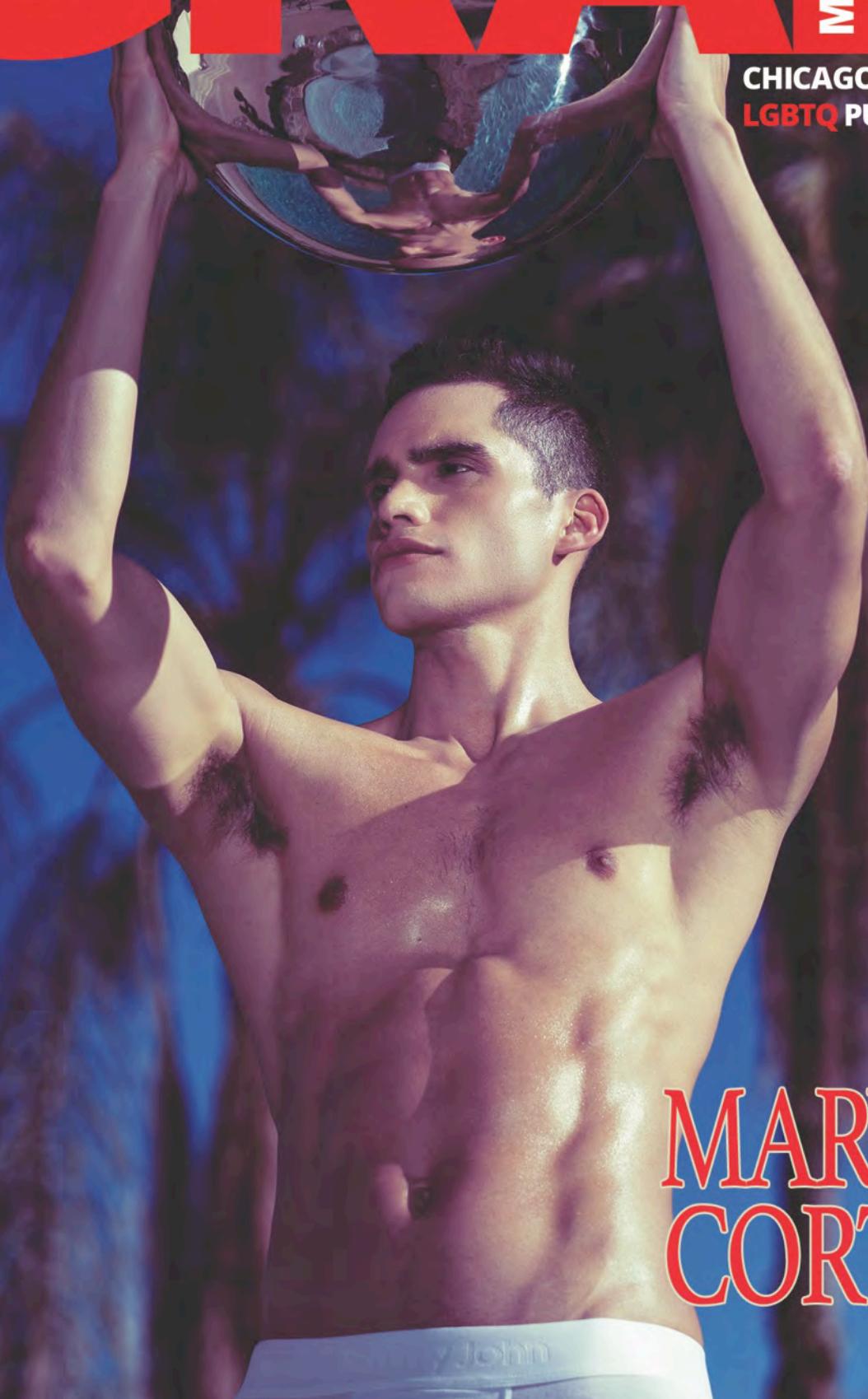
AUGUST 31, 2021 • VOL XII • ISSUE #18

GRAB

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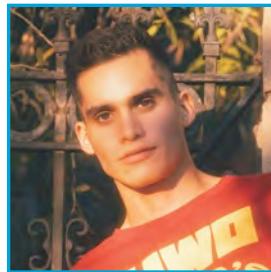
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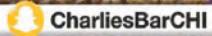
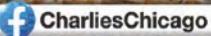
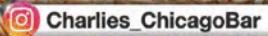
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GRAB A FILM



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An Aging Queen Gets His Swan Song

Arthouse icon Udo Kier and co-star Michael Urie on their moving, queer cross-generational bond in ‘Swan Song’

By Chris Azzopardi

German character actor Udo Kier is on camera holding old prints of press photos from his previous films over his face like a Halloween mask. He jokes that if a journalist dare ask a terrible question that he considers daft, the photos, not Kier himself, will answer back. Luckily those prints never made their way back onto camera during our conversation, which also included his “Swan Song” co-star Michael Urie.

“Swan Song,” the new film from openly gay “Edge of Seventeen” director Todd Stephens (“Another Gay Movie,” “Another Gay Movie 2: Gays Gone Wild”), wouldn’t be the film it is without Kier’s brilliant performance at the heart of it. He’s a leading man for the first time, rightly earning him some of the biggest buzz of his 50-year career. But there’s no question the film’s bittersweet coda, a scene that serves as an elegiac

tribute that Kier shares with Urie (“Ugly Betty”), is something special in its own right. Poignantly, it honors older generations of unapologetically queer elders who enriched the lives of younger LGBTQ+ populations, demonstrating that, without them, queer life now wouldn’t be the same.

Though Kier, also openly gay, has appeared in more than 220 films over the span of five decades (among them: almost all of Lars von Trier’s films, as well as Dario Argento’s “Suspiria” and Gus Van Sant’s “My Own Private Idaho”), he’s never played a character as proudly gay as Pat Pitsenberger, a legendary Ohio hairstylist known as the “Liberace of Sandusky.” Women loved Mr. Pat, as he’s called, for making them look, and consequently feel, beautiful.

Now in his advanced years and living in a nursing home, retired from

doing hair, he’s more than earned the right to be a bitter old queen. Mr. Pat survived the AIDS epidemic, lost friends, was at the forefront of gay liberation. In this new gay world, he’s an outsider all over again, his glory days behind him. But when one of his former clients dies and he’s asked to do her hair, he has an opportunity to reclaim the history that made him who he is.

Kier, speaking from Los Angeles, and Urie, at home in New York, recently chatted about shooting their powerful scene, what attracted them to the film and the legacies they hope to leave behind.

Chris Azzopardi: What made you agree to do this project?

Udo Kier: For me, I got the script and I liked it. I said, “I want to meet Todd, because I want to see if I can work with

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him." If I wouldn't have liked him, I wouldn't have made the film. But I liked him.

He came to Palm Springs, and we talked about it. His script was very strong. And I wanted to shoot as chronologically as we could. I wanted to start in the retirement home, which we did. I stayed there a single day on my own with no camera, because I wanted to feel the bed, I wanted to see where everything was. And then we went into town.

For me, the importance (of) this film is the different generation — my generation — and going back (to Ohio), and people don't recognize me anymore. You see, I'm from Germany, and in Germany ... if two men lived together, and the neighbors were hearing some erotic noises, they could call the police and the people were arrested and put in jail. Now they're holding hands at Applebee's.

So I think it's so, so wonderful (that) in (a) relatively short time, two men or two women can get married and adopt children. It's amazing. It's amazing that, after 50 years in the business working with genius directors like Lars von Trier

and Gus Van Sant, the critics now write that it is my best film.

Michael Urie: It was Udo from the beginning. When I was offered the job, he was already on board. That was very exciting to me, 'cause I've been a longtime fan of both the filmmaker, Todd, and Udo. But it's this quiet observation that we as queer people have when we're younger. Most queer people do not grow up in households with other queer people, and so we look elsewhere to find ourselves to see what we could be.

CA: Michael, your character Dustin acknowledges that Pat, even though they had never met, made it easier for him to be openly gay. Who are the queer people you never personally knew who paved the way for you to be openly gay?

Urie: I'm from Texas, and I grew up in a suburb of Dallas called Plano, Texas. I was in drama in high school, and I was reading great queer literature and (there was) theater: "Angels in America" and Terrence McNally plays. I was exposed to this stuff, and I was aware of it and titillated by it. But there was a guy in my

high school who was tall, strapping, extremely well dressed, very attractive, and pretty obviously gay. When I picture him in my head, he's 30, even though he was, of course, 17 at the time. I looked to him and his strength and his power and his beauty. He was, in many ways, my Mr. Pat. I still think back on him. I still think about how awesome he was.

CA: As gay men, do either of you see parts of yourself reflected in Pat?

Kier: I think, first of all, Michael, you did amazing, good work. (Our) scene on the couch works so well because I don't move one inch. If I would have had a conversation, that would have been not good. But just having the cigarettes with the ashes, and listening, listening, listening made it stronger than if I would have answered you.

I'm more like an actor who likes to underplay (the character). That's why, also, I never rehearsed with Todd, because Todd is a director who likes to rehearse. I learned from Lars von Trier, (whose) favorite line is, "Don't act." I always think about, especially if you're in a movie like "Swan Song," when you have a strong story, a strong situation,



Photo Courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

which is funny at times, and sad at times, there's no need to do acting numbers. A lot of actors, they'll start with their back to the camera, by the chimney, and then they'll turn around and they'll talk to the floor, and finally they'll come up to the camera. No, no, no.

Yesterday I saw 20 minutes (of "Swan Song"), and today I will see the whole film at Outfest, and it's a strong film. I hope a lot of people will see it. I showed it before to a few friends. Not many. I don't have many friends. But I showed it to a few friends, and they all said, "Oh, I cried and cried. And I laughed." So that is good. If you're able to tell a story where people laugh and cry, that's good.

It's amazing how many really young people liked the movie. You know, I was afraid that (they'd say), "There's an old man." But it's not true. There were young, young people. And one girl, yesterday, said to Todd, "This is one of my favorite films ever." And I said, "Wow. Maybe she only goes once a year to the cinema."

CA: I got choked up throughout the

movie thinking a lot about my older self and what I might be like when I'm Pat's age, how I might look back on my life. Do you feel like you share something in common with Pat when it comes to being gay and aging?

Kier: That's why I accepted the role. Todd told me a lot about Pat and when I got there (to Sandusky) I talked to Pat's friends and (they) told me how he was smoking and things like that. It's definitely the generation, and we're very lucky that in Sandusky, the main street became our set. So in that green suit, I went to have a glass of chardonnay, and they all know me. There was the secondhand store and across the street was the theater, so it became all real. It was not a film where you have trailers. No, no, no, no. It was a real film. It was all from my heart. It wasn't calculated. I never in the whole film calculated a situation. When I come out and say, "I'm back!," that was a copy of Liberace. Because when Liberace was performing in Las Vegas, he ran through the stage with all (his) rings and said, "You paid for them."

CA: Because this movie says a lot

about the legacies we leave behind, how do both of you hope others will remember you?

