

JULY 23, 2024 • VOL XV • ISSUE #7

GRAB MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S MONTHLY LGBTQ+ PUBLICATION

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TO MARKET DAYS 2024
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GRAB MELISSA



The “Re:View” from here: An interview with Melissa Manchester

By Gregg Shapiro

It can be difficult to keep track of all the things for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Bette Midler. Close to the top of the list is when, in the early 1970s, Midler made Melissa Manchester one of her back-up singers, known affectionately as the Harlettes. For many LGBTQ+ folks, it was an introduction to a performer, and lifetime friend of the community, who would go on to have a chart-topping career as a singer and songwriter in her own right. For “Re:View” (Green Hill), Manchester’s new album, she revisits some of her best-known songs including “Come In From The Rain,” “Don’t Cry Out Loud,” “Just You and I,” and “You Should Hear How She Talks About You.” What really sets the album apart are her renditions of “Whenever I Call You Friend” (a duet with Kenny Loggins with whom she co-wrote the song) and “Midnight

Blue” (a duet with Dolly Parton on the hit single Manchester co-wrote with longtime collaborator Carole Bayer Sager). Manchester, currently performing in the national tour of “Funny Girl,” as Fanny’s mother Mrs. Brice, no less, graciously made time for an interview to talk about “Re:View.”

Gregg Shapiro: With so many songs from which to choose, what was involved in your selection process for your new album “Re:View?”

Melissa Manchester: It was sort of a thank you to my fans for sharing this musical journey for 50 years. You’re right, there were several to choose from and they couldn’t all fit on the album. These were some of the charted hits and songs that I have performed, mostly, for such a long time. I found some harmonic

tweaks and I found more insight into the performance of the lyrics, and I wanted to revisit them because they have grown in depth and wisdom as I’ve grown in depth and wisdom.

GS: “Re:View” opens with you performing a duet with Kenny Loggins on “Whenever I Call You Friend.” Loggins had a hit with his 1978 version, a duet with Stevie Nicks. How did the songwriting collaboration with Kenny come about?

MM: Kenny and I kept running into each other at televised award shows where we were often paired up to present an award to somebody. It got to be so often that we’d see each other that it got to be kind of funny. He said why don’t we meet in a room without a powder puff in between us because we always met in the green room. I invited him over

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to my home one night to write a song. He showed up with his guitar and I had my piano, and we both had our boom boxes, because you would work on cassettes in those days. We wrote the song and then I didn't really see him again for a very long time. More recently, I had found out that after he left my place, he played the song for his friend Mike McDonald of The Doobie Brothers, who was not terribly impressed with "Whenever I Call You Friend." I played my cassette (of the song) for Clive Davis who was not terribly impressed with "Whenever I Call You Friend."

GS: Oh, no!

MM: [Laughs] Kenny was opening for Fleetwood Mac at the time so he enlisted Stevie to sing with him. That's how that happened. I had been trying to get him to record with me for such a long time because it's such a natural fit. Our schedules didn't allow and whatever. I finally said it's time to do this and if he wants to participate that's fine, and if he doesn't, I'll just move on. I produced and co-arranged the track with Stephan Oberhoff. His manager was very excited about it. I sent her the track and she forwarded it to him. I hadn't heard from him for a couple of weeks. Then one evening I texted him and asked him if he wanted to do it or not. He said, "Why don't you send me the track?" I said, "You've had it for two weeks!" He said, "I'll get right back to you," and 10 minutes later he said, "It's fantastic! I'm in." It was a wonderful recording session. He couldn't have been more amiable or affable. We had a great time, and the video is the proof in the pudding. It's a beautiful and delightful achievement after all these decades.

GS: What did it mean to you that that song became such a massive hit for Kenny and Stevie when it did?

MM: It's always delightful on a very major scale when a song of yours is a hit. It would have been nice to be notified that he was recording it. He



Melissa and Dolly Parton

apologized for that later which was very sweet of him. Of course, when I started performing the song myself with my keyboard player or whoever was singing, it was instantly recognizable and that's always exciting.

GS: The duet with Dolly Parton on "Midnight Blue" is simply gorgeous. What was the experience of collaborating with Dolly like for you?

MM: She is a true queen. That's the thing. She is music royalty, and so beloved, and has done such magnificent work not only through her songwriting but through her philanthropy. It was a real joy and honor to work with her. She was completely professional and delightful. My video crew flew down to Nashville to film the video. We only had a very short amount of time to shoot. The last shot that we did was the two of us driving in the back of an open-air Mustang, making a right and a right and a right, right back into the parking lot beside the recording studio. We were on Music Row, where all the publishing houses are, and it's the tourist area of Nashville. Coincidentally, as we were driving, and our director was in the front seat facing backward with his

camera, there was a tourist bus that came right next to us. Once they saw Dolly in the car, people were basically dripping out of the bus, screaming her name. It was so dear and thrilling. People in cars pull over when they see her and stop and call out to her. She is just magnificently, and well-deservedly beloved. It was lovely to rethink "Midnight Blue" as a duet. It had never been recorded as a duet. But she wanted to be part of the album and that was very sweet. I needed to think of which song would suit her. That worked out really well, and she sang so beautifully.

GS: I totally agree. I know, and love, the song "Confide In Me" from Diana Ross' underrated 1977 album "Baby, It's Me." I'm so happy you finally got to record the song for "Re:View."

MM: [Laughs] I found the right moment. My collaborator Stan Schwartz kept saying over the decades, "Are you gonna do this at some point?" When I revisited the song, it was written as a torch song. Raquel Welch had performed it on "The Muppet Show." When I took a deep dive into the song, I realized that it could sustain a Latin beat. Because it could do that, it could

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hold up to an opening verse, which is a very old-fashioned element that's not written anymore. But it worked beautifully, and I think we created a beautiful video for it. I think the recording is very luscious.

GS: I also love the addition of the Citrus Singers choir on "Just You and I," which lifts the song to new heights.

MM: Yes, oh absolutely! Thank you for mentioning that. One of the interesting things about recording "Re:View" is, because we had recorded so much of it prior to the pandemic, a lot of it was in the can. Many of these songs, without my knowing it, grew into that moment. When I rerecorded "Just You and I," which Carole Sager and I had written a long time ago, at the beginning of the women's movement actually, when we were young singer/songwriters, it grew into this song that would pay homage to essential workers, who were marginalized workers prior to the pandemic. Nurses and pizza delivery people and postal workers and people that were keeping the country functioning as best they could. The video for that song pays homage to that. I wanted to write choral parts for the Citrus Singers so they could underscore and amplify the gospel and anthemic components of the song.

GS: I'm so glad you mentioned Carole. In the liner notes, you extend your gratitude multiple times to "my esteemed colleague Carole Bayer Sager," with whom you co-wrote half the songs on "Re:View," as well as many others. What was it about Carole that made her a good songwriting collaborator?

MM: That's such a good question! One of the things that I learned not too long ago was that I was the first artist that Carole ever wrote with and wrote for. She was a songwriter for hire. She would write a song and it would be sent to other artists. I'd



Melissa and Kenny Loggins

never written with anyone before. She sat with me. She had a very interesting and intriguing way of expressing herself which is what stirs my imagination to hear music. We would chat, and out of those discussions came our songs. That's why the tones of our songs are always very conversational. They literally came out of conversations. She was a magnificent collaborator, and we had a very fruitful, productive, and beautiful collaboration for several years. Our songs reflect that. It was a joy to work with her.

GS: "Don't Cry Out Loud," which Carole co-wrote with the late Peter Allen, was one of the biggest hits of your recording career. Do you remember what the response to that song meant to you?

MM: It was thrilling because it was touching so many people. For me initially, it was curious. The song was so beautiful, but I heard it as a very quiet lullaby sung by Peter Allen. I thought that rendition was just perfection. When it was arranged to be this gigantic anthem it sort of overwhelmed me because Carole and I wrote songs about finding your voice and affirming your value and all of that. Suddenly I was singing this big version of a song where the first word of the title is, "Don't." I

thought, "How am I going to pull this off?" It took me a little bit to understand what people were resonating with from the song. The song is about how one must learn how to cope. That's just the way life goes. It is the lamenting of it, and it is the celebrating of it.

GS: Carole's memoir, "They're Playing Our Song," was published in 2016. Do you think you might have a memoir in you?

MM: I do have a memoir in me! I just have to figure out how to do it [laughs]. I've started many times. I may end up with a collaborator, just to help me focus and sit quietly and get it out. Yes, I do have a memoir in me.

GS: I had the pleasure of attending your concert at JAZZIZ in Boca Raton a few years ago. Are there plans for you to perform concerts in support of "Re:View"?

MM: Well, you would think, wouldn't you [laughs]? It's just that, at this moment, I am on the national tour of "Funny Girl," which is a wonderful way to celebrate the 50th year of my career. Yes, I will be returning to the concert platform once this is over, but it has been extended through April, so I'll be away from concerts for a little bit more.

GS: What is your favorite part

about playing Mrs. Brice in “Funny Girl?”

MM: My favorite part about playing Mrs. Brice is that, at this moment in my life, I can bring so much of my life experience and hard-won wisdom to the role. That’s what I feel I do.

GS: Finally, you have a long history as an ally to the LGBTQ+ community. We’re speaking during Pride Month 2024, and I was wondering if you had anything you wanted to say to your queer fans?

MM: I say to all of my LGBTQ+ fans, thank you for sharing this journey. I was raised to be an ally from my parents. They were allies. I was raised with lots of uncles and aunts from the community when everybody was hiding in closets, except in our home. I am grateful to love everybody. I am touched by the love that I have received. And we shall all carry on.



