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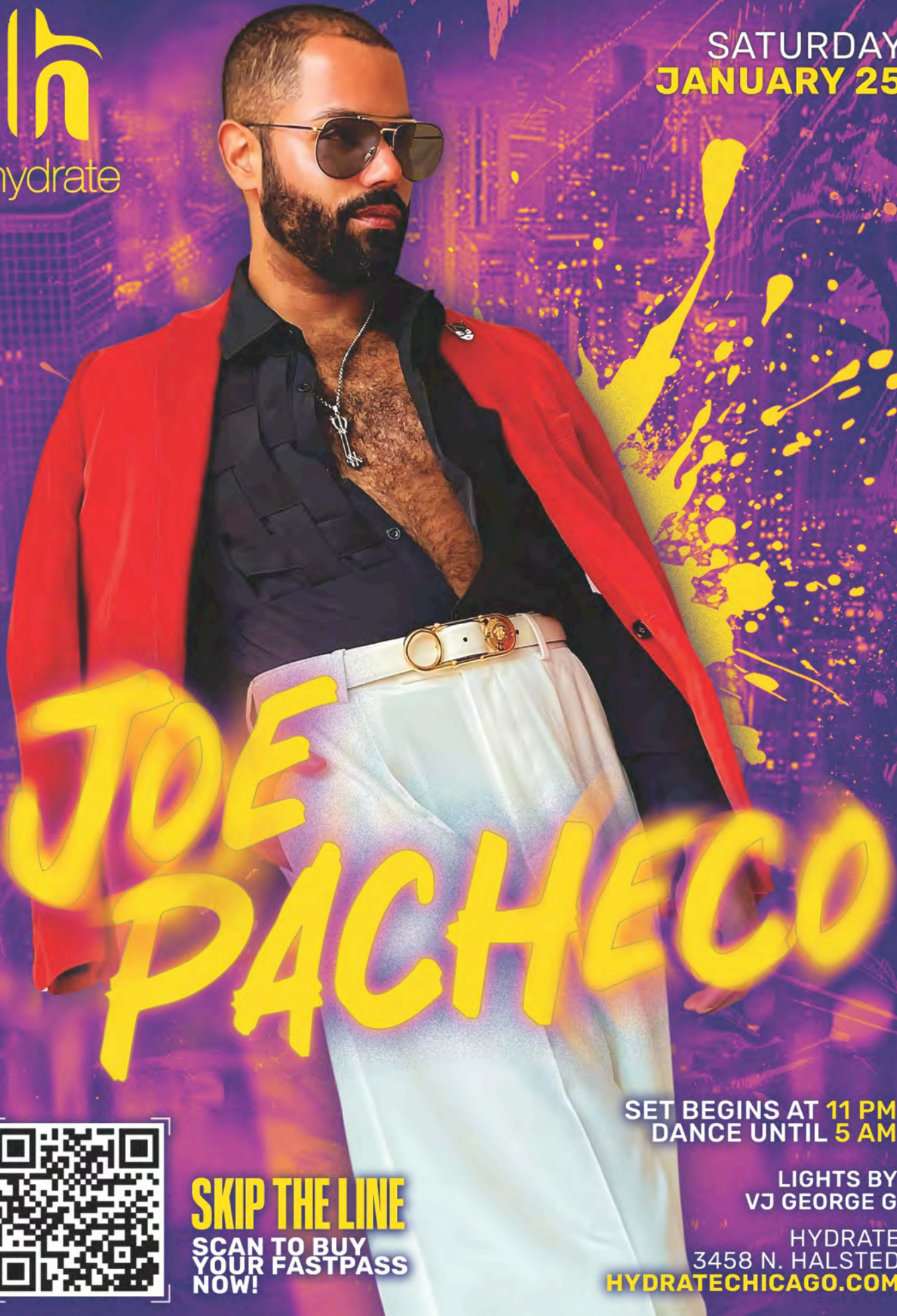


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GRAB MAGAZINE
3712 N. BROADWAY #315
CHICAGO, IL 60613
TEL: 773-707-2660
WWW.GRABCHICAGO.COM
WWW.GRABBYAWARDS.COM
EMAIL: GRABSTACY@GMAIL.COM

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Publisher
 Stacy Bridges
Creative Director (Web)
 Miguel Ortuno

Contributors
 Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss
 Holly Maholm
 Bill Malcolm
 Gregg Shapiro
 Terri Schlichenmeyer

Production
 Stacy Bridges
 James Gumb

Photography
 Bear Lens Photography
 CHRIS K.

Sales
 DAVID D.

Public Relations
 Nick Wille

NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE
 RIVENDELL MEDIA
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 Mark Nagel (Co-Founder)
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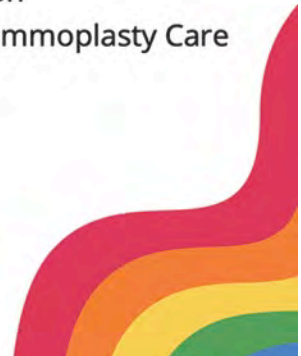
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GRAB A PLANE



Runyon Canyon, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, and the WeHo Bar Scene: Walking in L A (Your WeHo Car Free, Care Free Weekend)

By Bill Malcolm

I recently visited Southern California and had a fun time. The weather is always good, but the winter is the best coming from cloudy and cold climates like mine. I flew nonstop into LAX and survived without a rental car. It's a lot more relaxing. I stayed at the Ramada Plaza in West Hollywood (and the Renaissance LAX and the Anaheim Marriott). All three were excellent and affordable – increasingly important in this expensive region.

WHAT TO DO

Hike Runyon Canyon Park above Hollywood: This 160 acre park has a great three-mile loop trail. Enter from Fuller Road and go counterclockwise on the trails.

Stunning views of the Pacific Ocean, downtown LA, the LA mountains to the east, and of course the famous Hollywood sign. Many movie stars and movie star wannabees can be found hiking the popular trail. Lots of interesting native vegetation (mostly scrub chapparal) plus native trees adapted to the Mediterranean climate (rain only in the winter, dry the rest of the year). Bring plenty of water. Parking is limited so take public transit (Sunset Boulevard route to Fuller). Vendors at the park entrance sell food and beverages

including a fruit mix.

Hit the West Hollywood bar scene: Revolver is the video bar (8851 Santa Monica) and is always hopping. Dancers on the weekends. The Gym (8919 Santa Monica) is extremely popular. Micky's has a great happy hour and also a taco bar where you can have a picnic. Hi Tops is the sports bar (there's another one in San Francisco) and is quite popular. The Abbey is a lot of fun. Schmitt's is also quite popular and features an upscale crowd.

Take your pick of bars – there is something for everyone and they are just steps from the Ramada Plaza on Santa Monica Boulevard.

Explore the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Monument Park near Union Station:

It's the original spot where LA was founded in the 1700s. Learn about the history of this city which was previously under Spanish then Mexican rule. Enjoy the shops and restaurants in this Farmers Market like setting. Nearby is the art deco gem, Union Station, where you can catch Amtrak, Metrolink commuter rail, and the Metro subway/light rail lines. I went to LAX from Union Station on the A and C lines for just \$1.75.

Hang out on the beach at Santa Monica Pier

Go to Anaheim Home of Disneyland. The Anaheim Packing District is the new food court. The Garden Walk features tons of restaurants. We liked Casa de Pancho Mexican. The Anaheim Marriott is nice.

WHERE TO STAY IN WEHO

You simply cannot beat the iconic Ramada Plaza on Santa Monica Boulevard. Next door to the Trader Joe's. Many great LGBTQ+ bars just down the street. A great gym across the street. On the #4 line to Santa Monica and to downtown. Very handy. Best of all no resort fee (aka amenity fee or destination fee) which the other hotels had (at \$35 a day plus tax) and no "Worker Protection Fee Ordinance Surcharge" (around \$20 a day plus tax). And what is this even for and why are both charges not in base rates? (The Ramada has a \$1 a day safe fee plus tax but they will take it off the bill if you walk). The Ramada Plaza is a Miami 1980s architectural gem. If you need a car, Enterprise is next door. The trendy gym is across the street. You can walk everywhere, and everything is just steps away.