Kier: Well, in my case, because Mike is so much younger, doing it for 50 years, being Andy Warhol's Dracula, Andy Warhol's Frankenstein, people will, I guess, remember me (for those roles). But, for me, it's really amazing that Variety and all the critics write that ("Swan Song" is) my best film. I feel a little bit strange about that. Making so many films with great directors, like "My Own Private Idaho" with Gus, and now they write it's my best film. I know why. You know why? Because I have the leading part, and you follow the character. If you have a guest part in a film, people say, "He's very good. He's a good villain, yeah, yeah, yeah." But they cannot follow you through the story, from folding napkins to wearing wonderful shoes when he's dead (laughs).

Urie: I guess I want my legacy to be: "He was part of cool things. And he was always himself." I've been in a lot of queer movies and queer theater and —

Kier: Strange movies.

Urie: (Laughs.) I've been in a lot of

strange movies. And there was a point when I was first on TV and I was playing a very flamboyant gay character and I was told, "Don't do this again. Don't do any more of these. Don't get pigeonholed." And I thought, "There's so many different kinds of gay people." And I do play gay parts all the time, and they are different. We have so many different ways of being LGBTQ, and there are so many stories to tell.

I'm so proud to be part of this one, which I saw with a group at the Rooftop Film Festival in Brooklyn (with) a group of predominantly heterosexual people who loved it. That is a really exciting thing, too, to be a part of a movie that you would maybe call a gay movie because the protagonist is gay and the central conflict has to do with his homosexuality, but this is a straight person's gay movie. Straight people love it. I think that's a testament to Udo and a performance at the center that can compel and delight and break your heart. It's a piece of life, watching it. And working on it felt like walking into the movie.

As Udo said, we took over that town — or they took over that town, and I showed up. I showed up at a certain point in the shoot and I felt like I was walking into a movie — not onto a film set, but into a movie. There he was in his green suit, and we didn't talk much before we started shooting. He wanted our first interaction to be our first interaction. I'm used to going on stage and making people laugh, and here I am in this movie, reacting to a person. This is a guy walking into my space, and it was actually very easy because he was bringing so much over to me.

CA: Michael, what do you think this film says about aging, in particular regarding the queer demographic?

Urie: That's very interesting because now the way queer people navigate the world — marriage, parenting — there is a more traditional society-based way of getting older. An older person gets taken

care of (by) family and loved ones. But I think all of us as queer people, we're not going to have a life that society deems as normal. That is one of the things that we fear: that we will grow old alone or have no one to take care of us. Certainly it's a fear that I have and I think about.

But what's so beautiful about Mr. Pat and the way in which I relate to Mr. Pat is that, even though now it's 2021 and queer people are accepted — I can walk down the street holding hands with my partner and I don't feel any shame anymore or any danger, and I actually feel proud to do that; we're legal, we're allowed to marry, we're allowed to have kids, we have full protections under the law, for the most part, I can blend in, I can assimilate — I don't want to.

I think that is something that the older generation, when marriage equality became a thing and when people started getting married, thought, "Why would we need that? We've been fine without that. We don't wanna be like straight people; we don't wanna get married." It's two different things. It's the right to be married, versus the need to be married. Also, I'm proud of who I am, and I'm proud to be different, and I don't need to assimilate. I can be someone else. I think that I want to always have a little bit of Mr. Pat. I don't wanna walk down the street and have people think, "That's a straight person."

Kier: (Laughs.) You have to get a green

suit! Get a green suit and just smoke like (him).

Yesterday I looked up, because I hear (it) now so many times, the word "queer." I wanted to look in the dictionary (to see) what it means. And queer means, actually, strange. If you go on the dictionary, it says queer means strange. Um, (I) definitely did a strange performance. (Laughs.)

CA: So you might call your performance queer?

Kier: Not me. It's just a performance. It's not my swan song. I have made already four films after that. And so it's not my swan song. That was the danger of it: I thought, "Oh my god, 'Swan Song.' I'm 77 years old soon, so is that maybe my last movie?" No, no, no. I had to go to Lars von Trier and quickly make a movie. And that'll be my swan song.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.



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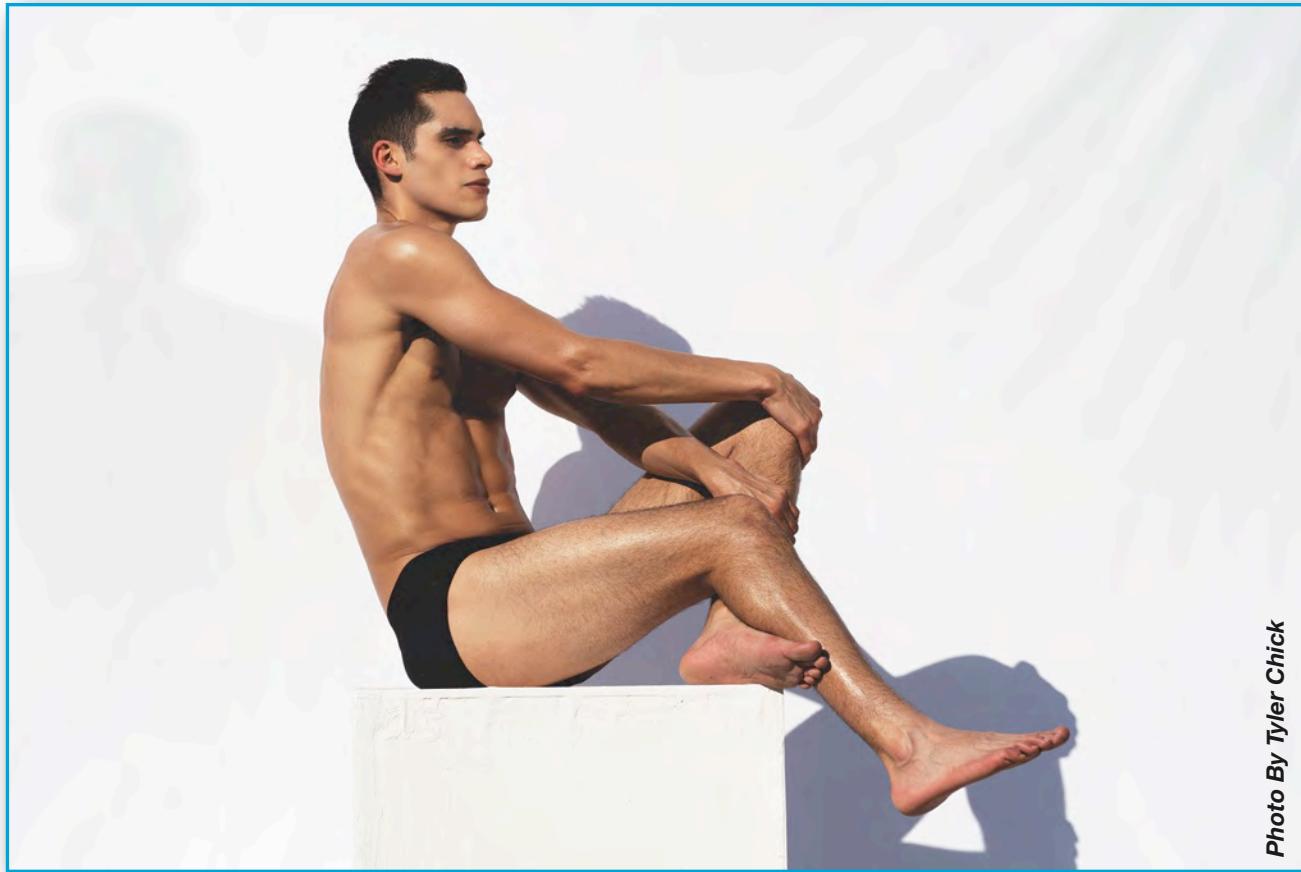


Photo By Tyler Chick

Bi, Bi, Love

Say hello to the newest member of the LGBTQ Community, America's Next Top Model's Marvin Cortes

By Shane Gallagher

Marvin Cortes is best known for competing in Tyra Banks' wildly popular reality modeling competition America's Next Top Model where he made series history as the first male contestant to place as runner-up. He later went on to publish his own book, *Don't Waste Your Looks on Likes*.

Last month, Cortes took to social media to share that he is a proud member of the LGBTQ community. "I want to let you know that I'm coming out as openly bisexual," said the 28-year-old in a heartfelt, 11-minute video he posted to Instagram TV. "I've never been happier, and I look forward to living more of an authentic life and sharing that with you."

He is inviting all the world to join on his journey of newfound sexual freedom in his latest venture - an OnlyFans page! We spoke with Marvin Cortes from his home in Los Angeles.

Shane Gallagher: Congratulations on living in your truth! What has been the reaction from fans to your Instagram post?

Marvin Cortes: It has been 99% positive. Most of my fans are happy to see me happy which is why I love them so much. I lost some followers, mostly women, but that's understandable. I gained a lot more men!

SG: What do you think prevented you from coming out as bisexual earlier?

MC: I would have to say my family. We are the stereotypical Hispanic family: conservative, with a million siblings and uncles and aunts and cousins. Not one of which is openly LGBTQ. I am the first, which is pretty nerve racking.

SG: Have they come around?

MC: Not exactly, no. My uncle, who is no saint by any means, is spreading the

narrative that I am somehow possessed by a gay demon and need to be prayed on to be liberated by it. He constantly makes my mother cry. Also, my father will always believe a man should be with a woman. I think they are just from a different time and, unfortunately, have no interest in changing.

SG: Where did you grow up?

MC: I grew up in the South Bronx. Home was eleven of us living in a humble, 2-bedroom apartment. Because of where we come from in Honduras, we felt like millionaires compared to families back in the home country. I never felt like I needed any friends because I was blessed to have eight brothers. I often wish I could go back to those simpler times.

SG: How did you find your way to America's Next Top Model?



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MC: I was working as a cashier at the retail store Zara. A casting director for the show happened to be in the store and she insisted I audition.

SG: Did friends and family watch you on the show?

MC: Many did! They all thought I was funny, though they did not expect me to cry so much. Neither did I, to be honest. It was the first time I really expressed so much emotion. I got 20 years of crying out in that two months of filming Top Model. Since the show, I have rarely shed a tear.

SG: Did anyone make fun of you for wanting to be part of the fashion industry?

MC: Only my family. They don't really know much about male modeling and so they mostly joked with me about the movie Zoolander.

SG: What have been some of your favorite jobs in fashion?

MC: I had a lot of fun shooting for Sears and for International Playground. I also enjoyed modeling for GUESS in Kuala Lumpur.

SG: Did modeling help you to become more comfortable in your skin?

MC: Yes, I found that with every shoot, I became more comfortable and I started to appreciate different parts and angles of myself.

SG: What about shooting nude?

MC: Shooting nude has always felt liberating for me. It has been my little way of saying "screw you!" to society rules.

SG: Your latest launch is an OnlyFans page!