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GRAB A STAGE

Market Days 2024 Headline Entertainers Saturday August 10 - Sunday August 11

Billy Porter



Photo By Franz Szony

Billy Porter is a GRAMMY®, EMMY® and 2X Tony® Award winner. Porter began his music career in 1997 with the release of his self-titled (aka Untitled) debut album which spawned the Top 10 “*Bubbling Under*” single, “*Show Me*” and the monster ballad, “*Love Is On The Way*,” which also appeared at the pivotal moment in the film, “*First Wives Club*.” He went on to release “*At the Corner of Broadway + Soul*” (2005), “*Billy’s Back on Broadway*” (2014) and “*The Sou lof Richard Rodgers*” (2017) featuring Pentatonix, India.Arie, Leslie Odom Jr. and Cynthia Erivo, among others. Porter scored his first #1 with “*Love Yourself*” in 2019 on the US Dance Club Songs Chart. He followed that up with his 2020 reimagining of the legendary Buffalo Springfield anthem, “*For What It’s Worth*,” and a fierce collab with The Shape shifters on “*Finally Ready*.” 2021 saw Porter covering Juliet Roberts club classic “*Caught in The Middle*” for Red Hot + Free, which supports underserved communities afflicted with HIV/AIDS. He was also enlisted by multiplatinum international superstar Jessie J for “*I Want Love*.” And he delivered a magical turn on Earth, Wind, and Fire’s iconic “*Shining Star*” as Fab G, the Fairy Godmuva, in the 2021 remake of “*Cinderella*.” Porter is a veteran of the theater (“*Miss Saigon*,” “*Angels in America*,” “*Grease*”), and a two time Tony® winner, including “Best Leading Actor in a Musical” for “*Kinky Boots*” in 2013 and “Best Musical” as a producer for “*A Strange Loop*” in 2022. He has also received a GRAMMY® for the “*Kinky Boots*” original Broadway cast recording in the category of “Best Musical Theater

Album” in 2014. Porter took home the EMMY® Award for “Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series” in 2019 for his work as Pray Tell on “*Pose*,” making history as being the first openly gay man to do so. *TIME Magazine* named him one of the “100 Most Influential People” of 2020. Porter released his highly anticipated memoir, “*Unprotected*,” in October 2021. His directorial film debut, “*Anything’s Possible*,” dropped Summer 2022 to much acclaim. Now, Porter kicks off his next chapter in music, his first love, with a new album “*The Black Mona Lisa*” out now. **Billy will be performing on Saturday August 10th 9:00pm on the Addison Stage.**

Alyssa Edwards



Justin Dwayne Lee Johnson, known by his stage name Alyssa Edwards, is an American entertainer, choreographer, drag performer and television personality. Prior to his television debut, Johnson was a gifted dance instructor and accomplished performer in the drag pageantry scene before rising to international prominence on the fifth season of RuPaul’s Drag Race, where he quickly became a fan favorite.

In 2012, Johnson was chosen as one of the 14 drag queens to compete on the fifth season of RuPaul’s Drag Race, where he immediately catapulted to fame for his candid testimonials, outrageous tongue-pops and quirky personality. In 2016, Johnson returned as one of 10 contestants in Season 2 of *RuPaul’s Drag Race: All Stars*, where he stole the hearts of the audience,

ultimately finishing as fourth runner-up. With personal appearances and tours spanning the globe, the Alyssa Edwards persona has quickly become a household name in many countries. Performing to fans throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and Central and South America, Johnson balances his time between international bookings and teaching dance in his hometown.

Johnson currently resides in Mesquite, Texas, a small suburb of Dallas, where he owns and runs an award-winning dance studio, Beyond Belief Dance Company. Johnson and his dance studio are the centerpieces of the Netflix Original docuseries *Dancing Queen*, produced by RuPaul and World of Wonder, currently in its first season. **Alyssa will be performing Saturday August 10th at 2:30pm on the Addison Stage.**

Big Freedia



Freddie Ross Jr. (born January 28, 1978), better known by her stage name Big Freedia (/ˈfriːdə/ FREE-də), is an American rapper and performer known for her work in the New Orleans genre of hip hop called bounce music. Freedia has been credited with helping popularize the genre, which had been largely underground since developing in the early 1990s.

Freedia is a gay man who also embraces his “feminine side”; he believes gender is on a spectrum and is ambivalent about his pronouns, stating, “I’m gender nonconforming, fluid, nonbinary. If I had known the ‘queen’ in *Queen Diva* would cause so much confusion, I might have called myself the king!”

He has collaborated with artists including Beyoncé, who sampled his voice for her song, “Formation” and on her 2022 number-one hit “Break My Soul”, Lizzo, Kesha, New Kids on the Block, Jordin Sparks, Naughty by Nature, Boyz II Men, and with Drake on his 2018 number-one hit “Nice for What”.

In 2011, he was named Best Emerging Artist and Best Hip-Hop/Rap Artist in January’s “Best of the Beat Awards”, and was nominated for the 2011 22nd GLAAD Media Awards. In 2013, he got his own reality show on the Fuse Channel, which chronicles his life on tour and at home. On July 7, 2015, he released his autobiography *God Save the Queen Diva!*

At the end of 2016, Freedia was featured in a local New Orleans television ad for Juan LaFonta Law Office, in which he is shown rapping with bounce music and dancers. In 2018, he released the EP *Third Ward Bounce*. **Big Freedia will be performing Sunday August 11th 2:45pm on the Addison Stage**

Dragonette



Martina Sorbara, better known as Dragonette, has lived multiple musical lifetimes over the past 15 years. A Juno Award-winning artist and sought-after songwriter, she’s scored chart-topping hits, collaborated with the world’s biggest DJs, and released four albums. Along the way, Dragonette has headlined shows across the globe; supported the likes of Duran Duran, Ke\$ha, Major Lazer, and Miike Snow; and played to thousands of fans at Coachella, Electric Daisy Carnival, Glastonbury, and Lollapalooza.

While Dragonette’s evolving sound lands delectably in between pop, new wave, and dance, Sorbara was raised with very different musical influences. “My past is so the opposite of pop music,” the Toronto-based artist recalls. “Until I was 19 or 20, I largely listened to folk and jazz. Between my hippie school and hippie parents, I thought that pop music had no merit. I had no real exposure to it. And so I ignored it because I thought it was music for other people.” After she left high school, all of that changed. “Once I grew up a little and started listening to music outside of my bubble, I realized that all the music I liked was actually pop. It was just decorated

differently.”

Sorbara began her musical career as a singer-songwriter before establishing herself as Dragonette. Trading out her acoustic guitar for a synth, she released a self-titled EP in 2005. Those formative recordings (including Dragonette’s cheeky first single “I Get Around”) put Sorbara’s electropop outfit on the map and earned them a supporting slot at a New Order concert—it was their second show, ever.

They released their debut album, *Galore*, in 2007, which earned them a nomination for New Group of the Year at the Junos. Those early days were a heady and transformative time for Sorbara—both musically and personally. She was still defining herself as a musician; trying to find the balance between her former, singer-songwriter self, and her new role as the frontwoman of an edgy pop band.

“I liked the idea of dressing up and putting on heels when I went on stage because it was the antithesis of how I had been performing until then,” Sorbara recalls. “At the beginning, I jumped really far in that direction, but it wasn’t me. I was just exploring. And then Dragonette sort of settled into itself. I realized that I needed to dance and have fun—I couldn’t do that while trying to balance in high heels. I didn’t need to make a persona. I just needed to be myself.”

Skillfully blending rock’n’roll sensibilities with slickly-crafted hooks, danceable beats, and sultry vocals, 2009’s *Fixin to Thrill* reflected Sorbara’s newfound confidence. Dragonette scored its first Canadian Top 40 hit with “Pick Up the Phone” and garnered a Juno nod for Best Dance Album. The band repeated that success with 2012’s *Bodyparts*, which notched another Juno nomination, landed in the Billboard Dance chart’s Top 20, and featured the exuberant, Canadian Top 40 hit “Let it Go.”

Sorbara was also enjoying the thrill of collaborating with others. Early on, she recorded with the legendary electronic duo Basement Jaxx and co-wrote with pop icon Cyndi Lauper. As Dragonette’s profile rose, Sorbara became an in-demand vocalist and songwriter—particularly in the electronic sphere, where she worked with the likes of Kaskadee, Don Diablo, and, most famously, Martin Solveig. The French DJ partnered with Sorbara on “Boys & Girls,” “Big in Japan,” and the massively popular 2010 hit, “Hello.” The single topped pop charts across Europe, hit No.1 on Billboard’s Dance Club Songs, earned a Platinum certification in the US, and won the Juno for Dance Recording of the Year.

As the decade turned, Sorbara continued that momentum, writing and recording alongside Mike Mago, Pretty Sister, and Galantis, with whom she released 2015’s “*Peanut Butter Jelly*”—a Top 10 hit across Europe, the UK, and Australia. More recently, she co-wrote and performed “Toyko Nights” with Digital Farm Animals and Shaun Frank, while in 2021, she lent her vocals to Gianni Kosta’s effervescent “Phantom.”

Sorbara’s songwriting also extends beyond the electronic realm. As a longtime priority writer with Sony/ATV publishing, she regularly works with acts under UMG, Warner Music, and Syco, among others, while her credits include songs for the multi-platinum-selling country artist Keith Urban, British pop star Nicola Roberts, plus Carly Rae Jepsen with The Knocks.