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Another fee-free hotel is the Best Western Sunset Plaza. Other great WeHo hotel options include the Chamberlin (an award winner) and the Andaz (part of the Hyatt family).

Before you book any hotel, check all the charges in addition to the room rate.

Read a summary of all the WeHo hotels at visitwesthollywood.com

HOW TO GET THERE

I took a non-stop (IND LAX) on American on the way out and another nonstop red eye on Delta on the way back. Both flights were flawless. Delta now has free WiFi!

I took the #3 Big Blue Bus to Santa Monica from LAX the next day for just \$1.10 and connected to the #4 bus to West Hollywood (\$1.75). Then I took the #4 bus to the red line subway to go to Union Station. Then I took the commuter rail, MetroLink, to go to Anaheim (close to Disneyland). The all day weekend pass is a deal. The new WeHo CityLine bus will also take you around town (weho.org/cityline). Car NOT needed.

WHERE AND WHAT TO EAT

Tail O' the Pup in West Hollywood is Southern California architecture at its finest. They also have good hot dogs.

I loved the many choices at the Original Farmers Market. Plus healthy juices. Try the enchiladas at Magee's (6333 W 3rd Street). The open air shopping and dining facility has been open since 1934.

I got quick meals too at the Trader Joes (8611 Santa Monica Boulevard).

The Angel City IPA is excellent



and is a local microbrew. I had one at LAX. The Asian Street Eats in the Tom Bradley Terminal has healthy bowls. Try the short ribs with purple rice and spicy Teriyaki.

You cannot go wrong in LA when eating. Even the gas station convenience stores have healthy items.

OTHER TIPS

You will see lots of movie stars and move star wanna bees. Everyone watches what they eat and eats healthy. I had a carrot/beet/pineapple/apple red juice combo at the Yum Yum Donuts (5836 W. Manchester) near the Doubletree LAX. Only in California. And so healthy.

The LA Blade occasionally carries my column. There is no other in print publication I could find.

However, GEDMAG.com (a Palm

Springs publication) has some LA stuff.

West Hollywood is celebrating its 40th anniversary as a city. It's very gay and not as retiree oriented as nearby Palm Springs. It's also very walkable.

More information and special thanks to visitwesthollywood.com.

While I flew into LAX, you may want to avoid it. Burbank, Ontario, Santa Ana, and Long Beach are less congested alternatives and easier to get to. If you must go into LAX like me (since that is where the non-stops went), take transit and avoid the car congestion.

Look out for the robot food carts in WeHo which deliver food. They are everywhere on the sidewalk. The Waymo driverless taxis are another hit.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated LGBTQ+ value travel writer. He boycotts hotels with junk fees (resort fees, amenity fees, made up charges and surcharges) and walks, bikes, or uses public transit. He receives no compensation (free hotel rooms, etc.) during his travels or when he does, discloses it. His views are his own.

Publishers Note: This Article was submitted before the Los Angeles Fires. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by the fires. If you would like to help those affected please visit <https://goFundMe.com/wildfire-relief-fund-2025>



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GRAB PAUL

Into the “Wild and Blue”: An interview with gay writer Paul Lisicky

By Gregg Shapiro

At 81 years old, all-around music legend Joni Mitchell may be more popular and famous now than at any other point in her long and productive career. Feted and honored at multiple music tributes, returning to the stage for limited live performances, showered with glowing praise from a plethora of sources and the subject of an abundance of new books, including “Song So Wild and Blue” (Harper One, 2025) by gay writer Paul Lisicky. Subtitled “A Life with the Music of Joni Mitchell,” Lisicky’s memoir interweaves Mitchell music references and life events with his own experiences, illustrating her impact on his personal and creative lives. Paul was kind enough to make time for an interview in advance of his book’s February 2025 publication date.

Gregg Shapiro: Forgive me, Paul, but I want to begin with the most obvious question – your book “Song So Wild and Blue” – arrives a few months after Ann Powers’ book “Traveling: On the Path of Joni Mitchell,” and in the same month as Henry Alford’s “I Dream of Joni.” Would you please say something about the Joni zeitgeist and the proximity of these books?

Paul Lisicky: The concept of the zeitgeist is funny to apply to Joni, in that most of her albums were written against the times, with the exception of “Court and Spark.” Folk music was long out of fashion by the time of her first three albums. “Blue” wasn’t recognized as the masterpiece it is until many years later, and so many of her albums from “The Hissing of Summer Lawns” onward were met with indifference if not disdain. Throughout the late 1970s into the 1980s, she was thought to be irrelevant. The culture has been late

to recognize her accomplishment. I just read that 68 books were published about Leonard Cohen between 2014 and 2021: 19 in 2014 and 2015 alone, the year of his eightieth birthday. We’re just catching up with Joni.

It’s interesting to me that the three books you mention all had to be underway before her 2022 appearance at the Newport Folk Festival. I don’t think anybody ever expected Joni to perform again after her brain aneurysm in 2015. It’s common knowledge that she had to learn how to walk, talk, and sing again, and her comeback in her early 80s hamagentic; how many times does an audience get to see a full-on resurrection? There are plenty more books to come and the thought of that makes me very happy.

GS: Were you aware of Ann’s and Henry’s books while writing yours?

PL: No, not at all. I learned about Ann’s book after I’d turned mine in, the Henry Alford book this past September. They’re all radically different projects and I was never concerned about overlap. Ann’s is as much about the complexities of being a music critic as it is a Joni biography. Henry Alford’s is a collection of short essays prompted by 53 photographs of Joni. My book documents Joni’s influence on my creative life, all the ways I’ve internalized the lessons in those songs, from youth till now. **It’s also** interested in thinking about her music from the perspective of a gay man, through an LGBTQ+ frame. That hasn’t been much written about.

GS: In the opening section, “Down To You,” you wrote, “Every writer



Photo By Jude Theriot

should begin with another art form – acting painting, sculpture – and use that as a point of comparison or departure.” Did your beginnings as a musician influence that train of thought?

PL: Oh, definitely. My work as a musician informs everything I write, whether it’s the shape of a sentence, a tonal shift, the pacing, the heightening of an image, or a word. A good song penetrates on multiple levels. It does something to our neural circuitry – it changes us. So how to bring that to the page? That’s been the challenge.

GS: In the “Stay In Touch” section, you wrote, “The transition from songwriting to fiction: Deep down under my skin, I knew it wasn’t as far as it seemed.” Does that mean that you feel that your songwriting and performing past prepared you for your life as a writer, one who does readings of his work?

PL: Giving a reading and singing before an audience has always felt like an identical experience to me. My own lost life comes fully back to me when I’m standing at a microphone, reading from my work. I think singers get to move their bodies more, but I’m probably doing that in my imagination [laughs]!

GS: Your partner Jude brackets the book, written about extensively in the first and final sections. How does he feel about

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being in the book?

PL: Jude came into my life just as the book was underway, and it's as much a love letter to him as it is to Joni. He was by my side through all of it. He listened to me think about it, read early and late drafts, and offered suggestions on both a global and line level. He's a brilliant reader and editor, has such good instincts about structure and cutting, and challenged me to push the book in more adventurous directions. But as to your question, I think you'd need to ask him.

GS: I love that you love Laura Nyro, too. More than any of the other Laurel Canyon women, I see more connection between Joni and Laura than the rest. Would you agree?

PL: Joni and Laura definitely took direction from each other – they were mutual fans; more collaborative than competitive. You can hear Laura in the piano songs on “Blue,” especially the title song, as well as in mid to later songs like “Paprika Plains,” “Last Chance Lost,” “Man from Mars,” and “Strong and Wrong.” And I can feel Joni’s influence all over Laura’s albums from “Smile” through “Mother’s Spiritual.” That shared fascination with unorthodox piano chords, art song, and a classical influence pulled up through the twentieth century into pop music. Not to mention a kind of unrestricted, feral emotion. Somewhere out there is a great photo of the two of them in conversation, cigarettes between their fingers, looking at each other with mischief and interest.