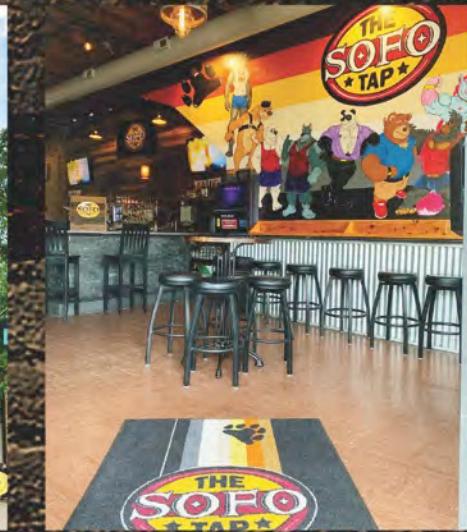
MC: Yes, I love every minute of being able to connect with my fans in a

deeper and more intimate way. I post very explicit content because that's what fans want and I welcome it. I am proud to show them my sex lives, with both women and men. I don't hold back

because I feel like it's my job as a content provider to give the people what they want.

SG: What are your plans now that





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Photo By Tyler Chick

OnlyFans is banning sexually explicit content?

MC: I'll bring my content to another platform. I am hoping that within the next month there is a new player on the scene that can pick up the demand and market that Onlyfans is choosing to leave behind. I am also working on my own website.

SG: What about future romantic plans?

MC: I am ready for a relationship. I'm looking for someone who can be loving, funny, easy going, and creative. Someone who can love me and accept my love in return.

SG: Would you date a fan?

MC: Most definitely. I love hard and give my all to a relationship so if they are open to that then I am game.

SG: What makes Marvin Cortes smile?

MC: When I hear a song that makes me feel happy.

SG: What makes you crazy?

MC: People at the gym who take up two machines at a time.

SG: What is your prized possession?

MC: My dog, Phoenix. Growing up, I had to share everything. He is the first thing that is all mine and I treat him like the prince that he is.

SG: Kiss, marry, kill any current or past male model.

MC: Kiss Zach Miko because he is pretty hunky. Marry Francisco Lachowski because he seems like the sweetest guy, and I love the way he loves his beautiful boys and looks like the greatest father and husband. Kill Andre Hamann for being too fine and

charming. It should be illegal to be that cute!

SG: If you could convince any male model to appear on your Only Fans page, who would it be and why?

MC: Chris Pratt. I know he's more of an actor but he has been on the cover of GQ so that qualifies. I have the biggest crush on him.

SG: Any plans to visit Chicago?

MC: The last time I was in Chicago was probably two years ago, before the pandemic. Boy, was it fun! The food is amazing, the nightlife is vibrant. Chicago has all the perks of NYC without being overcrowded. And, of course, there is Boystown which is where you'll find me the next time I'm there!

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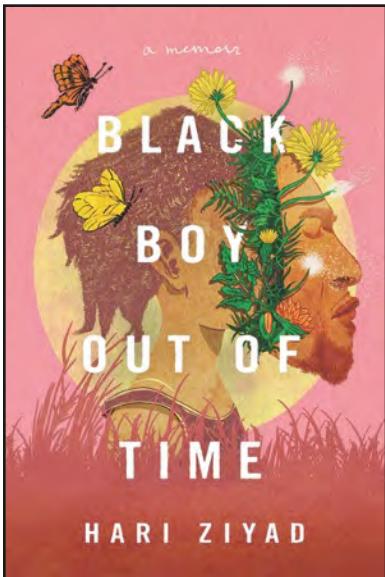
The Queer Library Is Open: 17 LGBTQ+ Must-Reads

By D'Anne Witkowski

Finding LGBTQ+ books used to be a challenge. You couldn't just Google "lesbian romance novels" or "books with trans characters." But now, luckily, that's no longer the case.

Whether a breezy-beach read is your thing, or you're more of a heartfelt memoir kind of queer, or you're looking for books that tackle social justice, there's something for everyone.

Black Boy Out of Time, Hari Ziyad (Memoir)



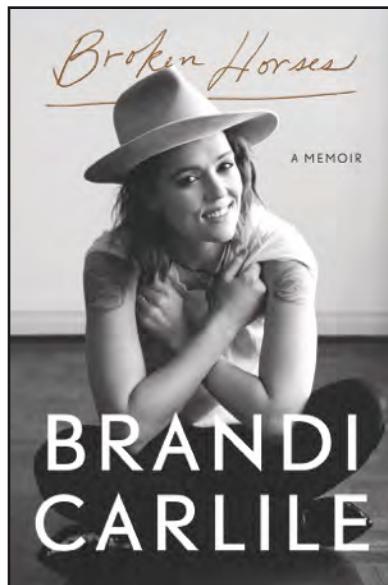
The struggle to reconcile faith and queerness is at the heart of this intimate and sharply observed memoir of growing up queer and Black in Cleveland, Ohio. As Ziyad, who identifies as nonbinary, grapples with the pain they've experienced and the pain they've caused others, they search for their identity amidst a backdrop of racism, family rejection, heteronormativity, faith and the deeply rooted need to be understood.

Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing, Lauren Hough (Memoir)

Lauren Hough grew up in a cult, but for years she didn't want anyone to know. For her, coming out as a lesbian was easier to do, even though she was forced out of the military when she did. But now she's bursting that closet wide open. Whether she's recounting her

time as a bouncer at a gay bar, meeting Dick Cheney and lonely housewives while working as a cable guy, or dealing with sexist assholes in the military, Hough is honest, funny, self-effacing and unafraid to be vulnerable.

Broken Horses, Brandi Carlile (Memoir)



When Grammy winner Brandi Carlile opens her memoir, she's a 4-year-old with meningitis living in a trailer and things don't look good. But she survives, and if you've ever wondered where she gets her emotional material from, her vulnerability in "Broken Horses" will have you wondering no more.

It Had to Be You, Georgia Clark (Fiction)

"She used to enjoy herself at weddings. She used to enjoy herself." But that was before Liv's husband and business partner died suddenly and willed their wedding-planning operation to the girlfriend she didn't even know he had. And then said girlfriend shows up on Liv's porch, expecting to run the business together. Something Liv would never do, if she wasn't desperate and hard up for cash. Reading Clark's celebration of all kinds of love, you'll feel like you crashed a wedding reception and a hot member

of the wedding party just handed you a glass of champagne and a slice of cake.

How Y'all Doing? Misadventures and Mischief from a Life Well Lived, Leslie Jordan (Memoir)



You may remember him from "Will & Grace," but today's Instagays know Emmy winner Leslie Jordan from social media, where he laughs about his failed diets and shares his thoughts on Kim and Kanye. During the pandemic, his nearly 6 million IG followers have given his career new life. There are a lot of dumpster fires in the world today, but Leslie Jordan is a goddamn delight. So, as an act of self-care, "hunker down" with this one.

The Chosen and the Beautiful, Nghi Vo (Fiction)

I had to read "The Great Gatsby" in high school and I... did not love it. OK, yes, the writing was beautiful, but I just didn't care what happened to the characters. If only I'd have been given "The Chosen and the Beautiful," a retelling of "Gatsby," to read instead: gorgeous prose that is faithful to the original, but with a queer Asian as the central character, thereby complicating the themes of wealth, excess, class and human connections that are at the heart of this story. The result? Magical.

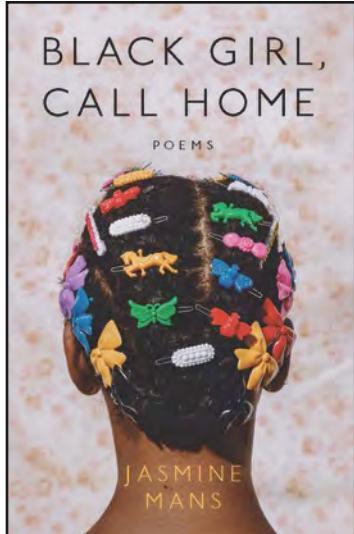


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Black Girl, Call Home, Jasmine Mans (Poetry)



Behind every woman is the girl they used to be. And poet Jasmine Mans wants to make sure those girls are heard. Especially the Black girls who love girls and get their hearts broken by girls. Mans's book explores growing up in an America that is racist, that is deadly, that is dangerous. And how love can be the way out of pain, while also being the way in. These poems pulse with heart, shimmer in beauty.

One Last Stop, Casey McQuiston (Fiction)

After August moves to New York City, her experience there has been, well, mostly meh. That is until she sees the Girl on the Train. No, not the book or the movie. A real person. Or is she? August is determined to find out who this hottie in the leather jacket is, and maybe even find love. If you read McQuiston's "Red, White & Royal Blue," then you know exactly what you're getting: a sweet, charming queer love story.

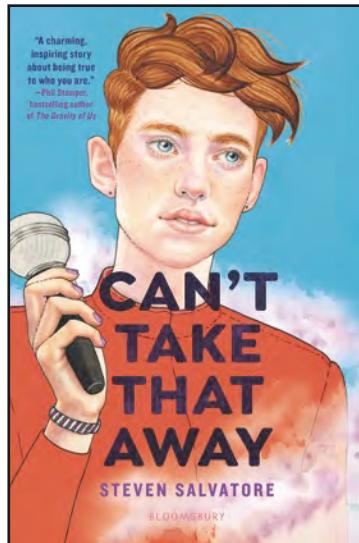
The Kingdom's Sandcastle, Luai Qubain (Fiction)

"The Kingdom had me in her steely clutches in that closeted purgatory," thinks Louie, the narrator of this first novel in a series based on true events. That Kingdom is Jordan, a country where homosexuality can be a death sentence. But trying to stay hidden can also be a death sentence, and Louie grapples with this paradox as he faces blackmail and abuse, not to mention a deep well of grief after his mother's death. Who can you trust when revealing your identity is a terrifying gamble? And yet finding someone to trust is his only way out of a crumbling castle.

The Legend of Auntie Po, Shing Yin Khor (Fiction, Graphic Novel)

Imagine Paul Bunyan as a Chinese woman and you've got Auntie Po who, along with her trusty ox, guides 13-year-old Mei through life in the lumber camp where Mei and her father work feeding the lumberjacks. Mei is trying to navigate her relationship with Bee, the foreman's daughter, who may be more than just a friend. She's also dealing with racial tensions in 1885, just three years after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned Chinese people from immigrating to the U.S. When a logging accident shakes the camp to its core, Mei needs Auntie Po more than ever. But will she come to the rescue? (Out June 15)

Can't Take That Away, Steven Salvatore (YA Fiction)



Carey Parker worships divas like Mariah Carey and Freddie Mercury and dreams of strutting across a stage with the lights turned on them, belting out songs that make the audience roar. But Carey is a high school student, not Mariah herself. Still, music is a current running through their veins, and they use it as armor against homophobic bullying and as a way to communicate with and connect to the grandmother they are losing to dementia. Then they meet Cris. Buoyed by this new spark, Carey braves tryouts for the school's production of "The Wizard of Oz." But there's a real-life wicked witch aiming to snuff out Carey's newfound light.