Those collaborative experiences strongly influenced Sorbara’s approach to Dragonette’s fourth album, 2016’s

Royal Blues. Striking a more personal and reflective tone than her previous releases, Sorbara crafted tracks like “Body 2 Body” and “Let the Night Fall” with a diverse collection of writers and producers, including the GRAMMY® and Academy Award-winning songwriter Anthony Rossomando (Lady Gaga, Ellie Goulding); Yonatan “xSDTRK” Ayal (Jessie J, Chloe x Halle); Matt Schwartz (YUNGBLUD, Massive Attack); and Lowell (Hailee Steinfeld, Tate McRae).

Since then, Sorbara has entered a new chapter in her life, taking on her most important role yet—that of a mother. These days, life is all about letting go of expectations around Dragonette and, instead, giving in to whatever feels—and sounds—good. “I just want to keep allowing these tectonic shifts to happen, instead of trying to paint the same picture,” she explains.

Fresh off the heels of her acclaimed new album *Twennies*, Sorbara is looking forward with more wisdom, experience and confidence than ever before. With *Twennies*, she chose one creative partner for the entire project—the Los Angeles-based producer Dan Farber (Dizze Rascal, Lizzo). The two artists spent several weeks together holed up Sorbara’s Toronto studio, where they wrote the majority of the record. “I’ve never concentrated on working on an album like that; just living and breathing this one thing,” she shares.

Twennies marks a full-circle moment for Sorbara. “It’s a true hybrid of my original influences as a child and what I’ve learned along the way. It feels so representative of my musical journey.” She adds, “It’s my favorite thing I’ve ever done. I’m so proud of it.”

Dragonette will be performing Saturday August 10th at 6:00pm on the Addison Stage.

Lauren Sanderson



Born & raised in Indiana, Lauren Sanderson stumbled into her career after failing to get into college. Not knowing what her next steps should be, Lauren did a Ted Talk at the age of 18 where she realized her love

for inspiring others and being on stage. Lauren started making music in her closet and while documenting every step of the way, cultivated a cult following and moved to Los Angeles in 2018. Since then, she has achieved over 200 million streams as an artist & more recently, a songwriter for other artists as well. Lauren opened for Chase Atlanta & FINNEAS in 2019, released her debut album “Midwest Kids Can Make It Big,” in 2020 & her sophomore album “Death of a Fantasy” in 2022, following her viral TikTok banger, “THERAPY!” and shortly after, her massively successful collaboration with GFLIP called “GAY 4 ME”. In 2023, Sanderson went on a major US headline tour as well as her first international EU/UK headline tour. She also received her first credit as a songwriter on JOJI’s platinum album “Smithereens”. Sanderson is looking to release her 3rd album in 2024. **Lauren will be performing Saturday August 10th 8:00pm – Belmont Stage (Back Lot Bash).**

RAINAO



There’s no right time, There is Rainao.

A Puerto Rican artist passionate for music and art overall. “Since I started my life project, I’m naturally creating from my ideas, criterion, knowledge and love for diversity. I’ve had other loves over the years: saxophone, acting and audiovisual production, but I fell in love with urban music and I’m looking forward to elevate and change the color of that genre. After writing, creating and working until I feel ready, I decided to show the world my music because “there is no right time, there is RaiNao.”

Rainao will be performing Sunday August 11th at 9:00pm on the Addison Stage.

Coco & Breezy



Coco & Breezy are Producers & DJs and the fiercely stylish twins behind their multifaceted brand. Their musical journey was influenced by their family and grew into a deep passion for dance music culture. Post moving to New York to launch their eyewear company, C&B submerged themselves into changing the face of dance music and what it means to be a technically accomplished Afro-Latina women DJs and producers.

Catch Coco & Breezy Sunday August 11th 7:00pm on the Belmont Stage.

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To see a List of all performers at Market Days turn to Page 45 or visit www.MarketDaysChicago.com

GRAB ON MEKAHEL

On Mekahel Makes a Splash With his Swim collection and Blazing New Summer Song

By Frank Doll

On Mekahel is an entertainment powerhouse. He is a model, actor, fashion designer and social media influencer with nearly three million followers. He is best known for starring on the reality show, Putting On, a series that ran for two seasons on Revry TV. It followed the ups and downs of his personal and business life, with viewers watching as the underwear model built his Mounderwear fashion empire from the ground up.

Mounderwear continues to thrive today with On Mekahel recently unveiling the company's summer 2024 collection. He's also adding one more title to his resume this summer: pop singer. This month, On Mekahel is debuting his first music single, "Play with Fire". Produced by DJ Ran Ziv, the song is a European house and dance-pop record that captures the energy and excitement of the dance floor.

We caught up with On Mekahel from his home in Los Angeles.

Frank Doll: Congratulations on the new song!

On Mekahel: Thanks! This song is just the beginning. I'm working on an entire EP!

F.D: Is singing a new thing for you?

O.M: Not really. Growing up, I was that kid that performed in every school and community event; the one that would put on a show wherever he was. The world has always been my stage.

F.D: Why was now the right time to release a music single?

O.M: There is never a better time than now to do absolutely anything. That's my life's motto! Also, I just felt ready and like I couldn't hold it in anymore. I feel more confident now

than ever before: ready to make the transition from shirtless boy on Instagram to someone that is creating a body of work that goes deeper. I know the direction I want to take my music and I'm not afraid of opening myself up to judgment.

F.D: Is that why you exited your show after two seasons? Did you grow tired of the judgement from viewers?

O.M: No, it was more due to creative differences with the network. While I loved the process and the results of doing the show, filming two seasons took a lot of time and energy. We won the Queerty Award for best streaming series in 2021, and after that, we sort of hit a plateau with the network and decided it was in everyone's best interests to go out on top.

F.D: What did you learn from shooting the reality show?

O.M: I learned about the art of storytelling and all that is involved in the process of sharing your life with the world. It's not nearly as simple as turning on the camera and filming. In order for the audience to engage with the show, the story has to make sense and grab interest. As the person whose life is under a microscope, you want to make sure that certain elements of who you are and what you stand for shine through but it's hard to do that when



you have producers twisting the story to fit their narrative.

F.D: What were the best parts of doing a reality show?

O.M: Working with my husband every day. There is nothing I love more in life than spending time with him. The show also kept me extremely busy, which I loved. I'm a better version of myself when I'm busy.

F.D: Worst parts?

O.M: Having cameras in your face when things are not great in life. Like when my first love broke my heart, or when my husband and I were struggling with our relationship. Those were really personal moments, but when you're on a reality show, you're required to show up and film, no matter what. But man, having a camera crew in the room with you makes life's problems so much more difficult.

F.D: Would you do it again?

O.M: I don't know. I'm forever

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thankful that I was given the opportunity and I will always cherish how, especially after the first season, I received so many messages about how simply sharing my story had inspired men to come out, follow their heart and chase their dreams. That made everything worth it.

F.D:Do you credit the show with the success of your Mounderwear brand?

M.O: I believe that it helped in some ways, absolutely. It shined a spotlight on the brand, the creative process and the hard work we put into it. My social media channels also deserve credit.

F.D: How has the Mounderwear brand evolved in the last few years?

M.O: We grow a bit with every new collection we put out. Our customers are vocal and we listen.

F.D:Your tattoos...

O.M: You like?

F.D:Oh, yes. There are so many! Do you have a favorite?

O.M: I have two. I love the Eiffel tower tattoo because my husband and I got married in Paris and we had what I can only call my dream



ceremony. The second tattoo that has major significance would be my dog paws. My dog babies are my world. They are my rocks. My soul. I put their paws on my leg so we can walk together forever.

On Mekahel's debut single, "Play with Fire", is available on Apple, Spotify and all major streamers.

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GRAB JACK

Grindr to a Halt Hilarious New Series Explores Trying to Find Mr. Right via the Hookup Apps

By Matt Blanco

Danny Will Die Alone dives deep into the hellscape of being a single gay man in his forties trying to find love via the hookup apps. Loosely based on Jack Tracy's own dating life in New York City and his "Dying Alone Together" podcast, the series depicts Tracy as Danny: a man on a mission. Recently single after a devastating breakup and freshly entering a mid-life crisis, Danny finds the dating scene markedly different from the last time he was on the market. Emotional unavailability, fear of commitment and hypersexuality abound and Danny is forced to navigate his way through unhinged flakes, fakes, and bots, all while remaining blissfully unaware of his own multitude of flaws.

In addition to its jaw-droppingly vulgar humor, the series presents a critical look at modern dating and its shifting relationship styles. It explores how gay men use the apps, treat one another, and the differences in their behavior when interacting virtually and in-person. "On the apps, you're never quite sure if the man you are speaking with is looking for something real or if he simply enjoys the chase," Tracy explains.

"It's as if long term relationships and traditional dating structures have been abandoned by men in their 20s and 30s," he continues. "Once you get into the 40s, it's a whole other macrocosm of messiness; mostly married couples who have opened their relationships and are looking for a temporary third to complete their throuple."

Jack Tracy explains more from his NYC home.

Matt Blanco: Is Danny will Die

Alone the gay man's Sex and the City?

Jack Tracy: Not quite. There's certainly a fair amount of sex but Danny's dating life is wildly depressing. I'm not sure any of the SATC girls were as unhinged as Danny is.

M.B.: Isn't it ironic that the apps that were supposed to make it easier for gay men to connect with each other have actually driven us further apart? What went wrong?

JT: I think it depends how you use them. If you get off the app and meet in person fast, it can work well. But in person chemistry is critical and you're a step removed from that on the apps, so you're going to get a lot more misses. Plus, the apps open up the dating world to more people with casual interest who would never approach in person so you'll get more time wasters. I can't stand the "still figuring it out" ones. Girl, go figure it out and come back when you have.