GS: Does your childhood friend Albert, about whom you wrote in the “Sweet Bird” section know he’s in the book?

PL: Albert died back in 1996, alas. If he were still around, I can imagine the two of us talking about that passage, him saying, “Aww, look at us.” From a distance of decades, it’s clear that all the complexities of our friendship/relationship were brought on by the homophobia of the times and all the ways we’d taken that rebuke into ourselves.

GS: When you write about writing, in the Iowa chapter and the “Black Crow” sections, for example, your teacher voice comes through.

Would you consider parts of “Songs So Wild and Blue” to be a cautionary tale for young writers?

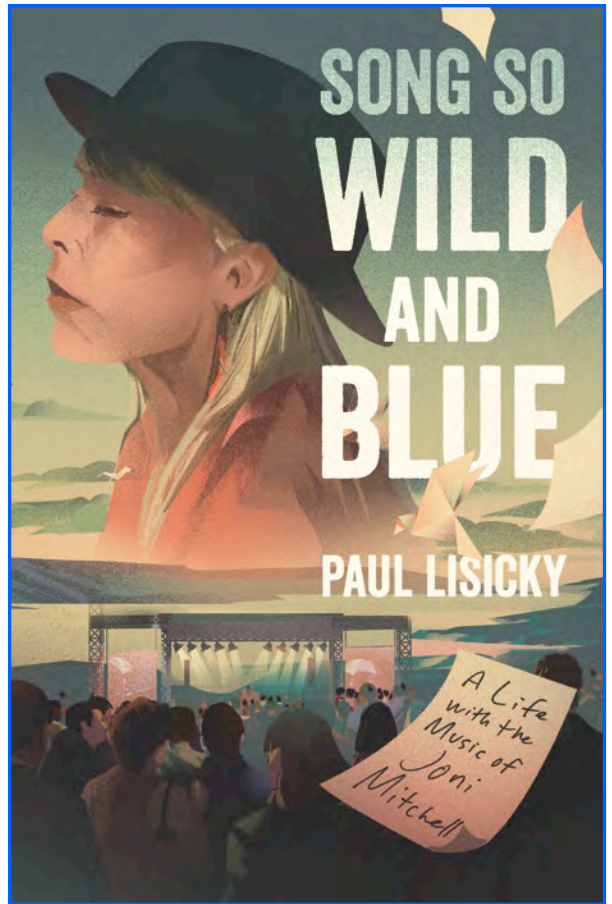
PL: I hadn’t thought of it in that way, but that makes sense. My greater hope is that those sections inspire younger writers when it comes to the hard work of shaping a vision, a sound, a voice. That never happens in isolation, but in conversation with other voices, in community. As to the challenges of cultivating an audience? I think a number of my students are already pretty savvy about a lot of that after having grown up with the thorns of social media.

GS: While I was reading your book, the latest book in the 33 1/3 series – Kate Bush’s “Hounds of Love” – was delivered. Joni’s “Court and Spark” is #40 of 188 titles. If you could write about a Joni album for the series, which would it be?

PL: I know I’m cheating, but it would be a toss-up between “For the Roses” and “Hejira.” But to be honest, I’ve been listening a lot to the later albums and I think I might learn more from getting deep into “Night Ride Home” or “Turbulent Indigo.”

GS: Have you seen the Kathy Bates interview in which she talks about her friendship with Joni?

PL: I first knew of that story through Taylor Goldsmith, but it was great to hear the story in Kathy Bates’ own voice. In short, Kathy Bates handed Joni her old guitar at one of the Joni Jams at her house. Joni started retuning it, and that was the mythic



moment in which Joni came back to performing her songs. The hilarious thing – and this I hadn’t heard before – is that Kathy Bates now wants her old guitar back [laughs]. Not sure if Joni has any idea!

GS: At the time this interview is taking place, the movie A Complete Unknown, starring Timothee Chalamet as Bob Dylan is getting a lot of attention. Who do you think would be the perfect actor to play young Joni in a biopic?

PL: Ah, great question! It’s already known that Meryl Streep is set to play the older Joni in the Cameron Crowe-directed movie coming out later this year. But the younger Joni has to be an unknown, and I’m betting the role might be career-defining.

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

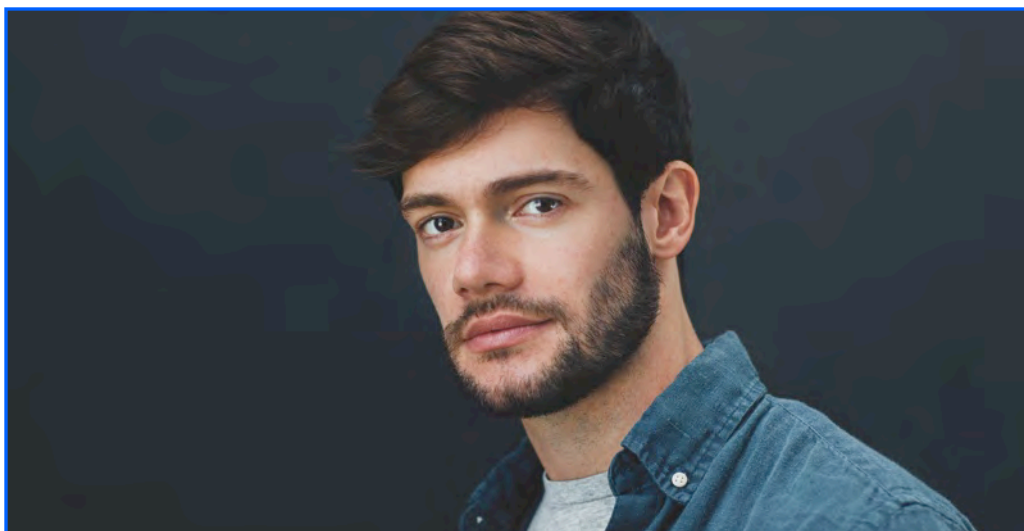
PL: Yes, I’m always working on something. I’ve been writing it since fall 2023 and it keeps changing shape as books do along the way.



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GRAB FERNANDO



The Stars are Bright, Fernando Fernando Shines in *Exteriors*, the captivating LGBTQ film by director Mark Schwab

By Paul Hutnick

Fernando grew up with dreams of making a difference. While he first aspired to become the U.S. president, his realization that this dream wasn't possible due to his being born in Costa Rica led him to pursue a different path of influence: acting. After graduating high school, Fernando made his way to Los Angeles, where he quickly landed a role on Disney Channel's *Disney 365*. It was a "dream come true" that shaped his career and life. Now, Fernando takes center stage in *Exteriors*, an LGBTQ film by director Mark Schwab that weaves together three interconnected stories of modern gay relationships. The film premieres in March on GayBingeTV. Fernando explains more from his Los Angeles home.

Paul Hutnick: You're best known from your time on Disney Channel's *Disney 365*. Is it true it almost didn't happen?

Fernando: Yes! The morning of my big audition, the power went out in my building and the gate of my garage wouldn't open! I was panicking: sweating bullets, crying. This was the biggest audition of my life, and I couldn't get out of my

building! Thankfully the casting director was so patient and understanding. I finally got to the audition, an hour late. I left thinking I would never hear from them but I got a callback that I completely flubbed because I was a ball of nerves. I left the callback thinking, not a chance in hell, but three days later I got the call telling me I booked it!

P.H: Did *Disney 365* help shape your journey as an actor?

Fernando: The lessons I learned from that time have shaped everything I do in and out of acting.

P.H: What does a typical day in your life look like now?

Fernando: I don't think there's such a thing as a typical day for an artist. For that reason, I strive to stick to my self-care regimens religiously. First thing every morning, I stretch for thirty minutes to an hour and then hit the gym. Whatever happens from that point on in the day is that day's adventure.

P.H: What initially attracted you to the role of Kenny, and in what ways do you relate to him

personally?

Fernando: Kenny and I are similar in that we care about our friendships and relationships more than anything else.

P.H: You previously portrayed Kenny in *Brotherly Lies*. How did it feel to revisit this character in a new context with *Exteriors*?