Fifteen Hundred Miles from the Sun, Jonny Garza Villa (YA Fiction)

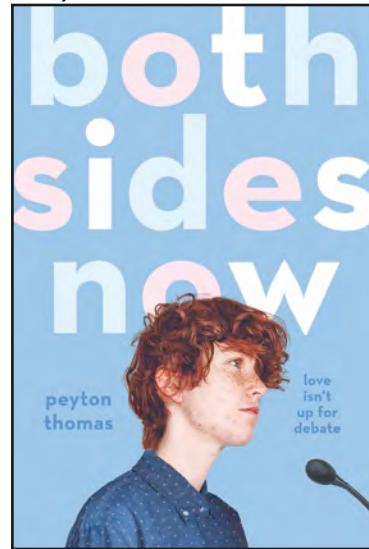
Julián Luna spends a good deal of time and energy "keeping himself in check," which entails making sure that he's being super masc at all times so that he's not called a "joto" at school.

(He gets enough grief for being a vegetarian.) But one night he drinks way too much and reveals even more on Twitter. Thankfully he's got a support system of loving friends, but not everybody is so accepting of the news. As he navigates life outside of the closet, he gets closer and closer to Mat, a guy he meets online. But no matter how close they get, they're still separated by 1,500 miles too many.

How to Become a Planet, Nicole Melleby (YA Fiction)

Lambda Literary Award-nominated author Nicole Melleby says her goal for this book was to "write a story that normalizes childhood depression and makes those readers feel less alone." It's the story of Pluto. Not the planet, but the person. And Pluto has just been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and is trying to figure out how to get her "old" self back. Her support system grows from just the person on the other end of the Hayden Planetarium Astronomy Question and Answer Hotline to include a therapist, and a new non-binary friend with a strong gravitational pull. This one's an astute and much-needed portrayal of mental illness in young people.

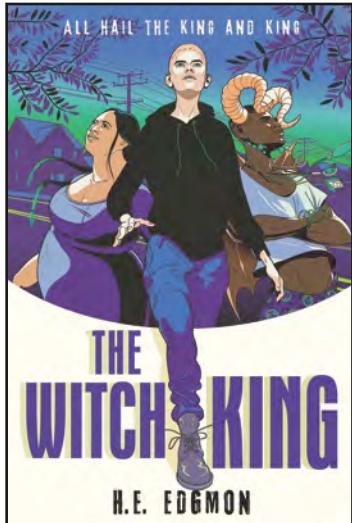
Both Sides Now, Peyton Thomas (YA Fiction)



High school debate champ Finch Kelly is on his way to Nationals. A win here would be a big help when it comes to getting into college in D.C. But he's ready. Until he learns that the topic of debate will be transgender rights. See, in debate, winning isn't dependent on arguing your truth with moral conviction. It's more technical, meaning that sometimes you have to argue something you don't actually believe. And Kelly is trans. This is an excellent,

engaging read. And I just can't help but feel a particular affection for a kid who dreams of egging Mitch McConnell's house.

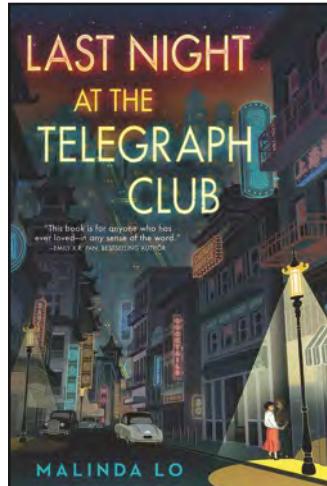
The Witch King, H.E. Edgmon (YA Fiction)



Setting: Asalin, which is ruled by the fae. Witches like Wyatt, who is trans, are oppressed in Asalin. "Wyatt's struggles as a witch mirror many of the struggles queer people, especially trans people, face in the real world," the author writes in the book's forward.

Wyatt's ex-fiancé, a fae prince, is basically the definition of a boyfriend from hell. Only this one has magical powers and is determined to get him back. The throne is at stake, after all. "The Witch King" is dark-fantasy fiction infused with humor and heart that touches on issues of systemic racism and oppression that are all too familiar here on earth.

Last Night at the Telegraph Club, Malinda Lo (YA Fiction)



Lily Hu lives in San Francisco's Chinatown. It's 1954 and she's falling in

love. With another girl. A white girl. Such a revelation would shatter her respectable reputation in her community and her family. Meanwhile, McCarthyism is raging and Chinese people are living with the looming threat of being called a Communist sympathizer, which results in very real punishments including deportation. It's an unlikely place for romance to bloom, so can it thrive? A satisfying coming-of-age story with a well-researched historical backdrop.

Last Call, Elon Green (Nonfiction)

Most true-crime tales focus on the criminals more than the victims. Not this time. "Last Call" is a harrowing picture of the danger of being closeted in the 1990s. When you can't be honest about who you are, who you are spending time with, and what you've been doing, you're relegated to the margins of society. Which makes you an attractive target for criminals — in this case a serial killer who targeted gay men. Homophobia and fears of AIDS colored the investigation, if you're wondering why this story isn't more widely known.

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GRAB RANDY



Look to the Rainbow: An interview with Randy Rainbow

By Gregg Shapiro

For many like-minded people, gay and straight, there was a ray of light and joy during the four years of Trump's reign of terror. Shining brightly through the seemingly impenetrable dark storm clouds, Randy Rainbow burst forth with colorful parody songs and videos that provided endless sources of laughs. His multitude of devoted fans and followers looked forward to Rainbow's brilliantly executed audio/visual treats, as catchy as they were thought-provoking. Hard at work on the follow-up to his 2019 debut album *Hey Gurl, It's Christmas*, as well as working on the plans for his upcoming multi-city concert tour, Randy was gracious enough to answer a few questions.

Gregg Shapiro: Randy, I'd like to begin by asking you to say a few words about the process of selecting a song for your parody lyrics, and if there's ever been a song that you really wanted to use but had to abandon because it wasn't a good fit?

Randy Rainbow: I'm a show queen! I naturally think in show tunes. I've just sort of been conditioned through the years, starting at home with my mom who's always loved the genre, to naturally find the musical theatre parallel to any situation, be it in my personal life or on the world stage. That's the easy part. A few times I have written songs and didn't release them because the

news had shifted to focus on something else. It's rare, but it has happened.

GS: Are you bombarded by suggestions of songs to parody from friends and fans, and if so, have you ever used any of them?

RR: Yes, and it's led to a few repeats. I had already done a parody of the song "Tradition" from *Fiddler on the Roof*, but then when the word "sedition" came into the zeitgeist, thanks to you-know-who, everyone was clamoring for a reprise. Same happened with my "Kamala" parody to the tune of "Camelot," which I'd used a few years back for Kavanaugh.



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GS: The last time we spoke was in 2019 around the time you released your debut album, *Hey Gurl, It's Christmas*. Looking back on the experience of making that record, how would you rate it?

RR: I loved it so much I'm doing it again!

GS: I was told that you are now busy in the recording studio working on your new album. What can you tell the readers about it?

RR: There are some amazing collaborations on this one. I'm dueting with guest stars like Bernadette Peters, Josh Gad, Sean Hayes, and Tituss Burgess. I've also written two new original songs with Marc Shaiman and Alan Menken. Can you believe?! It's called "A Little Brains, A Little Talent" and will be released later this year through Broadway Records. Stand by!

GS: How much of your upcoming tour will revolve around the songs on the new album?

RR: I am actually working on that right now. I definitely want to include some of the new songs, but there will be plenty of my "greatest hits" in there, too.

GS: You are an incredibly prolific artist. Did being isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic cause you to be

more productive or did your productivity remain the same?

RR: Believe it or not, 2020 was a very busy year for me artistically. In addition to the videos, I began writing my first memoir, recording the new album, launching a new podcast - it goes on. I am so grateful.

GS: Many folks baked sourdough bread during the shutdown. Are you one of them?

RR: Hell, no! I did what everyone else in New York City does, order take-out [laughs].

GS: Because "45" was such an endless source of inspiration, do you find yourself missing him?

RR: [Long pause] Are you for real right now?

GS: Do you know if "45," or anyone in his circle, was aware of your songs and videos?

RR: I've been told by some reliable sources that there were, and continue to be, a few fans of mine on Team Trump. I have to assume Melania.

GS: Is it difficult to parody Joe Biden because he's such a likable and seemingly effective POTUS?

RR: I don't set out to parody (the) POTUS, specifically. Trump was just an

endless source of comedy. Believe me, there are still many in Washington that offer those OMG moments.

GS: You are doing two dates in Washington DC. Because of its deeply political roots, do you find the DC audiences to be different from other audiences?

RR: Well, they are in the thick of it, aren't they? Let's just say they seem to have an even deeper appreciation for me and my work.

GS: What did it mean to you when Barbra Streisand tweeted about your "Marjorie Taylor Green" video?

RR: Barbra has now tweeted me twice, I'll have you know! I was even asked by her team to create a video celebrating the release of her new album. I mean. I can't believe it! It's BARBRA! She's my only religion.

GS: Have you recently heard from any other celebrities, either those who have been the subject of your videos or just as fans?

RR: I get lots of support from my fancy, famous friends every time I release a video and I love them for it. I also always get a note from another of my idols, Carol Burnett. She and my mom have become pen pals!

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Monday	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlies: Darla Dae's Bingo 7 – 11 pm Dancing until close. Houndstooth: .75 Boneless Wings, \$12 Domestic Pitchers, \$15 Premium Pitchers, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm, Bottles of Wine 50% off with dinner entree purchase. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 4pm, Dancers 8pm. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. Steamworks: Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. Touche: Beer Bust \$2 Bud, Bud Light Drafts & Sodas & Pucker shots All Day! The Shady party 3-7pm Cruisin on the Sidewalk..</p>
Tuesday	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. Houndstooth: \$2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, \$5 Red or White Sangria, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: 8/10 TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. 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).</p>
Wednesday	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. Houndstooth: \$4 Appetizers, \$7 Burgers, \$3 Domestic Drafts, \$5 Premium Drafts, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos & Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Men's Room Wednesday 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Taylor & Ariana 4th Wed of month – all 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men.</p>
Thursday	<p>@mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. Houndstooth: \$2.50 Minis • \$3 College Beer, \$6 40'S, \$5 Absolut Bombs, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: RuPaul's Drag Race Season All Stars Viewing Party Doors Open 6:30pm, Bubble POP Hosted by Khloe Coulee 9pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 6 viewing party & Bogo Pizza 7pm, Buy One Pizza, Get One Pizza Half Off (Dine in Only), Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Chicago's RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars Viewing Party 7pm, Drag & Games Dance Party 8pm-2am. Steamworks: Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am.</p>