M.B.:What inspired you to create a series about being single in NYC?

JT: My dating life is so wildly unsatisfying that I was determined to make something good from it. If I



have to be constantly disappointed, I'm going to make the most of it.

M.B.:Have you really dated guys like the men Danny meets in the series?

J.T: Every single episode is based off of a real-life date, most not veering too far from what happened. I think the wildest one was the guy who told me I had Trump Derangement Syndrome and he needed to find a new church because his fellow parishioners were losers. I walked out of that one.

M.B: Do you think Danny realizes that he may carry some of the blame for being alone?

J.T: Not at all. But the audience sure does. This will be explored a lot more

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in season 2.

M.B: I'm ducking as I ask this next question... but do you think, perhaps, that you may be part of the reason that you are not married? Maybe you work too hard?

JT: Well, I don't think the answer is ever diminishing oneself in order to find someone. I am certainly part of the problem in that I know what I want, how I deserve to be treated, and will not settle as I'm perfectly happy alone and am already a complete person. So yes, my pool will be smaller as a result. I had a much better time dating in the past when my self-esteem came from the validation of a boyfriend, which is no longer the case. And my person likes an ambitious hard worker. If he doesn't, he's not for me. He can go be happy with some vacant f-boy whose entire personality is brunch and travel. Mazel.

M.B: Maybe if you moved out of NYC? Have you considered it? Where else might you want to live?

JT: I consider it all the time. Since I work from home, I think next year I will do some nomading around the country to see if I fall in love with a new place. I certainly always have better dates when I'm visiting somewhere else.

M.B.: Well, you're not going to be alone for long because you're about to have a boatload of new fans after they watch this hilarious series.

JT: Oh yes, I'm sure the boys will just be lining up for the risk they may be the subject of a future episode.

Danny Will Die Alone streams on Dekkoo.





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GRAB PANDORA



Photo By Davide Laffe

Pandora Unwraps Her Boxx

By Christopher Fragnito

Pandora Boxx's new dance album is her most personal work ever. Boxx is fun and quirky, with songs like 'Pill', a rock track that depicts some of her real-life struggles; 'Stars', her tribute to Star Trek; and 'Raspberries', Pandora's ode to Carol Channing that marks her farewell to the impersonation she famously performed on *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

The album's first release is "Dance", a song Pandora wrote for her younger self who was mercilessly picked on at school, and would come home, lock his bedroom door, flip on a Madonna cd and dance his troubles away. "Dance is a song for everyone," Pandora explains. "It encourages people not to pay any mind to what others think and to dance like no one is watching." She explains more.

Christopher Fragnito: What inspired you to create an album based on your life?

Pandora Boxx: The music I had done before was silly and ridiculous. I felt like it was time to do something a little more personal. Something

that might resonate with other outsiders and make them feel like they aren't alone in the world.

C.F: You cover some heavy themes in Boxx.

P.B: Some of the songs are about loneliness; others are about ageism and being happy with who you are. I cover lots more, but I want to leave it a little open to the listener's interpretation.

C.F: Do you have a favorite track?

P.B: It's hard to pick one because all of them mean something to me in one way or another. Even some of the sillier songs have their own story. I will say that 'Pill' is a standout. It was one of the first I wrote and is probably the most personal song I've ever written.

C.F: How has your journey as a world famous drag queen influenced your music?

P.B: I don't think of myself as famous so that kind of makes me giggle. There are songs on the album that deal with the pressure of having to get on stage and make

people laugh even when I'm not happy at all. There are also tracks on the Drag Race fandom and how they can be truly amazing and yet there is a fraction of them that can be horribly cruel.

C.F: You don't see yourself as famous?

P.B: I wouldn't call myself famous. I do think that drag has presented me with incredible opportunities and every now and then, I will stop and reflect on how I have achieved many of my childhood goals. However, I'm still dreaming and I aspire to do more.

C.F: How do you hope fans relate and connect with your music?

P.B: I hope they enjoy it and dance along to it. It's a dance album, after all. I also hope they'll buy it!

C.F: What advice do you have for aspiring LGBTQ+ artists who want to pursue a career in music?

P.B: Do it! There are so many ways to have your music heard these days. If it's in your heart and soul, you have to go for it. Have regret

over a bad lunch choice but don't have regret over not pursuing a dream.

C.F: Looking back at your journey, what is the most significant lesson you have learned?

PB: To not give a shit about what others think. It's important to focus on the people who support you. They are the ones that have your back and will be there for you. And listen to your heart. Trust and believe in yourself. Boxx would have never happened if I listened to the voices in my head and the naysayers outside of it, that all said I couldn't do it.

Pandora Boxx's BOXX is available on streaming platforms. The Dance music video is be on YouTube. Visit Pandoraboxx.com



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GRAB JAMES



“Queering” history: An interview with gay writer and historian James T. Sears

By Gregg Shapiro

When it comes to LGBTQ+ summer destinations in the Eastern time zone, almost everyone knows about Provincetown, Massachusetts, Fire Island, New York, and Key West, Florida. There are also slightly lesser known, but no less wonderful places, such as Ogunquit, Maine, Saugatuck, Michigan, and New Hope, Pennsylvania. Sandwiched in between is Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, a location that is popular with queer folks from DC, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The dramatic and inspiring story of how Rehoboth Beach came to be what it is today can be found in gay historian James T. Sears’s revealing new book “Queering Rehoboth Beach: Beyond the Boardwalk” (Temple University Press, 2024). As educational as it is dishy, “Queering Rehoboth Beach”

provides readers with everything they need to know (and possibly didn’t realize they needed to know) about this fabulous locality. Sears was kind enough to make time to answer a few questions about the book.

Gregg Shapiro: James, it’s been a few years since I’ve interviewed you. The last time was in 1997 about your book “From Lonely Hunters to Lonely Hearts: An Oral History of Lesbian and Gay Southern Life.” At the time, you were living in Columbia, SC. Where are you currently based, and how long have you been there?

James T. Sears: It has been great reconnecting with you, Gregg. After that book, we moved to Charleston, SC. There I wrote several more

books. One was about the Mattachine group, focusing on one largely misunderstood leader, Hal Call. Another book shared reminiscences of a 90-year-old gentleman, the late John Zeigler, interweaving his diaries, letters, and poetry to chronicle growing up gay in the South at the turn of the last century. From there I moved to Central America where I chronicled everyday queer life and learned Spanish. We returned several years ago and then washed up on Rehoboth Beach.

GS: In the introduction to your new book “Queering Rehoboth Beach: Beyond the Boardwalk” (Temple University Press, 2024), you write about how a “restaurant incident” in Rehoboth, which you describe in

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detail in the prologue, became a kind of inspiration for the book project. Please say something about how as a historian, the personal can also be political and motivational.

JTS: I want to capture reader's interest by personalizing this book more than I have others. The restaurant anecdote is the book's backstory. It explains, in part, my motivation for writing it, and more crucially, introduces one meaning of "queering Rehoboth." That is, in order to judge this "incident" – and the book itself – we need to engage in multiple readings of history, or at least be comfortable with this approach. I underscore that what is accepted as "history" – about an individual, a community, or a society – is simply a reflection of that era's accepted view. Queering history challenges that consensus.

GS: Who do you see as the target audience for "Queering Rehoboth Beach?"

JTS: Well, certainly if you have been to Rehoboth or reside there, this book provides a history of the town – and its queering – giving details that I doubt even locals know!

Also, for those interested in the evolution of other East Coast queer resorts (Ptown, Fire Island, Key West) this book adds to that set of histories. My book will also be of interest to students of social change and community organizing. Most importantly, though, it is just a good summer read.

GS: "Queering Rehoboth Beach" features numerous interviews. What was involved in the selection

process of interview subjects?

JTS: I interviewed dozens of people. They are listed in the book as the "Cast of Narrators." Before these interviews, I engaged in a systematic review of local and state newspapers, going back to Rehoboth's founding as a Methodist Church Camp in 1873. I also read

(1970s-2000s). I sought diversity in background and perspective. To facilitate their memories, I provided a set of questions before we met. I often had photos, letters, or other memorabilia to prime their memories during our conversation.

GS: Under the heading of the more things change, the more they stay the same, the act of making homosexuality an issue in politics continues to this day. What do you think it will take for that to change?

JTS: You pose a key question. Those who effectuated change in Rehoboth – queers and progressive straights – sought common ground. Their goal was to integrate into the town. As such, rather than primarily focus on sexual and gender differences, they stressed values held in common. Rather than proselytize or agitate, they opened up businesses, restored houses of worship, and engaged in the town's civic life.

To foster and sustain change, however, those in power and those who supported them also had to have a willingness to listen, to bracket their presuppositions, and to engage in genuine dialogue. Violent

incidents, especially one on the Boardwalk, and the multi-year imbroglio of The Strand nightclub, gradually caused people to seek common ground.

That did not, however, come without its costs. For some – long separated from straight society – and for others – unchallenged in their heteronormativity – it was too great of a cost to bear. Further, minorities within the queer "community," such as people of



anecdotal stories penned by lesbians and gay men. These appeared in local or regional queer publications, such as "Letters from CAMP Rehoboth" and the "Washington Blade." Within a year, I had compiled a list of key individuals to interview. However, I also interviewed lesbians, gay men, transgendered individuals, and heterosexuals who lived or worked in Rehoboth sometime during the book's main timeframe

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color, those with limited income, and transgender individuals, never entered or were never invited into this enlarging public square.

The troubles chronicled in my book occurred during the era of the “Moral Majority” and “Gay Cancer.” Nevertheless, it didn’t approach the degree of polarization, acrimony, fake news, and demagoguery of today. So, whether this approach would even be viable as a strategy for social change is debatable.