Fernando: Amazing! It's rare to be given the chance to step back into a role, and I felt lucky to do so. Especially with Mark (Schwab, the film's director) and his crew.

P.H: *Exteriors* delves into the idea of whether coincidences are random or part of a greater plan. What are your personal thoughts?

Fernando: There have been countless times where I'm thinking of someone so I reach out or bump into them and they say, "I was just thinking of you." How is it that we both were thinking of each other? That, to me, proves we're all interconnected in ways we don't yet understand. I believe there's something bigger at play.

P.H: What do you hope audiences—both LGBTQ+ and beyond—take away from *Exteriors*?



Fernando: I hope audiences leave the experience more open to whatever “randomness” life throws at us. We can all learn something meaningful from seemingly

insignificant moments. You never know what that moment might mean eight years from now.

P.H: Would you suggest that viewers watch *Brotherly Lies* before diving into *Exteriors*?

Fernando: I definitely think it’s an added bonus, but both films stand on their own.

P.H: In your opinion, how has the representation of LGBTQ+ characters and stories in film evolved over time?

Fernando: How much time do you have? Long answer short; it’s come a long way but still has a long way to go.

P.H: How does working on a gay film compare to other projects you’ve been involved in?

Fernando: *Brotherly Lies* was my first time working on a queer project and I found it to be pure magic. It’s what little me never knew I wanted to do. It gave me a chance to speak

from my actual lived experiences and forced me to be honest with myself in the storytelling in ways I had never been challenged to do before.

P.H: What advice would you give to aspiring actors, particularly LGBTQ+ individuals, who want to break into the film industry?

Fernando: This is a hard one as after eleven years doing this professionally, I’m trying to figure it out myself. However, there are things that still remain true. Train. Learn. Study the craft, but also equip yourself with knowledge of how to navigate being your own business.

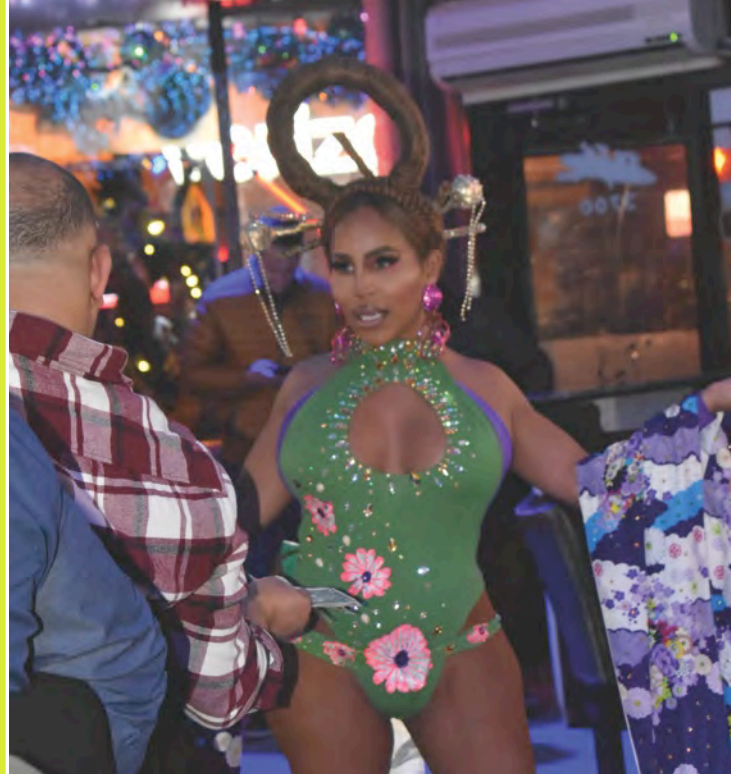
P.H: What’s next on the horizon for you?

Fernando: My new film *CUTAWAYS* will be coming out soon which I’m really excited for. I got to have blue hair which is something I always wanted to try! Aside from that, I am working towards a law degree and will be doing a pre law fellowship in Europe this summer. I’ve never been, and it’s wildly expensive so I’ve started a crowdfunding campaign on my social media @spacemoneyk.

Exteriors begins streaming March 3rd on GayBingeTV. Visit ditfilms.com

EXTERIORS

3 stories 3 coincidences 3 consequences



Kit Kat
 lounge & supper club
 Photos By Anthony Meade



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GRAB MUSIC



Father John Misty -Photo By Brent Goldman

Q-Music: ICYMI

By Gregg Shapiro

With so much music being released on a daily basis, it's easy to understand how some albums can be overlooked. Here are some from 2024 that you might have missed.

Listening to **Father John Misty** (aka Josh Tillman) can be a religious experience (even for an

atheist like me), especially when it comes to his brilliant album "Mahashmashana" (Sub Pop). The title is a reference to a Sanskrit word that means "great burial ground," and yet this is some of the most vibrant music you are likely to hear. Beginning with the near-epic (almost

10-minute) title track, with its mention of "the corpse dance," Father John Misty once again showcases his affection for lushly orchestrated pop music with a retro bent. Just don't get too cozy, because he slams us against the wall in "She Cleans Up." But that kind of sonic shift is temporary because he continues to pour on the disturbing beauty in "Mental Health," "Being You," and the Sinatra-esque "Summer's Gone." However, FJM comes closest to nirvana on "I Guess Time Just Makes Fools of Us All," an 8.5-

minute scoop of vintage disco that should be spun in gay clubs far and wide.

A similar retro vibe permeates "Here In The Pitch" (Mexican Summer) by **Jessica Pratt**. Some queer listeners may have first become aware of Pratt via gay singer/songwriter Troye Sivan's song "Can't Go Back, Baby" on which he samples her song "Back, Baby" from her 2015 "On Your Own Love Again" album. As haunting as it is gorgeous, listening to the nine songs on "Here In The Pitch" is a little like entering a musical time machine. The arrangements are from an earlier era but still manage to feel fresh and captivating. It also helps that Pratt doesn't sound like anyone else currently recording, which provides the songs with a distinctive personality. Standout tracks include "Better Hate," "Empires Never Know," "Nowhere It Was," "The Last Year," and "By Hook or By Crook."

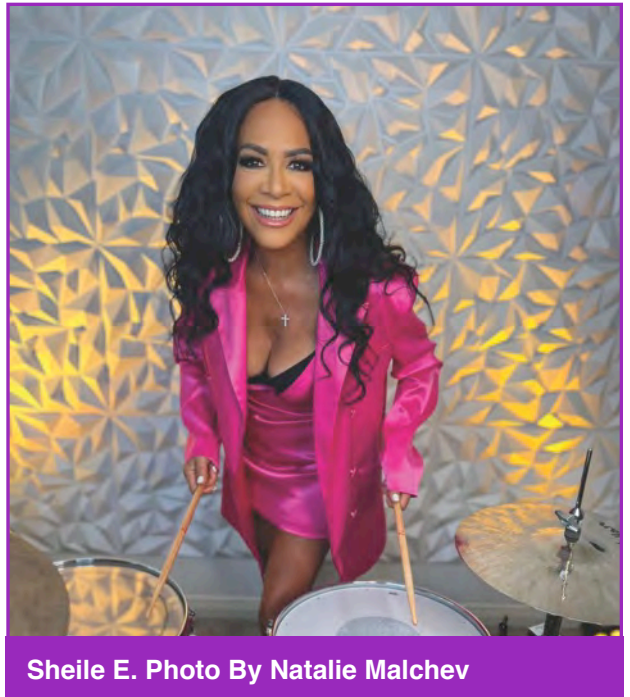
Nashville-based ally Mindy Smith (who has a performance at an HRC benefit on her resume) is back




with “Quiet Town” (Compass), the Americana singer/songwriter’s first album in more than a dozen years. Cited by Kacey Musgraves as an influence (something you can certainly hear), Smith at long last returns with one of the most powerful albums of her career. The breathtaking “I’d Rather Be a Bridge,” described as “a plea for compassion and connection” deserves to become an anthem during these troubled times. Other notable numbers include “Peace Eludes Me,” the old-time country of “Farther Than We Should Have,” and the title cut. [Mindy Smith performs on January 30 at City Winery Chicago.]