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials

Friday	<p>@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. Houndstooth: \$6 Pulled Pork or Pulled Chicken Sandwich, \$6 Absolut Mules, \$12 Domestic Pitchers, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: 8/6 Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 6pm. \$5 drink specials.. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Shakers: \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 3-8pm, Friday Night Dance Party 8pm-2am. Touche: 9/3 Cheap Thrills and moreRaffles fro Prizes to tease you!</p>
Saturday	<p>@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. Houndstooth: Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$5 Stadium Cups (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets.. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day Saturday 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. Touche: 9/4 Bear Night Chicago's Original Bear Party Midnight Pizza Panic/ DJ Harry T.</p>
Sunday Funday	<p>@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, Singsational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. Houndstooth: Brunch 11am-3pm \$15 Bottomless Mimosas, \$6 Michelada's, \$2 Breakfast Sliders, \$6 40'S (ALL DAY), \$12 Domestic Pitchers (ALL DAY), \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. Kit Kat Lounge: Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . Lark: Free Flowing Brunch 11am-3pm. Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frozens, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am Touche: 9/5 Jockstrap & underwear Fetish Party, Free Clothing check/ DJ Harry T, Hot Jock & Wet Underwear Contest at Midnight with \$50 Cash Prize Each. 9/12 Beer Bust \$2 Bud, Bud Light Drafts & Sodas & Pucker shots.</p>



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	Artist	Title
1	Harry Styles	Watermelon Sugar (Tommie Sunshine & Breikthru Remix)
2	Dragonette Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano	Summer Thing
3	Kelli Leigh	Feelin U (ManyFew Remix)
4	Cuebrick	Love You (Original Mix)
5	Disco Killerz & Holly T	Up to You
6	Sigrid	Mirror (Paul Woolford Remix)
7	Joel Corry x Raye x David Guetta	Bed
8	Raye	Call On Me
9	Peking Duk	Chemicals ft. Sarah Aarons
10	LODATO	Neon Lights
11	Sam Feldt & Sam Fischer	Pick Me Up
12	Yves V x HUGEL	Finally
13	Shane Codd	Always On My Mind Feat. Charlotte Haining
14	Becky Hill & David Guetta	Remember
15	Martin Garrix ft. Bono & The Edge	We Are The People
16	DubVision x AMNL KNGDM	I Wanna Be There (Radio Edit)
17	MO	Live to Survive
18	Joe Stone	Right Here
19	Galantis x David Guetta x Little Mix	Heartbreak Anthem
20	Shaun Frank & Takis ft. SHELLS	Don't Say I Love You
21	MAKJ x MADDS x Mila Jam	Just Sayin
22	Billen Ted	When You're Out ft. Mae Muller
23	Danny Avila	Unlearn To Love Ft. Madugo
24	Frank Walker x Sophie Simmons x Nevada	SHADOWS (Radio Edit)
25	Surf Mesa Featuring Bipolar Sunshine	Lose My Mind
26	Drove & Justin Caruso	Intoxicated
27	Zack Martino ft. Tanya Lacey	Not Enough
28	Sigala	You For Me ft. Rita Ora (Radio)
29	Jonas Blue & Leon	Hear Me Say
30	Timmy Trumpet & Afrojack	Stay Mine (Radio Edit)
31	Valentino Khan x Nitti Gritti	Your Body
32	Cheat Codes x Tinashe	Lean On Me (Michael Calfan Remix)
33	Rain Radio & DJ Craig Gorman	Talk About (Nexus Radio)
34	Jes	Tight Wires
35	Niiko x SWAE & Zack Martino ft. Kyle Reynolds	Glue
36	DallasK x Lauv	Try Again
37	David Solomon	Learn To Love Me ft. Ryan Tedder
38	Eli & Fur X Disciples	The Pressure (Radio Mix)
39	ONEDUO	Erase You (Angelyna Rose Remix)
40	Mike Williams & Felix Jaehn	Without You (Radio Mix)

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Photos By Ken Brown





Photos By Ken Brown



GRAB HOLLY

Canis Lupus Fidelitas

By Holly Maholm

I was stunned. Just moments before I had walked within a few feet of what Sassy Pants now informed me were four actual wolves! Having seen the unicorns from time-to-time disguise themselves as Dire Wolves, I had been lulled into a false sense of security, innocently assuming there were no actual wolves residing in the nearby forest.

Now thinking about my near encounter with those predators, two realizations hit me. First, they being "authentic" (*Canis lupus*; Grey Wolves), they would not have been capable of assaulting me with any "dire" result. Sure, they could have torn me to pieces and commenced feeding on my flesh, but not in any way you would describe as "dire."

Next, being modern, contemporary wolves, they would doubtless have refrained from tearing me limb-from-limb, lest they be "cancelled" for practicing the worst form of "transphobia." Nevertheless, I silently gave thanks that I had not stopped to converse with what I believed at the time to be a group of unicorns in disguise: Though I flatter myself that I possess all the attributes of a "Dire Lawyer," my bite is honestly nothing to fear.

Sassy spoke. "The wolves are here to greet the newborn unicorn. There is a ceremony about this which you should see. Come along." She preceded me back to the stall where Glitter and baby were resting. We slipped into the room and saw that the wolves were already in their places, standing shoulder-to-shoulder facing the newborn. Behind the baby stood Glitter, looking down indulgently upon the scene, and standing on either side of her and facing the wolves were Victor and Fletcher, eyeing the wolves with mild expressions that seemed to say, "They wouldn't dare try anything foolish."

The ceremony began. One wolf – the largest... alpha of the pack – stepped forward, coming near the newborn. Then, dipping one shoulder, the animal turned an abbreviated somersault, coming to rest on its back at the feet of the baby. Soundlessly, the wolf stretched out its muzzle parallel to the ground, thereby baring its throat – windpipe and jugular – defenseless before the infant unicorn. There the wolf lay, motionless, acting out in dumbshow a drama of loyalty and subservience of *Canis lupus* to the Species Unicorn.

Seeing the wolf prostrate at its feet, the newborn unicorn bent down and lightly touched the wolf's throat with its horn; following which she stepped back, and the wolf regained its footing. All four wolves then bowed their heads in respect (being careful to keep any sight of tooth or fang hidden by their lips), after which they silently withdrew. Sassy and I returned to the arena, where we watched the wolves trot gingerly out through a phalanx of watching unicorns. Soon they were lost in the darkness.

I hurried to ask, "Sassy! I thought there were no wolves in this forest! Nobody in town has ever seen one; or believes there are any. The State game warden is convinced there can't be any wolves. So how can this be?" Sassy smiled a devilish grin (but one devoid of any malice or deceit) and explained.

"You are well aware



that we unicorns have the power to render ourselves invisible to others, and you know we can extend that protection to anyone standing near to us. And it may surprise you to know that the Species Unicorn does not exist... how shall I say this? ... 'solitary and alone.' We are not like other species. The continued existence of unicorns is as much dependent upon our place among numberless other living creatures, as it is upon the fertility of our mares and the desire of all unicorns to leave issue behind us at our death.

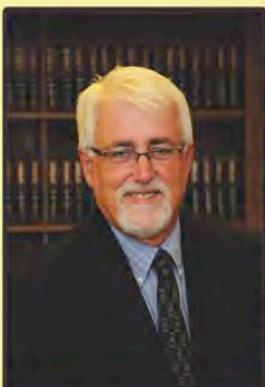
"As you have seen, Holly, there are indeed wolves in this forest. And from time-to-time, we unicorns are pleased to provide a period of 'protective invisibility' for such creatures. Many times, members of our frolic have stood guard over a mother wolf while she is in labor and giving birth. We have stood guard in shifts for days, hiding the mother and newborn babies from predators – and I assume you understand that when I say 'predators' I mean those who fancy themselves a 'macho hunter' or who believe that his flock of sheep will not survive the birth of a litter of carnivores.

"No, Holly, it is our purpose in this world, and our most gratifying devotion, that we provide all the protection we can to those living creatures who share with us these fields, this forest and this earth. Truly, if *Canis lupus* – or any other such unique and prominent fellow species – were to become extinct, some vital part of our benevolent heart would be lost forever. And on that day, some part of the magic of unicorns would be extinguished."

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Volume 2 of *What Would a Unicorn Do?* (now available on Amazon) which contains additional episodes of Holly's on-going story of her life among the unicorns, plus additional articles and a short story of a transgender woman confronted by Satan! Send a message to Holly www.hollymaholm.com.

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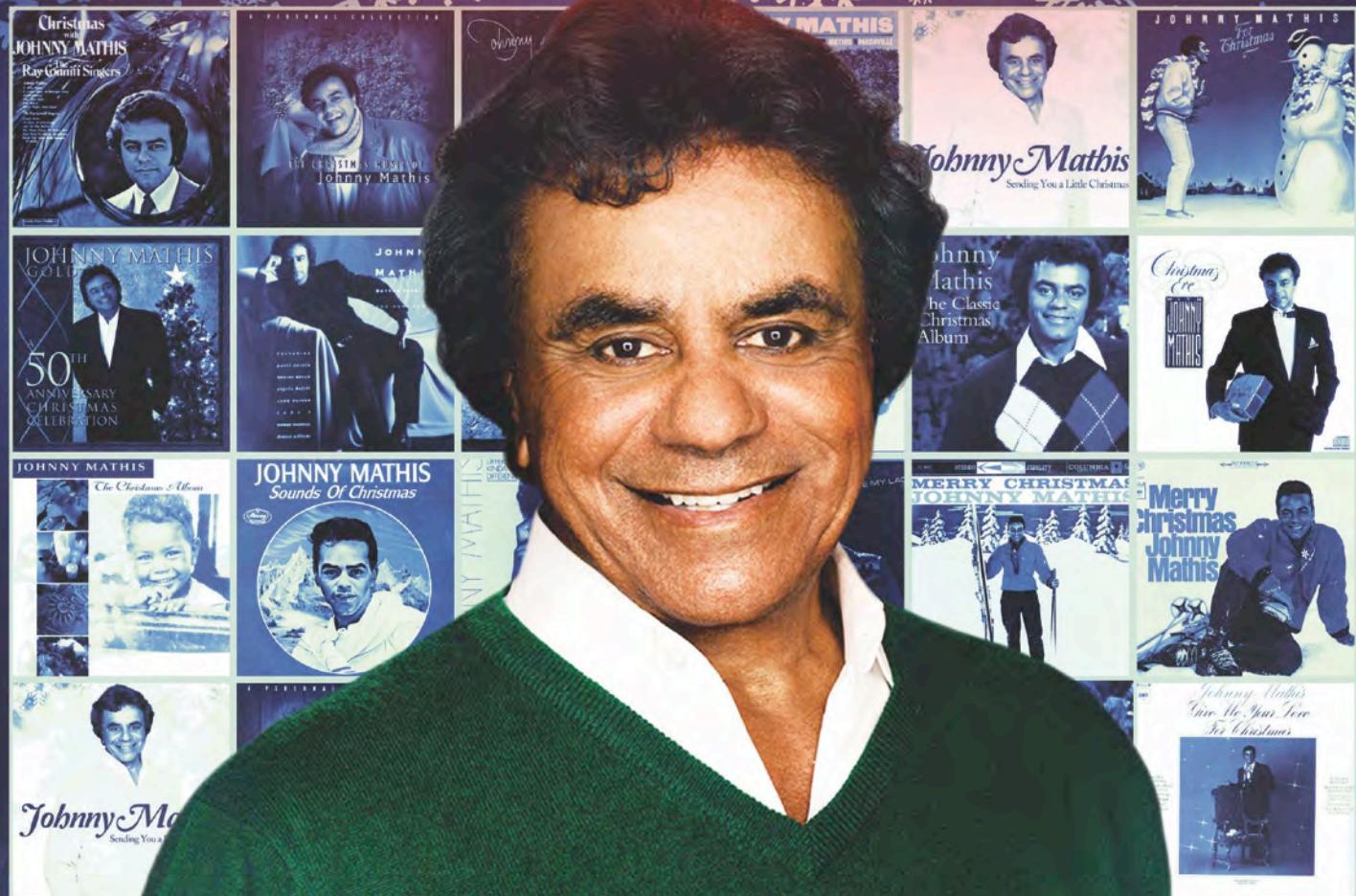
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Photos By Anthony Meade



August 31, 2021

GRAB Magazine

37

GRAB A GETAWAY

Weekend in Madison

By Bill Malcolm

You cannot beat a visit to Madison, Wisconsin. Situated on an isthmus between Lakes Monona and Mendota, the city is a bicyclist's paradise. It's very walkable and you don't need a car if you stay downtown.