GS: In recent years, there has been a proliferation of books about LGBTQ+ bars, a subject that is prominent in “Queering Rehoboth Beach.” Was this something of which you were aware while writing the book, and how do you see your book’s place on the shelf alongside these other books?

JTS: Queering heterosexual space has been a survival strategy for generations of queer folks. These spaces – under-used softball fields, desolate beaches, darkened parks, and out-of-the-way bars – are detailed in many LGBTQ+ books, from the classic, “Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold,” to the recently published “A Place of Our Own” and “The Bars Are Ours.” Of course, these spaces did not encompass the kaleidoscope of queer life, but they provide us a historical gateway into various segments of a queer community and culture.

This was certainly true for my book. Unsurprisingly, until The Strand controversy, which began in 1988, all of Rehoboth’s queer bars were beyond the town limits. There were, however, homosexual watering holes in the liminal sexual space. For instance, you had the Pink Pony on the Boardwalk during the 1950s and the Back Porch Café during the 1970s. So, in this sense, I think “Queering Rehoboth Beach” fits well in this ever-enlarging canon of queer history.

GS: As one of the most pro-LGBTQ+ Presidents in US history, how much, if it all, did the Biden + Delaware connection have to do with your desire to write “Queering Rehoboth Beach?”

JTS: It is just a coincidence. Interestingly, as I was researching this book, I came across a 1973 news story about Senator Biden

speaking at a civic association meeting. One of the 30 or so residents attending was James Robert Vane. The paper reported the senator being “startled” when Vane questioned him about the ban on homosexuals serving in the U.S. civil service and military. Uttering the familiar trope about being “security risks,” he then added, “I admit I haven’t given it much thought.” In Bidenesque manner, he paused and then exclaimed, “I’ll be darned!”

Biden was a frequent diner at the Back Street Café, often using the restaurant’s kitchen phone for political calls. Like the progressives I spoke about earlier, he had lived in a heteronormative bubble – a Catholic one at that! Yet, like many in Rehoboth, he eventually changed his view, strongly advocating for queer rights as Vice President during the Obama Administration.

GS: How do you think Rehoboth residents will respond to your depiction of their town?

JTS: Well, if recent events are predictive of future ones, then I think it will be generally positive. My first book signing at the locally-owned bookstore resulted in it selling out. The manager did tell me that a gentleman stepped to the counter asking, “Why is this queer book here?” – pointing to the front table of “Beach Reads.” That singular objection notwithstanding, his plan is to keep multiple boxes in stock throughout the summer.

GS: Over the years, many non-fiction and fiction books have been written about places such as Provincetown, Fire Island, and Key West. Is it your hope that more books will be written about Rehoboth Beach?

JTS: My hope is that writers and researchers continue to queer our stories. Focusing on persons, events, and communities, particularly micro-histories, provides a richer narrative of queer lives. It also allows us to queer the first generation of macro-histories which too often glossed over everyday activists. So, as the saying goes, let a thousand flowers bloom.

GS: Do you think that “Queering Rehoboth Beach” would make for a good documentary film subject?

JTS: Absolutely, although probably

not on the Hallmark Channel [laughs]! It would make an incredible film – a documentary or a drama – even a mini-series. Because it focuses on people: their lives and dreams, their long-running feuds and abbreviated love affairs, their darker secrets, and lighter moments within a larger context of the country’s social transformation. “Queering Rehoboth Beach” details the town’s first gay murder, the transformation of a once homophobic mayor, burned-out bars, and vigilante assaults on queers, the octogenarian lesbian couple, living for decades in Rehoboth never speaking the “L word,” who die within months of one another. It, too, is a story of how the sinewy arms of Jim Crow affected white Rehoboth – gay and straight. In short, “Queering Rehoboth Beach” is about a small beach town, transformed generation over generation – like shifting sands – yet retaining undercurrents of what are the best and worst in American life and culture.

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

JTS: The manuscript for this book was submitted to the publisher more than a year ago. During that time, I’ve been working on my first book of fiction. It is a queer novel set in early nineteenth century Wales against the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars and industrialization. I want to transport the reader into an era before the construction of homosexuality and at the inception of the women’s movement. How does one make meaning of sexual feelings toward the same gender or about being in the wrong gender? In the process of this murder mystery, I integrate Celtic culture and mythology and interrogate how today’s choices and those we made in the past (and in past lives) affect our future and those of others.

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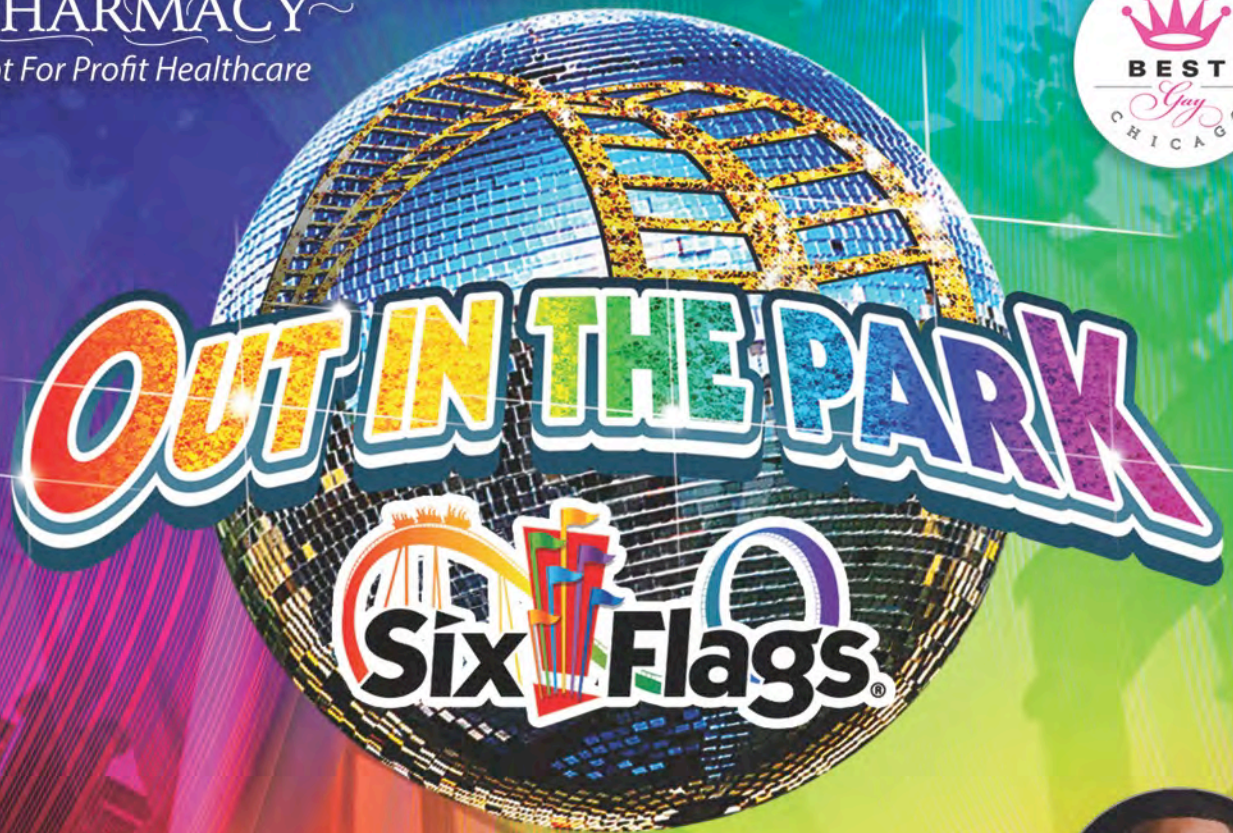
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MONDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor), Everyday Specials: \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlies: Bingo 7 – 11 pm Dancing until close. Hydrate: Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm.. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. Shakers on Clark: Comedy Night \$1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. Steamworks: Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. The Sofa Tap: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend.ClubRoom Opens at 6pm, 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock. 8/19 Full Moon Party.</p>
TUESDAY	<p>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 Sofa 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. 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock.</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p>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 Sofa 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. 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock</p>
THURSDAY	<p>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,Karaoke 10pm-1am. 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 Sofa 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. 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock</p>

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY	<p>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. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. The Sofo 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 Boys Beers (Buch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. Touche: 7/26 Christmas in July Party., 8/2 Porn Poker Party. 6-9pm, 8/9 Nipple Play Party. 8/16 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA. \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock.</p>
SATURDAY	<p>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 Sofo 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. 7/27 RIPE Party Dim Lights Deep Beats, Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T. 8/3 Chicago 's Bear Night Midnight Pizza Panic, 8/10 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm. 8/17 GEAR Night eith BLUF/Chicago Barber & BootBlack on duty dress code in Club Room BNC 6pm.</p>
SUNDAY FUNDAY	<p>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 CoctKails \$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 Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. Touche: Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, \$2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm. 7/28 Splash Party 4-7pm wild times with water.</p>

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GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of July