If all you know of legendary percussionist **Sheila E.** is related to the time she spent in Prince’s orbit, then you only know a fraction of the story. A sought-after musician in her own right, she has released several albums, including her latest “Bailar” (Sony Music Latin/Stilettoflats). Featuring guest artists Gloria Estefan and Mimy Succar (“Bemba Colora”), Rubén Blades

(“Anacaona”), Debi Nova (“Possibilities”), as well as her parents Pete “Pops” Escovedo and Juanita “Moms” Escovedo, Sheila E. makes a long overdue return to form.



Sheila E. Photo By Natalie Malchev

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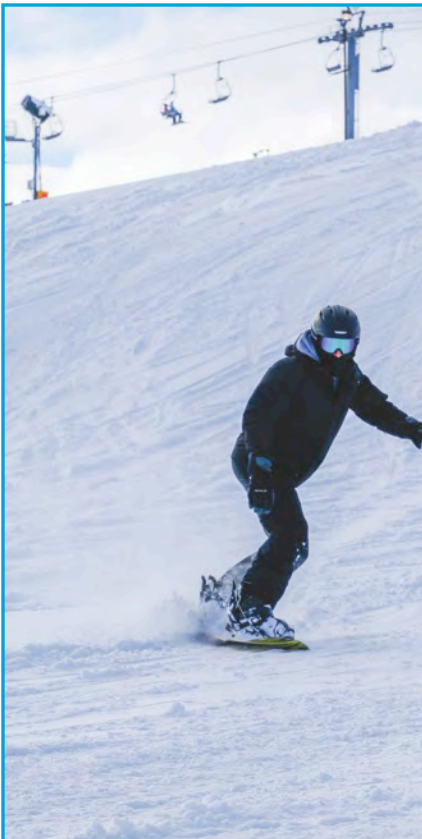
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GRAB SKIS



Pride & Ski Day on Sunday, February 9



For 87 seasons, Wilmot Mountain located in Wilmot Wisconsin has been the heart of the heartland, the warm hug on a cold day, the place for thousands to play, ski, learn, and tube and toast each other of a hot toddy and relax over a warm fire. Wilmot Mountain offers 22 lanes of tubing, each lane over 1,000 ft long.

This year Wilmot Mountain will host a Pride & Ski Day on Sunday, February 9, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This event celebrates Wilmot Mountain's dedication to fostering a sense of belonging for every guest. Pride & Ski Day offers a chance for individuals and families to come together, enjoy winter activities, and share in the vibrant culture of the LGBTQIA+ community.

This year's highlights will include

- S'mores on the Patio – Cozy up with a sweet treat by the fire.
- Kringle Time – Indulge in Wisconsin's favorite pastry.
- \$5 Equipment Rentals after 3 PM – Affordable access to winter fun.
- Cookie Decorating – A fun

activity for kids and adults alike.

- Party Favors & Pride Flags – Complimentary mementos to mark the day.
- Photo Opportunities – Capture your memories with vibrant backdrops.
- Ski Pride Parade – A colorful procession on the slopes.

Guests are encouraged to wear their favorite family-friendly Pride outfits to showcase their spirit in this inclusive celebration.

“Wilmot Mountain is proud to be a place where everyone feels welcome,” said **Chuck Randles**, General Manager at Wilmot Mountain. “Pride & Ski Day is a testament to our commitment to inclusivity and creating memorable experiences for all our guests.”

NEW FOR 24/25: Get ready for a season of nonstop fun at Wilmot Mountain! Our fan favorite The Rope Terrain Park has been regraded, making it less dependent on snowfall and ready to rock earlier in the season.

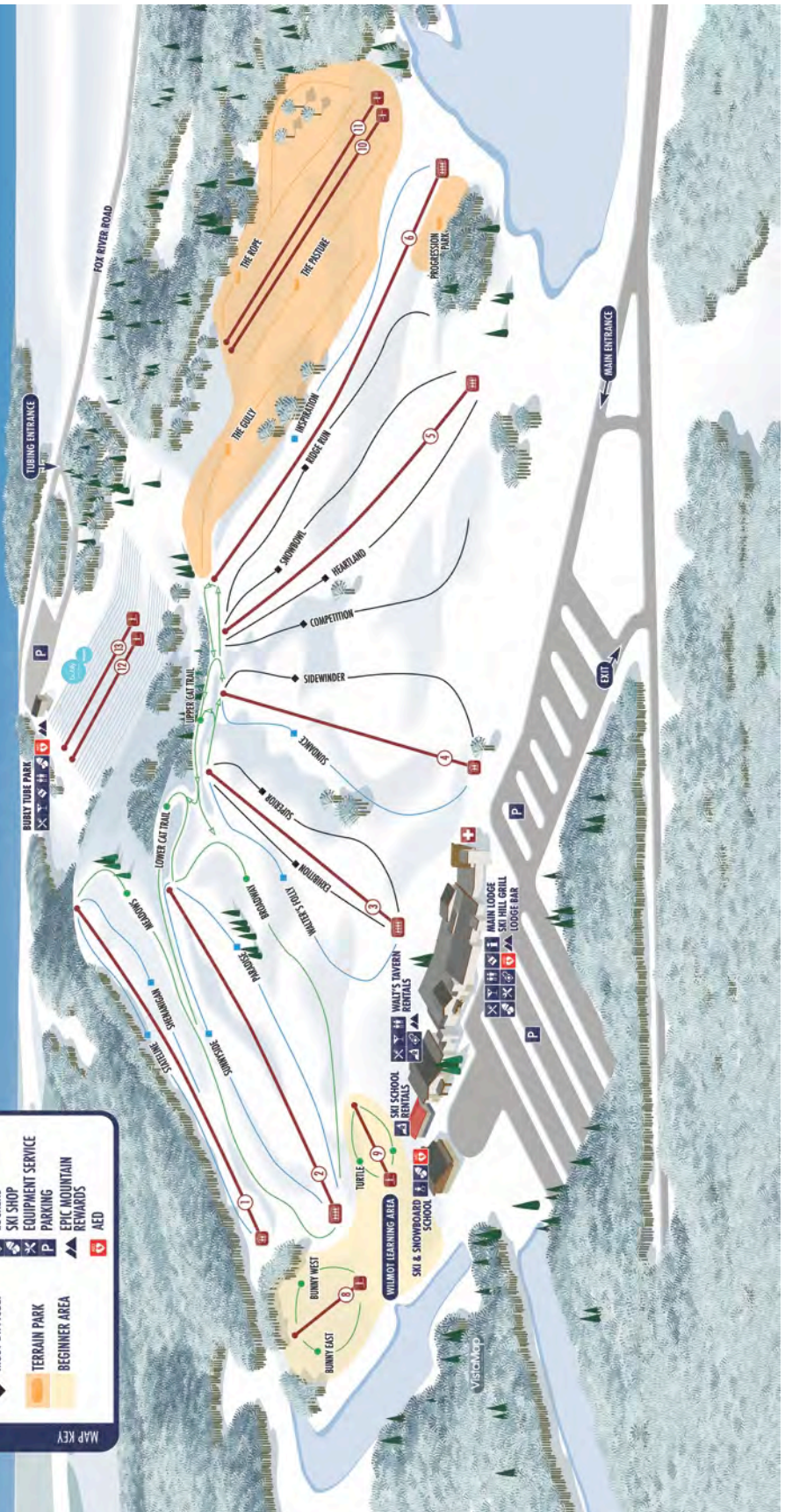
Wilmot has 120 Skiable Acres at an Elevation of 960 feet with Vertical – 200 feet and 25 Trails.