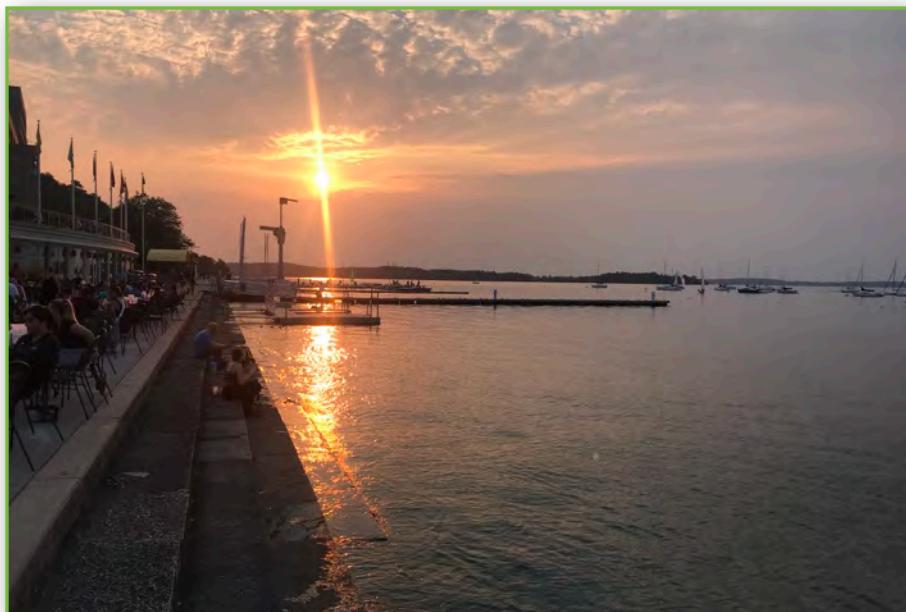
WHAT TO DO

Don't miss the Farmers' Market on Capitol Square every Saturday morning. Try the cheese bread or cheese curds. They don't call it America's Dairyland for nothing.

Then walk over to the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Monona Terrace to enjoy the view of Lake Monona from the roof top garden. Stop by Fromagination on the Square for some cheese to take home.

Next walk up State Street Mall to the UW Memorial Union Terrace to enjoy the Lake Mendota views. Enjoy a fresh grilled brat on the outdoor patio and a local Wisconsin micro-brew. Bring your swimsuit and enjoy a dip off the pier. Have some homemade ice cream also in the Union or visit the nearby Babcock Hall Dairy Store.

Afterwards, head up the Lakeshore Trail to scenic Picnic Point which juts



out into Lake Mendota. You may want to pick up a bike share bike as the walk is a bit lengthy. Details on the bike rentals at Madison.bcycle.com.

Other musts are the Olbrich Botanical Gardens on the east side. This too is accessible via a scenic bike ride along Lake Monona.

NIGHTLIFE

Near the Square is the friendly Shamrock Bar which features food and libations. Also, just off the Square is WOOFs, another friendly bar. (For details visit madwoofs.com).

Out of downtown in the Club V which features drag shows. The Overture Center for the Arts is back open and features Broadway productions, touring artists, and more. Details at overturecenter.org. You will find them on State Street downtown.

WHERE TO STAY

I like the Hampton Inn and Suites Downtown. Service is top notch and many rooms have Capitol views. The best hotel is the appropriately named Edgewater Hotel on Lake Mendota with stunning views of Lake Mendota and a dock side bar. The Hilton Monona Terrace is also very nice and features views of Lake Monona.

GETTING THERE

You can take the VanGalder Bus from downtown Chicago or O'Hare direct to Madison. It is about a two-and-a-half hour drive up I-90. You will not need a car if you stay near the Capitol Square. Dane County Regional Airport is another option for those that prefer to fly although the fares into MSN are usually very high.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

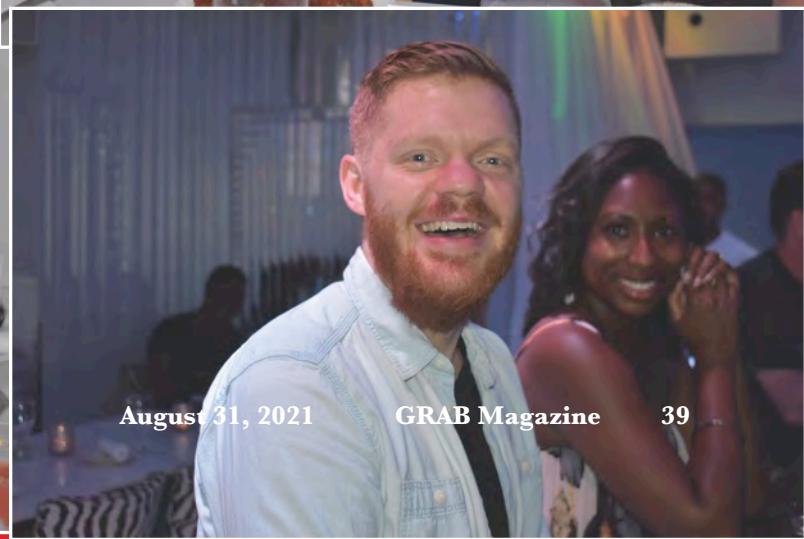
For further information, pick up a copy of Our Lives Magazine (or read online at ourliveswisconsin.com). They are celebrating their 14th year in business and are the only LGBTQ publication left in the state.

Bill Malcolm is the nation's only LGBTQ+ value travel writer. Based in Indianapolis, he focuses on local affordable travel of interest to the community. He is a native of Madison.





Photos By Anthony Meade



GRAB A FILM

By Delven Shaw

MODERN LOVE satisfies eight times!

Amazon's anthology of love stories adapted from the New York Times series of the same name brings great artists together creating one-hour valentines of many different flavors. Season 2 is now on Amazon, and it does not disappoint.

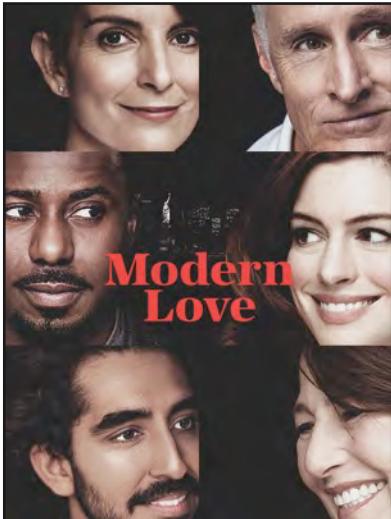
Minnie Driver is terrific in the delightful *On a Serpentine Road*, With the Top Down, a love story linking two lovers, two children, and one great car. As the title suggests, there are many twists and turns, and only the ending disappoints. But the relationship of those we love who are gone with those we love who are still with us is beautifully explored.

Strangers on a (Dublin) Train is a different brand of sweet, as a brainiac girl meets a magnetic man on a train because of Covid. Lucy Boynton and Kit Harington are really delightful – both on the train ride, and when they return to their strange families to quarantine.

How Do You Remember Me? Is the gay entry and is written and directed by **Andrew Rannalls**. **Zane Pais** and **Marquis Rodriguez** play two men who are each walking with friends in New York when they make eye contact. As the distance between them shortens, we see in flashback how they had once connected, and it is hot and very interesting.

Modern Love is a great dessert at the end of hot summer night. Short, sweet, and sincere.

<https://youtu.be/Vb3gCwimRpI>



SCHMIGADOON! is lively insider fun.

Schmigadoon! is a perfect film for actors or audiences who love musical theater. The material is lovingly crafted by **Ken Daurio** and **Cinco Paul**, and they

don't let any show biz bits left unteased, as the laughs and songs pile up.

Cecilly Strong and **Keegan-Michael Key** stars as lovers, who – just as Gene Kelly and Van Johnson did in the classic *Brigadoon* – cross a bridge into a magical place in which sudden musical introductions cue unexpected songs. The cast is a who's-who of Broadway and Hollywood royalty, including **Fred Armisen** and **Alan Cumming** as the closeted preacher and mayor, **Kristin Chenoweth**, **Jane Krakowski**, **Martin Short**, and **Aaron Tveit**, leading a very enthusiastic ensemble of singin' and dancin' townsfolk!

There are lovers' spats, secrets revealed, babies born and old folk dying, and of course resolution, as in all good musicals. Some of the lyrics and songs are extremely clever, while others leave you thinking you could have done better in any piano bar after a few shots. But the spirit – while sometimes naughty, and perhaps not great for kids (watch out for the Sound of Music parody you probably don't want to hear the kids singing with their friends) but it is very inclusive and well-intended.

If you like musicals, and tear up and cheer at the end, then *SCHMIGADOON!* will be a perfect treat for you. You can watch it all on Apple+.

<https://youtu.be/yKG0RodrzVo>



WHAT / IF has a great gay love story at heart.

WHAT/IF from 2019 and now on Netflix again gets most attention for the duel between two powerful and unpleasant women. **Renée Zellweger** plays a woman who has risen from nothing to become powerful, rich and ruthless. **Jane Levy** plays a brilliant medical researcher whose discovery can change the world. But she needs cash,

so the older woman pays \$20 million to sleep with the younger woman's husband for one night!

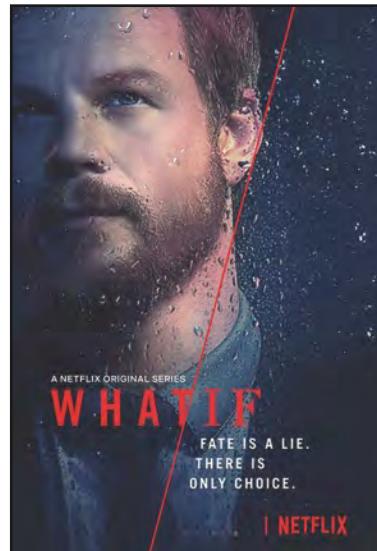
Since the husband is the bland Blake Jenner, it seems as though the older woman will crush everything in reach. Which is fun to watch – to a point – as you can predict the ending long before it gets there.