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	Artist	Title
1	Martin Garrix & Dubvision	Wherever You Are Ft. Shaun Farrugia
2	Seven Lions & Above & Beyond	Over Now ft. Opposite The Other
3	Timmy Trumpet	My Home (Radio Edit)
4	Nelly Furtado	Love Bites Ft. Tove Lo & Sg Lewis
5	Tritonal & Kuala	From The Inside
6	Breathe Carolina & Nikki Vianna	Dumb
7	Jack Wins	Us
8	Armin Van Buuren & Chef'special	Larger Than Life
9	Kygo & Hayla	Without You
10	Lucas & Steve X Philip Strand	Best Of Me
11	Vaance	Something Good
12	Rufus Du Sol	Music Is Better (Radio Edit)
13	Hayla	Fall Again (Radio Edit)
14	Romy	Always Forever
15	Heather Russell	Happy Again (Original Mix)
16	Elderbrook	Shallow Water
17	Hayla	Embers
18	Tate Sedar & Liv Kennedy	Our Goodbye (Radio Edit)
19	Sofi Tukker	Throw Some Ass (Clean Edit)
20	Vidojean x Oliver Loenn x José Lucas	Embawe (Radio Edit)
21	Surf Mesa x Nky	Obsession
22	Jayhem x Jamie Hiron	Can't Get Enough
23	Lucas & Steve	What We Know ft. Conor Byrne
24	Lucas & Steve X Lawrent	End Of Time Ft. Jordan Shaw
25	Disco Fries x Jayem x Alix Robson	Waterfalls
26	Cascada	Ain't No Mountain High Enough (Jax Jones Remix)
27	Seven Lions & Illenium	Not Even Love Ft. Asdis
28	Kane Brown x Marshmello	Miles On It
29	Allegra	Love You Right Back (Alok Radio Remix)
30	Manyfew	Nrg

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GRAB ROGER

Tenants By the Entirety vs Joint Tenancy

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Q: My lover and I bought our house together and hold title in joint tenancy. After many years together, we got married two years ago. Our lawyer said that in case one of us should die, the house would go to the survivor with or without a will. I put up all the money for the down payment for the house and am concerned that I will be protected. My partner is in business for himself and is struggling due to COVID's effect on the economy. I am worried he will have creditors that may try to take away the house. Does owning the house in joint tenancy give me the protection I need?

A: Many couples own title to their homes as "joint tenants with right of survivorship" to ensure that title to the house will pass to the surviving partner if one should die. When one joint tenant dies, the remaining joint tenant automatically owns the entire property, without the

necessity of probate court proceedings. Even if the deceased partner had a will, title to the property transfers to the survivor, regardless of the terms of the will. When a joint tenant dies, all that is usually required to clear the title of the deceased joint tenant's interest is to submit to the title insurance company, which examines the status of title, an affidavit of survivorship and a certified copy of the deceased joint tenant's death certificate. Ownership as tenants in common, means that upon the death of either owner, their interest in the real estate transfers to their heirs (or if they have a will to the person named in the will) and the survivor only owns one-half of the real estate along with the heirs of the deceased lover. With the passage of Illinois Marriage and Illinois Civil Unions there is now a third way LGBT couples can own real estate together. Since 1990 married couples in Illinois have enjoyed the option of owning their Illinois marital home as tenants by the entirety. Now, LGBT couples who enter into a civil union or get

married will have the same right to hold title to real estate as tenants by the entirety.

Tenancy by the entirety combines the survivorship attributes of joint tenancy with the bonus of limited protection against creditors. That is, a judgment creditor of just one of the homeowners cannot enforce its lien against the residence of the homeowners owned as tenants by the entirety. Tenancy by the entirety has often been touted as ideal for people who are married, in business for themselves, or whose work leaves them vulnerable to the lawsuits of disgruntled clients, patients, or customers. This means that if you get married and sign and



record a new deed conveying the title of your house, which has to be your residence, to yourselves, as tenants by the entirety, the creditors of one of you cannot take away the house. This is asset protection in its greatest form.

There are some rules, however, a creditor may tear down the tenancy by the entirety protection when the property is conveyed with the sole intent to avoid the payment of debts existing at the time of the transfer. There is no protection if both owners are liable to the creditor for the debt. And the protection only applies to your main residence, homestead, and not to a vacation house or vacant real estate such as farmland. It is a common misconception, however, that joint tenancy is the best answer for all couples who want protection from all the problems that can arise when real estate is involved. There are many ways to purchase and hold title to real estate in order to achieve each couple's ownership and estate planning goals. As this subject involves considerable legal and tax consequences one should first consult with their own attorney.

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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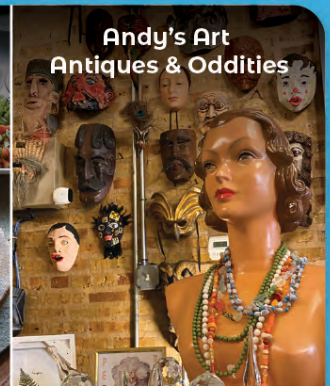
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GRAB HOLLY

A High School Latin Teacher

By Holly Maholm

I climbed the steps to the front porch of the farmhouse at the Horse Rescue and took a seat in a rocking chair next to where Dot was sitting. She looked at me quizzically, waiting for me to tell her where I had been. I did not disappoint.

"So..." I started in, "this morning I went out to the cemetery with Phyllis. She wanted to put flowers on the grave of a teacher she once knew. It was somebody named Ginny, who was her close friend. Did you know her?" I asked. "Oh, yes," Dot replied, "she was the Latin teacher at the high school, back when they used to teach that subject. I remember her well."

I continued. "We went to the old section of the cemetery to find the grave, and I have to tell you about the amazing grave marker I saw. This was not Ginny's grave, but a much older one. It was a life-sized statue of a woman wearing a long robe with a kind of veil drawn down over her face."

Dot interrupted, "Yes, and the woman had her left arm extended and her left hand positioned as if she were holding one end of a thread. Then her right arm was extended, and in her right hand was a pair of shears, as if she were about to cut the thread."

"You see," Dot explained, "that's a monument to the Roman goddess Morta, who - with her shears - cuts

the Thread of Life which each of us has, thereby determining when our life must end. A very appropriate monument to decorate a grave."

Dot continued. "Let me tell you something about that statue, and about Ginny, whom many of us loved. Soon after I arrived in Wellington and joined the frolic, I became aware that Ginny often visited that monument to Morta, where she would sit opposite the statue and meditate. I mentioned Ginny's habit to our Queen, upon which Penelope went out to see Ginny's obsession for herself. When she returned, she gave Fletcher and me her instructions, as follows...

"We watched from hiding, waiting for the day when Ginny next visited the statue. When that day came... Fletcher activated his unicorn magic, transforming himself into a flesh and blood incarnation of Pegasus! The winged horse of Mt. Olympus. He gave himself enormous, powerful wings, each thick with feathers the color of snow, and his coat and tail were of purest white.

"Then next, Fletcher used his magic to disguise me as the Goddess Athena, giving me a cream-colored tunic with decorative gold belts crisscrossing my chest, and on my head a golden helmet featuring glimmering gold wings - like those of Pegasus. The features of my face revealed a serene, self-confident expression. I jumped up on Fletcher's back and held tight. My magical Pegasus rushed up to where Ginny was sitting, where he removed our invisibility.

"Frozen by the sight of the angelic apparitions appearing before her, Ginny gasped in astonishment. Fletcher dropped to his knees, so I could slide off. I spoke, 'Ginny, I have seen you in this place many times, and by your presence, I gather you are seeking the aid of my sister, Morta, but because she is unavailable, I, Athena, have come in her place. It is evident to me that your heart is full of regret for the life you have lived, and that you would not object to Morta doing a little snipping in your direction. The reason for your regret, I perceive, is that you devoted your life to teaching what is today called a "dead



language," and you feel your life has been wasted.'

'But Ginny, you know that I, Goddess of Wisdom, am ever protective of those who have sacrificed themselves to preserve and share what little "wisdom" you humans possess, and accordingly, I have come to help you grasp what it is you do not see when you gaze upon that image of my sister.

'It is this: That over the years, while you were teaching young men and women the language of the Romans, you were simultaneously impressing upon their consciousness the words of one of history's greatest thinkers. Yes, it has not gone unnoticed by me that you selected your most important lessons from among the Meditations of that greatest of all Roman Emperors, Marcus Aurelius.'

"Saying which, I held up my hand to bestow upon Ginny the blessing of Athena, and declared, 'You, who devoted your life to the preservation of Wisdom, have lived a life pleasing to me, the Goddess of Wisdom. Accordingly, when the time comes for your thread to be severed, it is I who will ensure that you partake of the glory of the Immortal Gods.'

"I regained my seat upon Pegasus, and we turned and leaped into the invisible realm of the Gods."

(To be continued)

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

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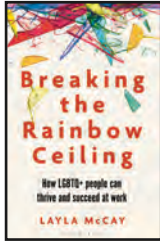
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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Breaking the Rainbow Ceiling: How LGBTQ+ People Can Thrive and Succeed at Work" by Layla McCay c.2024, Bloomsbury \$24.00 240 pages



You can see the CEO's office from the outside of your workplace.

You've actually been in that office, so you know what it looks like inside, too. Big, expansive desk. Cushy, expensive chair. Ankle-deep carpet. The CEO got there through regular means over the course of his career – something you'd like to do, too. But as you know, and as in the new book, "Breaking the Rainbow Ceiling" by Layla McCay, you'll have to take a different path.

Of all the thousands of board seats and C-suite occupiers in American businesses, only a very tiny number – less than one percent – are occupied by people who identify as LGBTQ+. In London, says McCay, no one on the Financial Times Stock Exchange identifies as such. Just six of the world's leaders, past or current, have come out as LGBTQ+.

The reasons for this are many, from discomfort to a sense of a lack of safety or just plain mistrust. Employees often don't talk about it and employers can't or don't ask, which can lead to a lot of issues that cis, heterosexual employees don't have to think about.