For more information visit <http://www.wilmotmountain.com>

WILMOT mountain

MAP KEY

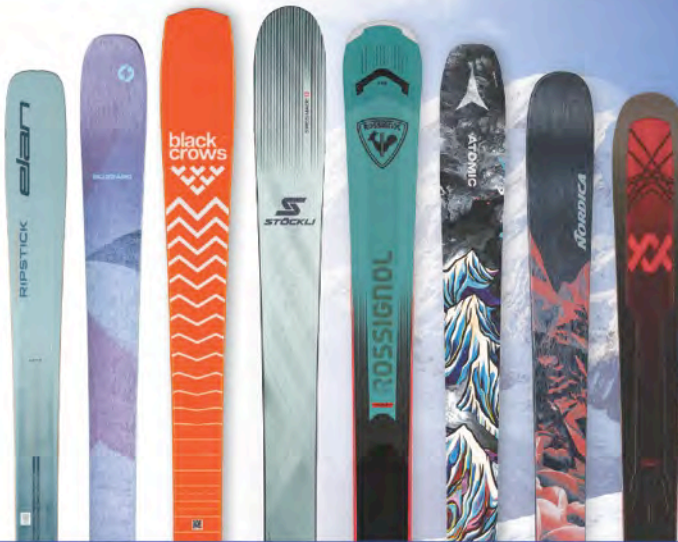
	CARPET LIFT		SKI PATROL
	ROPE TOW		INFORMATION
	DOUBLE CHAIR		DINING
	TRIPLE CHAIR		BAR
	QUAD CHAIR		RESTROOM
			TICKETS
			RENTALS
			SKI SCHOOL
			LOCKERS
			SKI SHOP
			EQUIPMENT SERVICE
			PARKING
			EPIC MOUNTAIN
			REWARDS
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	EASIEST		
	MORE DIFFICULT		
	MOST DIFFICULT		
	TERRAIN PARK		
	BEGINNER AREA		





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*See store for details on price match.

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GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials;

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: Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. Hydrate: Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm.. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. Shakers on Clark: Comedy Night \$1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. Steamworks: Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. The Sofo Tap: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons. 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. Club Room Open!</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: Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 Hydrate: TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm-8pm: \$5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. Shakers on Clark: \$3 Domestic Beers. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. Steamworks: Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). The Sofo Tap: \$5 Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Tallboys Everyday Specials:, \$5Jager, \$5 Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. Touche: Open 5pm - 4am. Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi. 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: Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. 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 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Dua & Ariana last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. The Sofo Tap: \$3 House Shots, \$5 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. 2/12 Full Moon Jockstrap Night Free Pants Check.</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: Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. 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 Thursday! Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. Steamworks: Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. The Sofo Tap: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails\$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. Touche: Open 5pm - 4am. Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music and Porn by Bijou Video.</p>

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm–6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm’s), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie’s:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **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:** 1/24 MCL 2025 Weekend Welcome Party. 2/7 Man’Nipple’ate Nipple Fetish play Night. 2/14 Winter Underwear Fetish Party & Mr. Union Suit Contest.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: ½ 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:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **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, Post-Brunch SaturGay Fun 1pm-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: ½ Off All Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm’s) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 5am. 2/25 MCL 2025 Gear Swap at Noon, MCL 2024 Contest @ 9pm Victory Party follows, 2/1 BEASTIAL BEAR NIGHT, 2/8 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm.

SUNDAY FUNDAY

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:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 **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.. 1/26 MCL 2025 Leather Brunch @ 11am, 2/9 SuperBowl Beer Bust.

GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of January 2025



Visit nexusradio.fm

	Artist	Title
1	Badger & Icona Pop	Body Type
2	Jes	What Will Be
3	Hugel & Diplo	Forever Ft. Malou & Yuna
4	Moguai x Enisa x Jean Noel	Willow Tree (Radio Edit)
5	Lucas & Steve	Heart First ft. Jordan Shaw
6	Manyfew	Get Up! Ft. Janne Schaffer
7	Don Diablo & MK ft. Gaby Gerlis	Next To Me
8	Tsha	Drive Ft. Ingrid Witt
9	Sasson	Energy feat. Drea (Radio Edit)
10	Two Friends & Hrvy	All For Me Ft. Hrvy
11	Hayla	Freefall
12	Bingo Players x Landis	Adrenaline
13	The Blessed Madonna & Kylie Minogue	Edge Of Saturday Night
14	Frank Walker	Crossfire Ft. Alexander Stewart
15	Nimino	I Only Smoke When I Drink
16	Plastik Funk & Esox & Tara McDonald	Looking At You
17	Livvy Lauren	Felt Love
18	Alex Mills	Sensation
19	Meetch	Take It Slow (Radio Edit)
20	Gattüso	By My Side
21	Robin Schulz & CYRIL f. Sam Martin	World Gone Wild
22	Allegra	Rain (Manuel Riva Remix)
23	Will Sass	Into The Blue ft. Kamille
24	Audien	Living In Color ft. Jeoff Harris
25	Love Harder	Nightlife
26	David Guetta & Alesso	Never Going Home Tonight Ft. Madison Love
27	Sub Focus f. Katy B	Push The Tempo
28	BLOND ISH & Bantu	Can't Let You Go
29	TELYKAST & Sam Gray	Surrender Your Love
30	Martin Jensen X Sommer Ray	No Sleep (Radio Edit)

JANUARY 24-26. 2025

2025 MR CHICAGO LEATHER

CONTEST WEEKEND

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

WELCOME PARTY &
MCL TRAVEL FUND BENEFIT 10PM

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

MCL GEAR SWAP 11AM-2PM
MCL2025 CONTEST 9PM
VICTORY RIPE PARTY 11PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

MCL FAREWELL BRUNCH 11AM
SUNDAY BEER BUST 2-4PM



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FORNICATION SUNDAY FEB 2ND
MIDNIGHT PIZZA PANIC
DJ HARRY T NO COVER



WINTER UNDERWEAR FETISH PARTY AND MR. UNION SUIT 2025 CONTEST

**FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 14**

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\$100 CASH & TROPHY
TO WINNER

GRAB ROGER

Avoiding Financial Grief

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Imagine, for a moment, the unthinkable: You're in a car wreck or have a heart attack and suddenly you are in the hospital for a long time. Who pays the mortgage, who makes the car payment? Who cashes your paychecks or makes insurance claims? Who manages your investments?

If you assume that your partner, lover or married spouse could automatically manage everything for you, think again. Your spouse does not have the legal authority to act on your behalf. If bank accounts, stocks or mutual funds are in one person's name alone, his or her hands will be tied.

And your spouse may be restricted even if property is owned in both of your names. For example, if title of your house is held in both of your names, your spouse can't sell it unless both of you sign the papers.

The way around this potential nightmare is a simple document called a durable power of attorney.

With this legal document, you appoint a specific person to manage your finances if you become incapacitated or incompetent. Generally, this person would be able to write checks from your accounts, pay your taxes, sell stocks and bonds and handle real estate transactions and other financial matters.

Without such written authority the non-disabled spouse would be powerless to help his or her disabled spouse with banking problems, real estate snafus or representing their disabled spouse in applying for insurance, unemployment or social security benefits.

And if family members tried to take over control of the bank accounts and property of their disabled (non-married) child, the non-disabled partner would only be able to stand by and watch, especially painful if it involved property and money the couple owned together.

The Illinois State Legislature has enacted a law entitled the "Illinois Power of Attorney Act" which

formerly recognizes the right of an individual (principal) to delegate personal and financial decision making power to an "agent" – a LGBT spouse, lover or partner. The law ensures the right of LGBT couples to have their spouse's powers to be the same as their own to control all aspects of personal financial matters throughout their lifetime, including periods of disability, and to continue until their death unless revoked.

The law anticipates that by using a standardized form an individual will be assured that his or her agent's authority will be honored by third parties with whom the agent deals, regardless of the mental condition of the principal



when the power is used.

Although the process of designating someone as your agent has been simplified by the use of standardized forms the power you are granting is enormous and can have severe consequences if abused. The decision to grant anyone such extensive power should only be made after first consulting with your attorney to understand the consequences and protections against abuse the law provides.

You may wish to have your attorney modify the "standardized" form to include additional protections against abuse of the power by providing that the power of attorney can only take effect upon the incompetence of the maker (this is called a "springing" power of attorney because it springs into effect only when the maker becomes incapacitated) as determined by the physician designated in the power.