Two other stories are intertwined. The husband's best friend's wife is sleeping with the chief doctor at her hospital and has discovered she is pregnant. Again, standard stuff. (Although death by bear trap is pretty great.)

But what most intrigued was the story line of the younger woman's gay 'brother' who has a secret of his own, and **Juan Castano** dazzles as a lovely, neurotic lawyer with a heart of gold, whose husband (**John Clarence Stewart**) is terrific. But a beautiful stripper (**Derek Smith**) the men share changes their lives, and I found this story line fascinating and rewarding.

Ensemble stories are tricky, especially when you are only really into 1/3 of them. The two female leads have gone on to much higher profile projects which will allow them to create more nuanced characters.

<https://youtu.be/Vb3gCwimRpI>



There are a lot of queer culture available screening right now. Check out the two-minute reviews at DelvenShaw.com for more!



Photos By Anthony Meade



August 31, 2021

CRAB Magazine

41

'We Belong Together' Aims to Increase LGBTQ Representation



LGBTQ Victory Fund – the only national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ leaders to public office – launched a first-of-its-kind national effort to ensure LGBTQ communities are considered and respected throughout the U.S. redistricting process. The “*We Belong Together*” project will support local partners, elected officials and redistricting entities in identifying concentrations of LGBTQ people and advocating for district maps that keep LGBTQ neighborhoods and communities together. The project comes as the U.S. Census Bureau releases new precinct-level population data this Thursday that will kickstart redistricting efforts nationwide.

Redistricting is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to increase LGBTQ representation in government by solidifying LGBTQ voting power within appropriately-drawn districts – including city council, state legislative and congressional districts. “*We Belong Together*” and its partners will work to convince redistricting entities to: Define the LGBTQ community as a “community of interest” for redistricting – much like many other vulnerable populations – so the

interests and well-being of LGBTQ people are emphasized during the map-making process. Identify and advocate for concentrations of LGBTQ people using population data, locations of LGBTQ neighborhoods and businesses, memberships in LGBTQ organizations, and even reports of anti-LGBTQ crime, among other tools.

“The drawing of district lines is enormously consequential to LGBTQ representation, yet historically our community has been largely absent from discussions on redistricting,” said Mayor **Anisse Parker**, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. “A line drawn in the middle of a neighborhood with a large LGBTQ population – or even a line drawn to cut off a corner of that neighborhood – can be the difference between electing an LGBTQ person or having zero LGBTQ representation. With better LGBTQ population data and our community and redistricting entities educated about the importance of our inclusion, we can build LGBTQ political power for the next decade and beyond.”

“*We Belong Together*” will focus on states with independent redistricting commissions – including Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan and Montana – but will support any local organizations, elected officials or redistricting entities that aim to make LGBTQ people a “community of interest.” The project provides support by educating stakeholders about the importance of LGBTQ inclusion, providing resources and guidance on advocacy and population data collection, and on testimonies to redistricting entities. The national project is modeled after the California-based

efforts of Equality California during the last redistricting process. Both Equality California and One Colorado are partners in “*We Belong Together*.” When explaining the impact of the effort, “*We Belong Together*” cites redistricting work in San Diego, which led to the creation of an “LGBTQ legacy seat” on the city council. In the early 1990s, LGBTQ advocates pulled together LGBTQ population data using as many sources as possible and successfully advocated for a council district that encompassed all of Hillcrest, a predominantly LGBTQ neighborhood. In 1993, after redistricting, **Christine Kehoe** won that city council seat, becoming San Diego’s first out LGBTQ official. The seat has been held by an LGBTQ city council member ever since. **Toni Atkins**, now President Pro Tem of the California state Senate; Todd Gloria, now mayor of San Diego; and Chris Ward, now a California state Assemblymember; all held the seat in succession. The seat is currently held by out city councilmember Stephen Whitburn.

“When we build districts that keep LGBTQ neighborhoods together, we create LGBTQ legacy seats that serve as pipelines for out leaders to achieve even higher-level office,” said Mayor Parker. “If LGBTQ community members in a small city come together to focus on this effort, they can elect their first LGBTQ schoolboard member, who in the future may be their first LGBTQ state legislator and then member of Congress.”

Visit the “*We Belong Together*” website for more stories and information at <http://www.LGBTQredistricting.com>.

Brian Sims Sets Record Fundraising Numbers in PA Lt. Gov Race



Pennsylvania state Representative Brian Sims has announced record-setting fundraising

and support in his race for Pennsylvania lieutenant governor – including donors from all 50 states and all U.S. territories. The national support for his candidacy signals huge momentum for Rep. Sims just nine months before the primary – with much of the enthusiasm due to the historic nature of the race. If elected, Rep. Sims would become the first out LGBTQ lieutenant governor of a U.S. state and one of just nine out LGBTQ people elected to statewide office anywhere in the country.

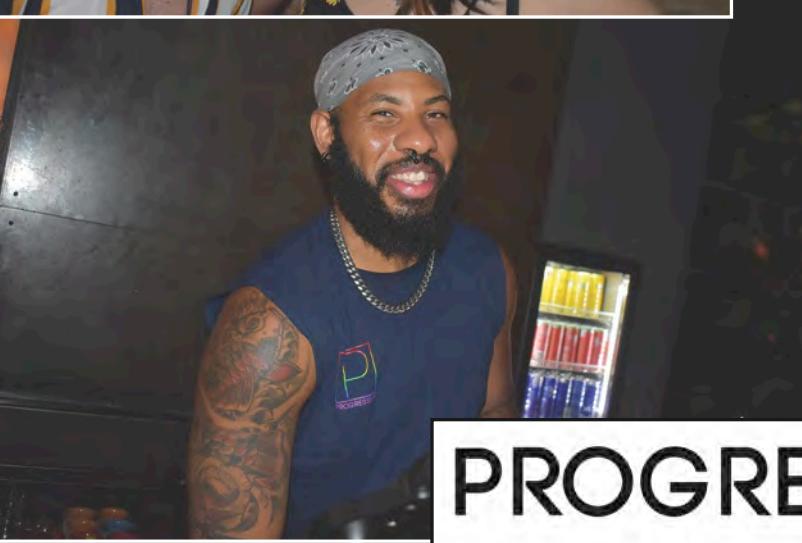
Pennsylvania has never elected an out LGBTQ person to statewide office.

Mayor **Anisse Parker**, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund, released the following statement about the announcement: “Brian is a trailblazing LGBTQ elected leader with national prominence, so LGBTQ people across the country are rallying behind his historic candidacy. Pennsylvania was slow to elect LGBTQ people to public positions, but this is an opportunity

for the state to leapfrog ahead and become a national leader in LGBTQ representation. Brian’s election would be a milestone moment in LGBTQ political history. Yet his outspoken leadership on social justice issues would also make his election a victory for all underserved communities in the state.”

In 2012, Rep. Sims became the first out LGBTQ state legislator in Pennsylvania history. While Rep. Sims would be the first out LGBTQ lieutenant governor of any U.S. state, current Guam Lt. Governor **Josh Tenorio** became the first out LGBTQ lieutenant governor in U.S. history when he won in 2019.

More information about all of Victory Fund’s endorsed candidates is available at <http://www.victoryfund.org/ourcandidates>. Since 1991, Victory Fund has helped thousands of openly LGBTQ candidates win local, state and federal elections.



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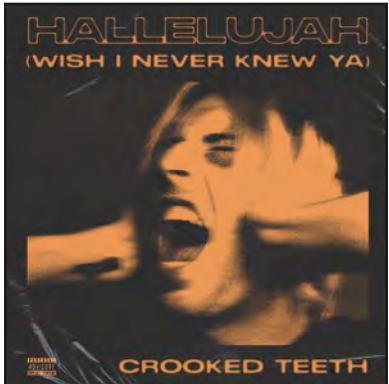
Photos By Anthony Meade



August 31, 2021

GRAB Magazine 43

**CROOKED TEETH
SHARE NEW SINGLE
“HALLELUJAH (WISH I NEVER
KNEW YA)”**



California based alternative pop artist Crooked Teeth has released his new single titled “Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)”. An undeniable alt-pop anthem, “*Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)*” resembles a beautiful collision of self-titled era blink-182 and The Chainsmokers. The new single was produced and mixed by **Matt Malpass** (Machine Gun Kelly, trippie redd, blink-182).

On the new single he shares, “Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)” is a song about liberating one’s self from the emotional baggage that comes with let downs, heartbreak and the internal struggle to find inner peace.” Even though he trades in energetic, best-when-played-loud pop-rock, *Crooked*

Teeth frontman **Tyson Evans** has learned that sometimes it’s best to let silence lead the way.

“I started making the drive from Santa Cruz down to LA to write songs last year,” Evans says. “I loved driving because it let me be in my head and block out the noise. I wouldn’t even listen to a podcast or music. I’d just sit in silence with myself and come to peace with things in life.”

There’s seemingly no shortage of things to think over in today’s modern world, and since forming in 2016 (first as a full band and later morphing into a solo project), Crooked Teeth has mused on many of them – with his heart fully on his sleeve, packaging emotional heft and life’s big challenges into shiny, anthemic emotinged songs.

With his brand-new single, “*Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)*,” Crooked Teeth is entering his most fully realized musical era yet. Combining the percussive buoyancy of blink-182’s heyday with the spirit of classic emo and elastic, modern production, “Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)” is a skyscraping slice of pop that tackles a well-trod lyrical road – but with far more maturity than many of the genre’s torchbearers were known for.

“It’s about letting go, finally being able to move past the negativity of a failed relationship,” he says of the track. “It’s not rooted in malice. Sometimes you just need to finally be at peace and clean the cobwebs out. As a queer, cis man, I don’t want to spend time or energy tearing people down. I always want to find a way to be self-reflective.”

It’s a welcome detour in a scene known for its fair share of vindictive one-liners, as Evans instead mines a similar emotional depth and nuance – not to mention sonic diversity – found on some of his favorite albums, seminal early 2000s releases like *American Idiot* and *Bleed American*. “I believe in a cohesive feel and consistent rock sound,” he begins. “But I don’t want to be held back by what people expect.”

That extends to both Crooked Teeth’s listeners and collaborators. Finally finding the freedom to chase his muse has been one of the most rewarding parts of downsizing the band – but it’s also one Evans admits at first came with a fair amount of trepidation.

“I was really scared to do it myself and say ‘this is what Crooked Teeth is,’ ” he explains. “But every day I feel more and more excited. I always feel insecure about physical stuff, even something like walking straight. The only time I really feel comfortable being totally active and secure in my footing is when I’m onstage playing music. This just feels right.”

Listen to “Hallelujah (Wish I Never Knew Ya)” at <https://www.onestowatch.com/blog/crooked-teeth-hallelujah>.