LGBTQ+ employees make less money than their straight co-workers. They experience discrimination ranging from sexual violence on one end, to microaggressions on the other. Discrimination can be found in educational settings, and networking events, in a lack of mentorship, and the feeling that one needs to "code-switch." Even an overseas job offer can be complicated by identifying as LGBTQ+.

And yet, says McCoy, there are benefits to coming out, including a sense of authenticity, and feeling as if a load has been removed from one's shoulders.

If you are an employer, McCoy says, there are things you can do to help. Include LGBTQ+ people in your diversity programs at work. Insist on it

for recruitment. Make sure your employees feel safe to be themselves. Make all policies inclusive, all the time., from the start. Doing so benefits your business. It helps your employees.

"It's good for society."

Pretty common sense stuff, no? Yeah, it is; most of what you'll read inside "Breaking the Rainbow Ceiling" is, in fact, very commonsensical. Moreover, if you're gay, lesbian, bi, trans, or queer, you won't find one new or radical thing in this book.

And yet, inside all the nothing-new, readers will generally find things they'll appreciate at least seeing underscored. The statistics, for instance, that author Layla McCay offers would be helpful to cite when asking for a raise. It's beneficial, for instance, to be reminded why you may want to come out at work or not. The advice on being and finding a mentor is gold. These things are presented through interviews from business leaders around the world, and readers will find comfort and wisdom in that. You'll just have to wade through a lot of things you already know to get it, that's all.

Is it worth it? That depends on your situation. You may find nothing in "Breaking the Rainbow Ceiling," or it may help you raise the roof.

"The Guncle Abroad" by Steven Rowley c.2024, Putnam \$29.00 307 pages



The cake's going to be magnificent. You must've tasted fifteen different samples and a dozen frostings, and considered five unique looks before settling on a showstopper. Next, you have to get invitations addressed and in the mail. You have to confirm the tuxes. You have to get flowers and centerpieces ordered. As in "The Guncle Abroad" by Steven Rowley, you have to get everyone on-board. Patrick O'Hara couldn't believe how his life had changed.

A few short years ago, he was living in Palm Springs, having "retired" from making films. He was in love, happy, and he had temporary custody of his niece, Maisie, and his nephew, Grant. Life was good.

Now... oh boy. Patrick and Emory had split-ish (Emory was still living in Patrick's California home), Patrick was living in Manhattan, making a movie in London, looking for another role soon, and the kids were four years older. Maisie was an attitudinal teen now, Grant was nine and too wise for his age.

They weren't the cuddly kids Patrick once knew – especially since their dad, Patrick's brother, Greg, was getting married again and the kids didn't like Livia, their wealthy socialite stepmom-to-be. Patrick suspected it was because Grant and Maisie still missed their Mom. It hadn't been all that long since Sara died. Was a new marriage an insult to old memories? Patrick didn't think so, and he'd prove it. While Greg and Livia were last-minute wedding-planning, he bought three Eurail passes, one for him and one each for the kids. He'd give them some culture and some new Guncle rules about love. Maybe – was it possible? – he'd even become their favorite GUP again.

But Maisie and Grant had other ideas. They agreed to go on the stupid trip around Europe with their GUP, if Patrick agreed to talk to Greg about calling off the entire wedding. Something old (memories), something new (stepmother), something borrowed (trouble), and something blue (two kids) just had to be undone, and soon.

There's an old saying, to paraphrase, that if the wedding is perfectly smooth, the marriage won't be. With this in mind, "The Guncle Abroad" is covered: add a snarky lesbian with an entourage, a tipsy sister on a manhunt, a Lothario who doesn't speak English, and lost love, all at a lakeside hotel, and yeah, we're good.

But here's the thing: author Steven Rowley doesn't just make readers laugh. We're covered on that part, too, because the whole pre-wedding scene in this book is pure chaos and LOL funny. Long before that, though, you'll be charmed by Rowley's main character and his desperation to stay relevant, to avoid-not-avoid love, and by his efforts to connect with his brother's kids. And after the not-so-storybook wedding, well, you know how those things are. Bring tissues, that's all you need to know.

If you're in need of a rom-com this summer, just bring the bubbly, pop a cork, and make it this one. Reading "The Guncle Abroad" is best for beach, bench, or back yard. Loving it? Piece of cake.

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GRAB A GETAWAY

SUMMER FUN IN MADISON, WISCONSIN

By Bill Malcolm

Madison, Wisconsin is a great city to visit but in the summer it cannot be beat. Situated on an isthmus between two lakes, there is so much to do: bicycling, canoeing, kayaking, and more. I grew up there and am a frequent visitor and have watched it grow into a medium sized city from just a college town (home to the University of Wisconsin).

GETTING THERE

I took Delta through Minneapolis (MSP). Delta now offers free internet to SkyMiles members on most flights. However, don't buy anything at MSP as they tack on an annoying 4.5 percent "hospitality fee" (a junk fee, a rip off charge). On the way home, I changed planes in Detroit, a much better choice with no surprise fees. Try the salmon at the Zingerman's (Ann Arbor's premiere deli) at the airport. Once in Madison, you can walk everywhere or take Madison Metro (or rent a B Cycle shared electric bike). If you stay on the Square, you do not need a car.

WHERE TO STAY

I stayed at the Concourse Hotel downtown just off the Capitol Square at 5 West Dayton. The remodeled room was nice (and quiet) and overlooked the beautiful Capitol. It is walkable to all the attractions (both lakes), has a free airport shuttle, and more. Michealangelo's Coffee is around the corner as is the State Street (pedestrian friendly) mall. They offer a free shuttle to the airport. The Starbucks is in the lobby. The restaurant features a great salad bar for lunch.

I also spent one night at the new SpringHill Suites in midtown at Hilldale (mall). It is near the Whole Foods, Target, Metcalf Market, and some great shops and restaurants, it is also very walkable. The Bartaco is the hipster hangout with a novel take

on Mexican food. The Metcalf's (gourmet supermarket) nearby had a food bar which also features Asian dishes to go as well as salads. The new Whole Foods is another to go food choice. Since I travel alone, I skip the wait (and cost) at restaurants whenever I can.

Avoid the Fluno Center Hotel which now tacks on a new \$35 maintenance fee. I also like the Hampton inn and Doubletree (both downtown) as well as the Best Western West Town on the west side. The Fairfield Inn in Middleton is also nice. The Edgewater Hotel on Lake Mendota has magnificent views and a lakeside bar.

WHAT TO DO

The Mad City Ski Team has a free water ski shows Sundays at 6 p.m. at Law Park along Lake Monona. The Pyramid of water skiers was amazing.

Head out to Picnic Point along the Lake Shore trail west of the UW Madison campus which makes for a great bike ride. You can rent a Trek electric bike to ride along Lake Mendota and then drop it at Picnic Point for the hike out to the point. Watch the sunset (and have a brat and beer) at the UW Memorial Union Terrace. Many nights feature music. They have a Babcock Hall ice cream



stand in the lobby where you can enjoy the treat made right on campus. Other fast casual options include salad and pizza. Don't miss the German Beer Hall as well. After all that food, jump in the lake for a swim at the UW Memorial Union Swim Pier. It is open from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and is free.

Swim at BB Clarke Beach on Lake Monona.

Enjoy music and dancing Thursdays and Fridays on the roof of the Monona Terrace Convention Center, the Frank Lloyd Wright building overlooking Lake Monona. Take in the Farmers Market Saturday mornings on the Square. Have some Spreckels cheesy bread or cheese curds. I got some local berries. Pick up some cheese to take home or enjoy a cheese sandwich at Fromagination (gourmet cheese store) on the Square. Have an orphan piece of cheese for \$2 or \$3.

Try the 5 year old aged cheddar. Canoe or kayak on Lake Wingra or Brittingham Bay on Lake Monona.

A photograph of three shirtless men in a locker room. The man in the center is a Black man with dark, wavy hair and a serious expression. He has tattoos on his chest and arms. The man on the left is a white man with a goatee, looking towards the center. The man on the right is a white man with short brown hair, looking towards the center. They are standing in front of red lockers. The text 'COME TAKE A LOAD OFF' is overlaid in large white letters.

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Enjoy the fabulous (and free) Olbrich Gardens along Lake Monona. I rode a B Cycle along the lake to the gardens. Don't miss the Thai Pavilion.

WHERE TO EAT

Coopers Tavern is right on the Square. You can sit outside and enjoy the locally sourced dishes. The view of the Square is nice. Try the tomato soup and salad.

Cosetta's at 222 West Washington features sandwiches, salads, and soups (all homemade). They are only open for lunch. Try the sausage tomato soup or the roast beef salad. Their home made breads are to die for.

Colectivo Coffee on the Square (25. S. Pickney) is incredibly good as is *Barriques* (127 W. Washington) for coffee drinks.

The Capitol Centre Market (111 North Broom) has a hot food bar as well as salads to go.

The Fresh Madison Market at 703 University has a hot food bar as well as a salad bar. Great for a quick meal.

Enjoy the *Old Fashioned Restaurant*, a Wisconsin original (and have one-Wisconsin Old Fashioneds are made with brandy). You will find them on the Square.



Have a brat (a pork sausage, pronounced braht) on the UW Memorial Union Terrace. Grilled outside. Goes well with a beer. Or a pitcher of beer. Sit outside on the Terrace. Watch the sailboats or the sunset.

NIGHTLIFE

Enjoy *Woofs* on King Street right off the square. It's a levi leather bar. The Sunday beer bust is fun. They have a weekend party on the street each August which is not to be missed which also features a cruise on Lake

Monona during the day. This year the fun day will be August 19. The nearby Shamrock is another fun spot. It's your neighborhood Cheers type bar right on the square. They also serve beer. If you have a car, you will find Club V on the Beltline which features drag shows and more.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

OurLives is the bi-monthly LGBTQ Magazine based in Madison. *Isthmus Magazine*, published monthly, is the alternative publication with lots of current events. *Madison Magazine* also has a lot of ideas of what to visit and where to eat.