The power would then start when the non-disabled spouse receives a letter from the doctor stating that the maker of the power of attorney is unable to handle ordinary business matters. Be aware that state laws vary. If you live in Chicago but spend your winters in Florida or Palm Springs, make sure that your durable power of attorney is acceptable in both states. You may have to draw up a second set for Florida. Also, make sure your document is considered acceptable by the financial institutions you use. Some banks only recognize their own forms.

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

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH

You Are Not Alone 

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

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

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

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

988

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GRAB HOLLY

A Clever Theological Scam

By Holly Maholm

Queen Penelope had revealed to me that many tens of thousands of years ago, the Species Unicorn and Species Human had been upon the friendliest and most familiar terms. Nevertheless, she explained, there came that fateful day when unicorns and humans began to take very different paths through this world. She spoke, "I will tell you, now, Holly, of that day when Evil came into the world; the day when the Species Human fell under the spell of that Evil; the day when we unicorns refused to follow you down that path to destruction, folly and despair.

"I described to you earlier," she continued, "how unicorns and humans lived cooperatively in what was then no more than wilderness. We lived in the fields and forests, and you had your encampments of tents made of animal hides. All knowledge then possessed by your species existed solely in the minds and memories of those few humans then alive: Writing had not yet been invented. This was as far as your species had got, until that fateful day when Evil arrived, unbidden and unrecognized, a day which I will now recount.

"Since I am going to describe the first humans who were capable of 'writing' (and 'reading' – an inseparable skill), I will make my job

easier by introducing one of that number, whom I will name 'Gruk.' (He being long dead and departed, and thereby unable to object to the name I have bestowed on him, we can move along with our story.)

"Now, it was very much to Gruk's advantage that he was the only one in his encampment who could read. An itinerant traveler had come through their village some time before, and Gruk had implored that man to teach him the system of writing – alphabet, grammar, vocabulary – known to him. In time, the traveler moved on, leaving Gruk in possession of a rare and valuable technology."

"But how to profit from what I have learned?" Gruk asked himself. Then he realized that what the traveler had shared with him was not just a system of writing, it was also a new and heretofore unknown 'origin story' of a most unique and powerful supernatural entity.

"You see, the traveler had instructed Gruk in the lore and wisdom of 'Marduk' – whom the traveler described as a powerful supernatural deity. Never before had anyone – even a unicorn – dared to give a name to that transcendent spirit who brings the rain, who makes the sun to burn, and who has assigned to all living creatures their place in this world. Until that moment, everyone, even the Storyteller, would have referred to that otherwise unnamed transcendent spirit simply as Those Greater Than Ourselves.

"As we soon learned, the traveler had not only instructed Gruk in the alleged life story and powers of Marduk, (a story only Gruk could read), but that traveler likewise shared with Gruk, alone, the secret how to profit from that knowledge. Accordingly, it was not long before Gruk began to read aloud from those skins upon which he had written what he claimed to be the 'Book of Marduk.'

"So it was that Gruk – preaching from those skins – revealed, first, that Marduk was an all-powerful deity whose words must be obeyed; second, that Marduk had appointed himself (Gruk) as 'Priest of Marduk,' and third, that Marduk (being a



jealous deity), demanded sacrifices from all in the village. Now... it turned out that the sacrifices demanded by Marduk invariably consisted of the very best cuts of the recent game killed by the hunters, and since Gruk was Priest of Marduk, it was only fitting that Gruk should be solely entitled to eat all of those delicious steaks."

Penelope showed on her face a look of profound disgust, saying "So, Holly, this rather transparent scam lasted for longer than you would think; until the hunters began to question if this really was 'The Will of Marduk.' (We unicorns, I assure you, were not taken in.) For his part, Gruk puzzled how to translate this temporarily effective scam into a secure position which would entitle him to a perpetual claim on the best cuts of meat harvested by the hunters.

Penelope looked genuinely pained to acknowledge, "So it was, Holly, that Gruk – selfish, dishonest, POS that he was – came up with an all-too-effective 'ploy' to cement his entitlement to the tenderest of juicy steaks. Tragically, that ploy which Gruk stumbled upon proved to be exceedingly useful to him – and to his successors in that long line of Priests of Marduk, Priests of Ishtar, Priests of Mithra, and countless other Priests of Whatever Disembodied, Unknowable and Invisible Spiritual Entity Who Nevertheless Demands Sacrifices of the Most Tender and Delicious Kind."

Penelope scowled in a most withering and unforgiving way, and added, "Now, I will describe to you that evil 'ploy' devised by Gruk."

(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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**TRAVEL & ADVENTURE
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CELEBRATES 20 YEARS IN
CHICAGO, RETURNS FEBRUARY
1-2 TO THE DONALD E.
STEPHENS CONVENTION
CENTER**



America's favorite travel show, the Travel & Adventure Show, is returning for its 20th year at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center for another exciting year of wanderlust! According to recent reports, travelers are seeking out those lesser-known destinations and the Travel & Adventure Show is the perfect spot to discover one's next dream destination. With more than 450 destinations, tour companies, cruise lines and travel providers slated to be in attendance there's ample inspiration available at this year's show and to top it all off, attendees can even take advantage of unbeatable prices directly on the

show floor.

This year's lineup features some familiar names as well as some new additions to a lineup of travel experts who can help answer all your pressing questions about maximizing travel in 2025. Some of the speakers that attendees can look forward to seeing include:

Award-winning travel writer and Brat Pack member **Andrew McCarthy** with an inspiration talk on the transformational power of travel who will also be hosting an autograph signing following his keynote

CBS News Travel Editor and world adventurer **Peter Greenberg** will be sharing his insights on the top destinations for 2025 and how to make the most of one's vacation

Ultra-economical travel expert **Russell Hannon** will blow your mind with untold budget travel trips that will help you stretch your dollar even further.

Pauline Frommer, Editorial Director of The Frommer's Guides and publisher of **Frommers.com** will be sharing insights on how to make the most out of any trip. Frommer's has published hundreds of guidebooks, and the company introduced masses

to the beauty of travel after the publication of their first book in 1957.

Travel expert **Scott Mayerowitz** who has the best tips and tricks for maximizing airline, hotel and credit card points and miles

YouTuber and packing expert **Angel Castellanos** returns to share helpful packing tips

One thing Chicago attendees can always expect at the Show is a selection of fun activities. This year, attendees will get a chance to try their hand at riding around on a Segway or a Trikke. And for those who want something a little more exhilarating, this year's show will feature an inflatable obstacle course that will make you feel like a ninja warrior.

Back by popular demand, the Dive and Water Sport Pavilion brings together destinations and tour operators to promote the most exciting watersport activities and inspire a new generation of divers by showing them the world that awaits under the sea.

Tickets are available for advance purchase online starting at \$16.

For more information on the Chicago Travel & Adventure Shows or to purchase tickets visit <https://travelshows.com/shows/chicago/>.





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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Murder in the Dressing Room"

by Holly Stars c.2025,
Berkeley \$19.00 368 pages



Your alter-ego, the other half of your double life, is a superhero. When you're quiet, she's boisterous. Your confidence is flat, hers soars. She's a better dresser than you are, she's more popular, and maybe even a little smarter. By day, you live a normal existence but by night, your other side roars and in the new mystery, "Murder in the Dressing Room" by Holly Stars, both of you solve crimes.

Lady Lady had been a little off all evening.

As owner of London's most fabulous, elegant drag club, she was usually in command but her protegee, Misty Devine, could tell that something was wrong. She discovered how wrong when she found Lady Lady on her dressing room floor, foaming at the mouth, dead, poisoned by a mysterious box of chocolates.

Hours later, Misty de-dragged, morphing from an elegant woman to an ordinary, binary hotel employee named Joe who was heartbroken by the tragedy. Only employees had access to Lady Lady's dressing room – ergo, someone they knew at the club had to be the killer! Obviously, the London detectives assigned to the case had a suspect list, but Misty/Joe and their boyfriend Miles knew solving Lady Lady's murder was really up to them. They knew who the killer wasn't... but who it was, well, who had reason to kill Misty's mentor?