**JAKE WESLEY ROGERS
RELEASES NEW SINGLE &
MUSIC VIDEO “WEDDINGS &
FUNERALS”**



Championed by everyone from Sir Elton John and Zane Lowe to *Billboard*, *People*, *PAPER*, and more, singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist **Jake Wesley Rogers** continues his journey to global stardom with his new single and music video “*Weddings & Funerals*,” available now via Facet Records/Warner Records.

About this stirring ballad, he commented, “When I sat down with Justin Tranter and Eren Cannata to write ‘Weddings & Funerals,’ my grandpa had just died, and all of my friends were getting engaged. Everything felt like it was monumentally wonderful or terrible. I wrote this song as a reminder to appreciate the magical mundane parts in my life—as I sing, ‘like the sun in the sky / like your body on mine.’”

On the track, his voice echoes through strains of soft piano as he observes, “Friends are getting high, married in July.” On the hypnotic hook, the lyrics chill and captivate all at once as he ponders, “Everything’s only weddings and funerals.”

Frequent collaborator **Se Oh** directed the accompanying sixties-inspired video which was printed to film to achieve an authentic effect. In the clip, Jake falls in love at the park and winds up walking down the aisle (and looking unbelievably dapper in the process) before all kinds of epic drama unfurls...

Regarding the visual, he muses, “I based the music video for ‘Weddings & Funerals’ in the 1960s, when my grandparents got married. What would it have looked like if I saw the love of my life in a park and then daydreamed he was JFK, and we got married and then assassinated? The answer is this music video, and I hope it serves as a reminder of the importance to tell someone that you love them before it’s too late.”

It sets the stage for the arrival of his debut EP, *Pluto*—coming very soon.

Born in Kansas City, MO, Jake Wesley Rogers combines skyscraping vocals, eloquent songcraft, and driving instrumentation to give pop a jolt of infectious integrity and soaring spirit. Generating 20 million-plus streams independently, he captivated a growing fanbase with various singles and the Evergreen EP [2017] and Spiritual EP [2019]. Grammy-nominated songwriter Justin Tranter heard the powerful and poetic “Jacob From The Bible,” fell in love with Jake’s music, and signed him to Facet Records/Warner Records in 2020. Jake Wesley Rogers’ bold music is queer storytelling refracted through a universal lens; it’s inspired by the authenticity and artistry of his heroes like Adele, Regina Spektor, and Florence + the Machine. His songs are for everyone, but they’re special treats for those who know and share his experiences. Jake has turned his most formative years into some of the most stunning and evocative music you’ll hear this year.

For more visit
<https://www.jakewesleyrogers.com/>

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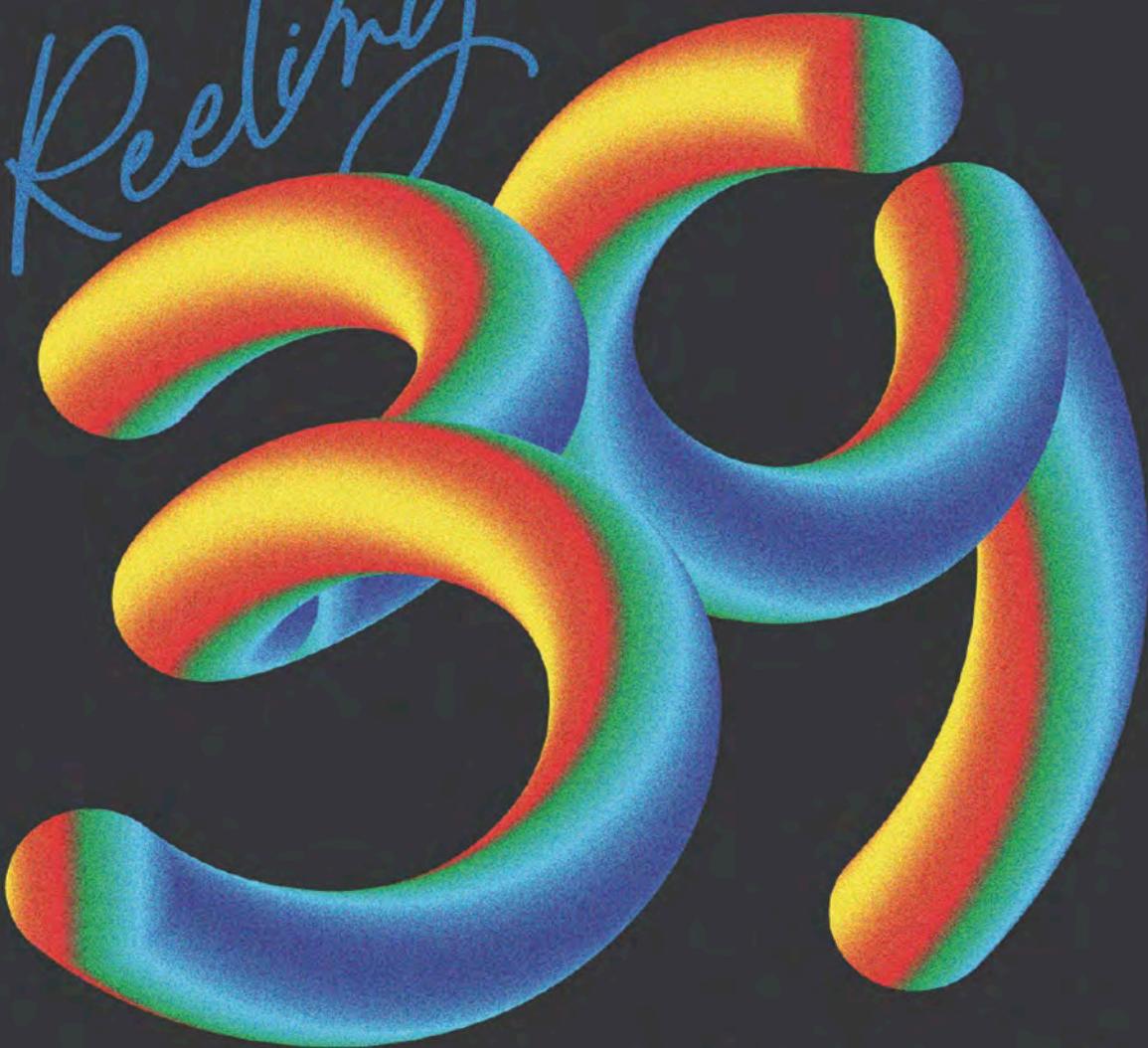
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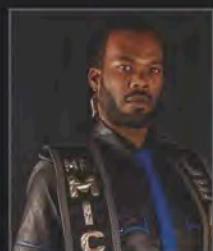
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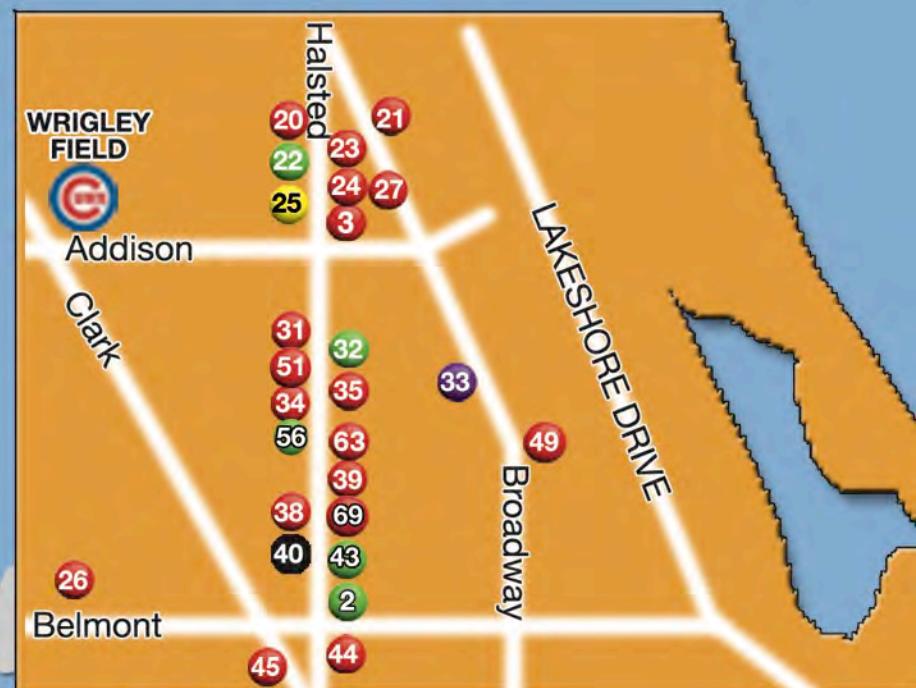
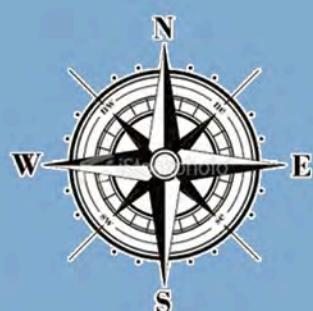
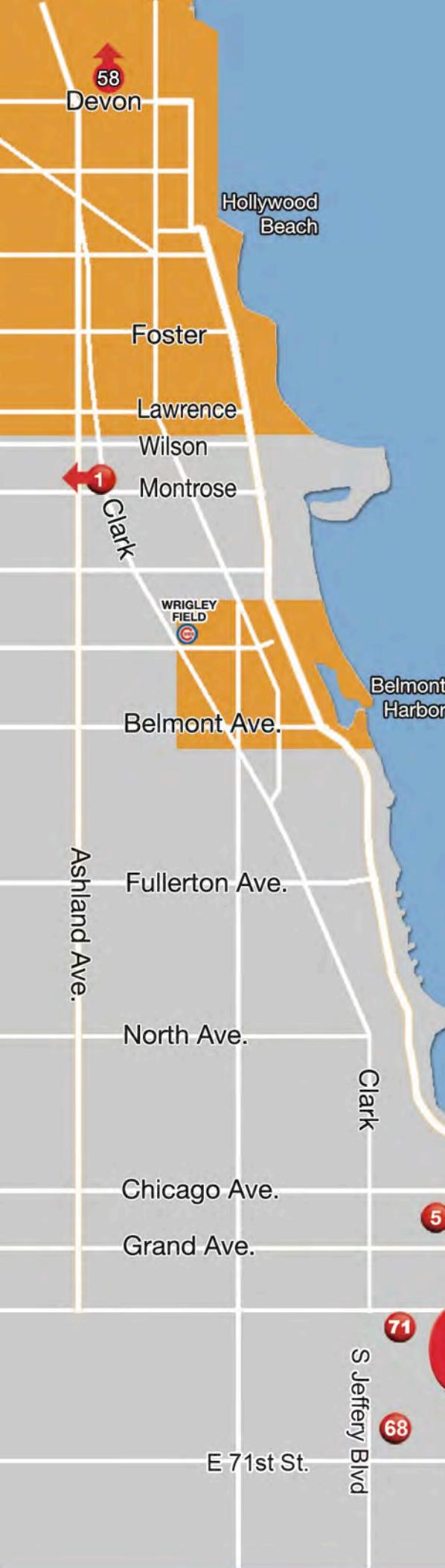
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