Visit the Destination Madison website for other travel tips. You cannot beat Madison in the summer although it is great any time of year. Between the lake activities, biking, or enjoying nature, it is great.

Bill Malcolm's syndicated LGBTQ + oriented travel column appears in publications (and on line) throughout North America and on the IGLTA.org travel blog site. He focuses on going local and value as well as walking, biking, and transit. He thanks Destination Madison for their travel tips and one month free B Cycle pass. Otherwise, he received no compensation for his Madison column of any kind.



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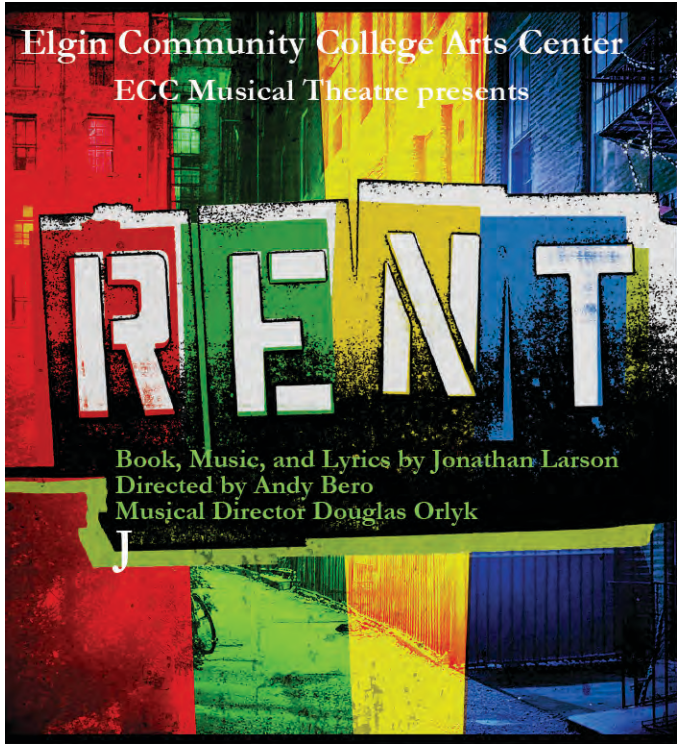
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CAST AND PRODUCTION TEAM ANNOUNCED FOR *Les Misérables*, PRESENTED BY UPTOWN MUSIC THEATER OF HIGHLAND PARK AT DEERFIELD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, DEERFIELD, IL JULY 26 TO AUGUST 11



Through special personal arrangement with renowned producer **Sir Cameron Mackintosh** (*Les Misérables*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Hamilton*), Uptown Music Theater of Highland Park has been granted an exceptional license to produce *Les Misérables*, at the stunning new Deerfield Performing Arts Center (1959 Waukegan Rd., Deerfield, IL). A portion of the proceeds from this special limited engagement will benefit the Highland Park Shooting Recovery Fund.

Directing the production is **Scott Shallenbarger**, who served the Highland Park community as Director of Theatre Arts at Highland Park High School for over three decades. **Stacey Flaster**, Associate Director and Choreographer, has an impressive resume including direction and choreography credits with the Marriott Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Theatre at the Center, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and has been nominated for two Jeff Awards for her choreography. Serving as the Music Director and Conductor is the two-time Jeff Award nominated **Aaron Kaplan**.

For ticketing information and to learn more about the production, visit uptownhp.org.

MUSIC THEATER WORKS ANNOUNCES THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR *CAROUSEL*, AUGUST 8 - 18, AT THE NORTH SHORE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN SKOKIE



Music Theater Works has announced the cast and creative team for the second production of its 2024 season, *Caroussel*, in the Center Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts In Skokie, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, IL

Caroussel, with music by **Richard Rodgers** and book and lyrics

by **Oscar Hammerstein II**, is directed by **Sasha Gerritson**, choreographed by **Andrew Waters** and music directed by **Michael McBride**.

As the second musical written by the iconic duo, *Rodgers and Hammerstein, Caroussel* is a classic in the Broadway cannon. Based on **Ferenc Molnar's** play, *Liliom*, *Caroussel* tells the love story between carnival barker *Billy Bigelow* and millworker *Julie Jordan*. Voted best musical of the 20th Century by "Time Magazine," Music Theater Works' orchestra of 17 and a cast of more than 20 will perform *Caroussel's* score including the songs "If I Loved You," "You'll Never Walk Alone," and "Soliloquy." Lilted tunes, sweeping dance sequences and a poignant plot keep audiences enthralled with this Golden Age classic.

Tickets are now on sale at MusicTheaterWorks.com or by calling the Music Theater Works box office at the North Shore Center, **847.673.6300**.

KOKANDY PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCES LINE-UP FOR CHICAGO MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL RETURNING AUGUST 8-11 AT STEPPENWOLF'S 1700 THEATER



Kokandy Productions has announced the official selections for the return of the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival, a celebration and showcase of the growing field of musical theatre creators from Chicago and beyond. The 2024 Festival will feature concert presentations of five new musicals over the course of one weekend, as part of Steppenwolf's dynamic and genre-defying LookOut series. The Festival will be performed August 8 - 11, 2024 in Steppenwolf's 1700 Theater, 1700 N. Halsted St.

Since its inception in 2014 by Underscore Theatre Company, the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival has brought over 50 new musicals to Chicago stages. The festival provides much-needed artistic resources for emerging composer/lyricist teams to have their work supported, explored and most importantly - performed! Kokandy is thrilled to steward the much-anticipated return of this vital opportunity for new musical development in Chicago.

Tickets are currently available at steppenwolf.org/CMTF

HELL IN A HANDBAG PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCES THE GOLDEN GIRLS MEET THE SKOOBY DON'T GANG: THE MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED BUSH OCTOBER 10- NOVEMBER 3 AT THE CHOPIN THEATRE



Hell in a Handbag Productions will conclude its 22nd season with the world premiere of *The Golden Girls Meet The Scooby Don't Gang: The Mystery of The Haunted Bush*, bringing together two beloved Handbag parodies in one chilling Halloween tale. The girls - Dorothy, Rose, Blanche, Sophia (and their whacky friends) - enlist the help of America's favorite 30-something teenage detectives to help solve a mystery in this all new episode written by Artistic Director **David Cerda** and directed by **Frankie Leo Bennett**. *The Mystery of The Haunted Bush* plays October 10 - November 3, 2024 on The Chopin Theatre Mainstage, 1543 W. Division St. in Chicago.

Rose's (**Ed Jones**) nephew Fred (**Tyler Anthony Smith**) is coming for a visit with his amateur sleuth friends, Daffy (**Liz Lesinski**), Velva (**Caitlin Jackson**), Skaggy (**Josh Kemper**) and their dog Scooby (to be announced). While Rose is excited, she's also hiding the real motive for inviting them: she's being haunted by a big, scary bush - or is it a tree? There's seems to be some confusion about that.

Meanwhile, the Scooby gang is in awe of their idol and Sophia's (**Ryan Oates**) best friend, Nancy Drew (**Danne Taylor**), particularly Skaggy, who takes things a step further. Can the gang help the girls solve the mystery of the haunted bush before it devours Rose? Will Velva and Daffy reveal their special secret? Will Dorothy (**David Cerda**), Blanche (**Grant Drager**) and Sophia survive the spooky hijinks?

Tickets are now on sale at handbagproductions.org or bit.ly/hauntedbush.

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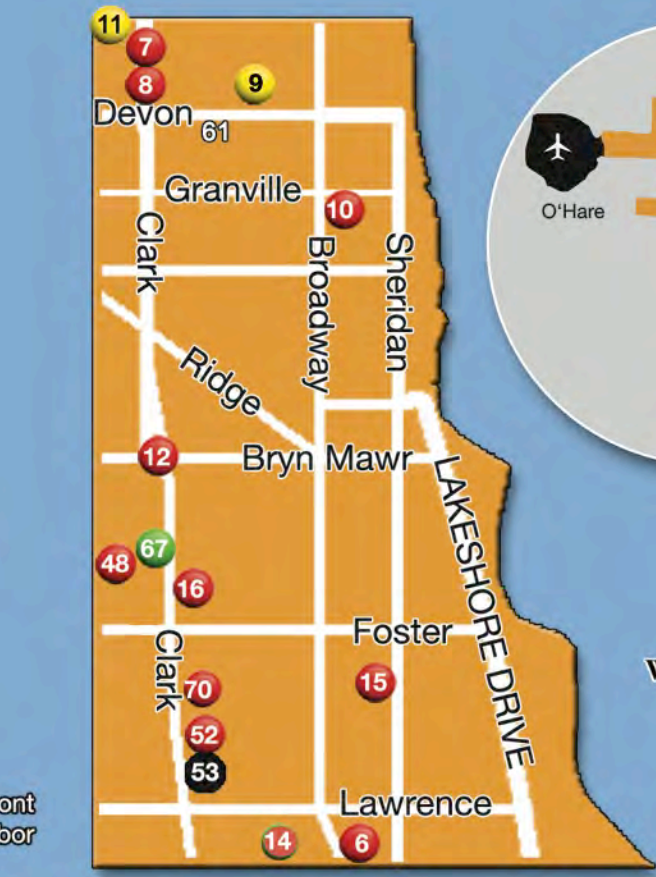
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