Maybe Mandy, the club's co-owner. The club's bartender and bouncer were both sketchy. Lady Lady had spats with two employees and a former co-worker, but was that motive enough? When the dress Lady Lady was wearing that night proved to have been valuable stolen goods, Joe's investigation list grew to include people who might have sneaked backstage when no one was paying attention, and a shady man who was suddenly following them around.

Then Misty learned that she was in Lady Lady's will, and she figured the inheritance would be minor but she got a huge surprise. Lady Lady's posthumous gift could make others think that Misty might've had reason to kill her!

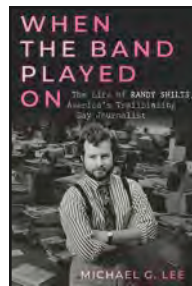
And just like that, the suspect list gained another entry...

When you first get "Murder in the Dressing Room" in your hands, hang onto it tight. It's fun, and so fluffy and light that it might float away if you're not careful.

The story's a little too long, as well, but there's enjoyment to be had here, and authenticity enough to hold a reader's attention. Author Holly Stars is a drag performer in London and somewhat of a murder maven there, which gives her insight into books of this genre and the ability to string readers along nicely with solid characters. If you're unfamiliar with the world of drag you'll also learn a thing or two while you're sleuthing through the story; drag queens and kings will like the dual tale, and the settings that anchor it.

As a mystery, this is fun and different, exciting, but tame enough for any adult reader. If you love whodunits and you want something light, "Murder in the Dressing Room" is a double delight.

"When the Band Played On: The Life of Randy Shilts, America's Trailblazing Gay Journalist" by Michael G. Lee c.2025, Chicago Review Press \$30.00 282 pages



You spent most of your early career playing second fiddle.

But now you've got the baton, and a story to tell that people aren't going to want to hear, though it's essential that they face the music. They must know what's happening. As in the new book "When the Band Played On" by Michael G. Lee, this time, it's personal.

Born in 1951 in small-town Iowa, Randy Shilts was his alcoholic, abusive mother's third of six sons. Frustrated, drunk, she reportedly beat Shilts almost daily when he was young; she also called him a "sissy," which "seemed to follow Randy everywhere."

Perhaps because of the abuse,

Shilts had to "teach himself social graces," developing "adultlike impassiveness" and "biting sarcasm," traits that featured strongly as he matured and became a writer. He was exploring his sexuality then, learning "the subtleties of sexual communication," while sleeping with women before fully coming out as gay to friends.

Nearing his twenty-first birthday, Shilts moved to Oregon to attend college and to "allow myself love." There, he became somewhat of an activist before leaving San Francisco to fully pursue journalism, focusing on stories of gay life that were "mostly unknown to anyone outside of gay culture."

He would bounce between Oregon and California several times, though he never lost sight of his writing career and, through it, his activism. In both states, Shilts reported on gay life, until he was well-known to national readers and gay influencers. After San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk was assassinated, he was tapped to write Milk's biography.

By 1982, Shilts was in love, had a book under his belt, a radio gig, and a regular byline in a national publication reporting "on the GRID beat," an acronym later changed to AIDS. He was even under contract to write a second book.

But Shilts was careless. Just once, careless.

"In hindsight," says Lee, "... it was likely the night when Randy crossed the line, becoming more a part of the pandemic than just another worried bystander."

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are two distinct audiences for "When the Band Played On." One type of reader will remember the AIDS crisis and the seminal book about it. The other is too young to remember it, but needs to know Randy Shilts' place in its history.

The journey may be different, the result is the same: author Michael G. Lee tells a complicated, still-controversial story of Shilts and the book that made America pay attention, and it's edgy for modern eyes. Lee clearly shows why Shilts had fans and haters, why Shilts was who he was, and Lee keeps some mystery in the tale: Shilts had the knowledge to keep himself safe but he apparently didn't, and readers are left to wonder why. There's uncomfortable tension in that, and a lot of hypothetical thinking to be had.

For scholars of gay history, this is an essential book to read. Also, for anyone too young to remember AIDS as it was, "When the Band Played On" hits the right note.

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**STEPPEWOLF THEATRE
PRESENTS REVIVAL OF FOOL
FOR LOVE JANUARY 30 –
MARCH 16**



Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the nation's premier ensemble theater company, is pleased to present a searing revival of Sam Shepard's dark and beautiful masterpiece *Fool for Love*, directed by Jeremy Herrin, playing January 30 – March 16, 2025 in Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theater, 1650 N. Halsted St.

In a sweltering motel room in the Mojave Desert, May and Eddie lick their wounds and get ready for another relentless round. This brawl is eternal and infernal. And the Old Man is always watching.

Perhaps the sexiest, most haunting play of the 20th century, *Fool for Love* is a twisted and tequila-soaked love letter from **Sam Shepard**, one of the greatest American playwrights, indulging the need to get inside someone just to tear them apart.

Steppenwolf Artistic Directors **Glenn Davis** and **Audrey Francis** comment, "Through the decades, Steppenwolf has returned again and again to Sam Shepard's searing body of work. His plays, filled with tension, symbol and muscle, pose delights and demands for actors and audiences alike. *Fool for Love* is no exception, with Eddie and May's iconic power struggle at the heart of this prize-winning masterpiece."

Davis and Francis add, "And—we can't stress enough—there's nothing quite like Shepard's work when we do it here. It's lightning in a bottle; it's visceral, timeless, contemporary and mythic all in one. For seven short weeks this winter, our Downstairs Theater will once again be transformed to a house of worship dedicated to Shepard, Steppenwolf's patron saint of irreverent, enigmatic and downright explosive American Drama."

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

**OPEN SPACE ARTS TO PRESENT
CHICAGO PREMIERE OF
MR. PARKER JANUARY 31 –
FEBRUARY 16**



Open Space Arts has announced that it will stage the Chicago premiere of *MR. PARKER*, a drama by **Michael McKeever**. The play, which originated in 2019 at the Penguin Repertory Theatre in suburban New York City, transferred to off-Broadway at Theatre Row in 2022.

Terry Parker is a middle-aged man navigating life after a profound personal loss. As he works to rediscover his identity and adjust to unexpected changes, Terry is challenged by a world that feels unfamiliar when he begins to date a much younger man. Terry must also adjust to the change from his identity as the "better half" of a "power couple" to a single man without any public image of his own. "I was defined by the man I married," Terry says. "And now, suddenly, for the first time, I'm just ... 'Mr. Parker.' And I don't know how to do that." Rex Reed judged it "A very intelligent, absorbing look at contemporary relationships and the conflicts that keep us all from aging with joy and peace of mind. The writing is both honest and engaging. This play is a real discovery."

Cast in the title role is **Andrew Kain Miller**, remembered for his role in the drama inspired by Tennessee Williams's life, *HIS GREATNESS*, produced by PrideArts in 2019. Mr. Parker's new love interest, Justin, will be played by Chicago newcomer **Riley Capp**, an MFA graduate of the Actors Training Program of the University of Houston whose most recent credits include Edmund in *KING LEAR* and Claudio in *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Chicago veteran **Mary Ann Bowman**, seen most recently at Open Space Arts in *MASSAGE THERAPY*,

Tickets and season passes will be on sale soon at <https://openspacearts.org/> Information on all Open Space Arts events is available at <https://openspacearts.org/>

**PRIDE ARTS MAKES
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Center on Halsted (COH) and PrideArts have launched a partnership that will generate new arts and culture programs and performances for the public and leverage the unique strengths of both organizations.

PrideArts, which has operated in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood since 2016, has chosen COH as its new theater and administrative home. This union provides both organizations fertile ground to incubate artistic works elevating the diversity of LGBTQ+ voices and experiences, increase programmatic offerings for the community, and strengthen organizational capacity and resilience.

"PrideArts board and staff are so excited as we embark on this new journey. Center on Halsted's facilities will bring a new professionalism for our patrons and hopefully bring new patrons to our productions," **Ambler Mandley**, PrideArts' Managing Director, said.

STEPPEWOLF



Photo by Sandra Miller

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A photograph of three shirtless men in a locker room. The man in the center is a Black man with dark hair and a serious expression, looking slightly to the right. He has a tattoo on his chest. 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 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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