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GRAB THE PERFECT SHOT



Behind the Lens with the Fashionable Men of CiNava

By Fred Karimi

Husbands Angel Cintron and Steve Nava are two of the most highly sought-after photographers in today's fashion industry. Collectively known as CiNava, they are prized for their highly produced editorial images that are creative, edgy, artistic, fresh, and often drawn from their own environment. "We notice everything around us," Steve Nava explains. "People, locations, lighting, colors, wardrobe... We combine them all to develop a story that is told within a single image."

We spoke with CiNava from their San Francisco studio.

Fred Karimi: How would you define your photographic style?
Angel Cintron: We aim to manifest beautiful imagery that tells a story. We

hope the person flipping through a magazine who lands on our image is captured and emotionally triggered in one way or another.

FK: How did you get into fashion photography?

Steve Nava: While in art school, when Angel needed help with lighting or holding bounce cards, I was there to assist. Essentially, I became free labor. However, it was such a great experience working together, that almost a decade later, we remain a duo that plays off one another, kinda a ying to the other's yang.

FK: Do you have a preference in shooting men or women?

Angel Cintron: As the male physique

has a desirable appeal in many ways, we find ourselves exploring the edgy and sexy side of men.

FK: What are the most challenging aspects of fashion photography? Angel Cintron: Outdoor lighting comes with challenges. Sunlight is often the enemy. When balancing light, we use an off-camera strobe, scrims to block harsh light, or a bounce to override the extreme shadows.

FK: Where do you get your creative inspiration?

Steve Nava: First and foremost, the mood and the vibe of the shoot. It's impacted by so many things: the location, wardrobe, models and the story we're trying to tell.

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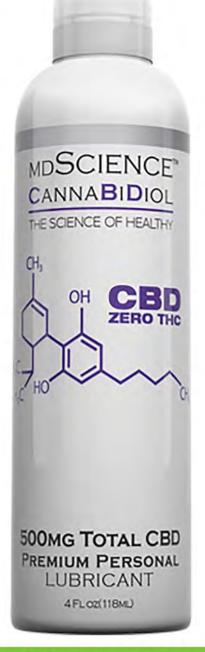
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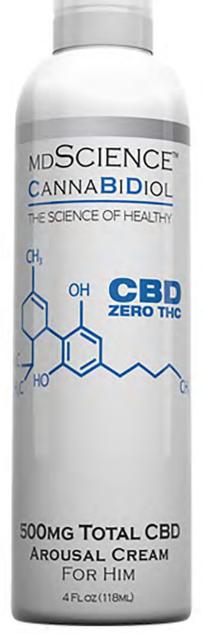
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FK: What is typically in your camera bag?

Steve Nava: We love our Canon 5D Mark IV cameras, but that seems like a standard answer. Everyone loves their camera. If we think about a really useful piece of equipment that can be easily transported and can, in some instances, replace the need for carting around heavy lighting equipment, it is the LED ring light with remote trigger! This powerful and lightweight light can be used on location or in studio. It's amazing. The light path creates a beautiful catch light on the talents eyes while emitting an even diffused light to eliminate shadows. This piece of equipment is essential for every photographer.

FK: Can you recall your favorite photoshoot?

Angel Cintron: The most memorable photoshoot was for a men's summer editorial in Brooklyn, New York. The location was on top of an 8-story

creative artist building. Of course, there was no elevator. We had to carry sandbags, c-stands, and lighting equipment up eight flights and on the first day of the shoot, it began to snow. Lightly at first. Then, an hour into the shoot, we were in full snow storm. Not the best look for a summer shoot! Nevertheless, as one does on location, we quickly adapted. The surrounding buildings were wrapped in epic graffiti. They became our





backdrop and the shoot was more awesome than we had originally envisioned.

FK: Since foreign travel is not an option for the time being, are there domestic locations that you are using as substitutes for foreign cities? Angel Cintron: Yes, locations like The Chicago Riverwalk have been amazing substitutes. The canals and bridges make a grand illusion suited for fashion editorials. The endless flow of iron, concrete, and wood boasts are magical. Overall, it's an amazing location that we will continue to use even after the pandemic.

FK: Of all the men you have shot, who has the most potential to be fashion's next top male model? Steve Nava: Thomas "The Boxer" Canestraro. A former World Champion Kickboxer, he is now an actor, fighting coach and model. He has a boyish yet manly appeal that lights up newsstands.

FK: What advice do you have for aspiring fashion photographers? Angel Cintron: Once you have the shot, move on! Believe in your skills as a photographer. The crew and the talent do not have all day for you to chase the perfect shot.

FK: What advice do you have for male models interested in shooting with you?

Steve Nava: Be your true self. Don't feel that you need to hold back in front of our camera lens. We strive for unique, bold movements. As photographers, we try to keep the energy going and engage with the talent. This allows us to connect and bring out the best in the model.

FK: What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic?
Angel Cintron: Visiting home! We both have family in the Midwest and we long to be reunited with them. It is the biggest thing we wish for in 2021.

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GRAB A REMOTE



A Threesome Remedy For Our Times Social Distance stars talk COVID-era series and

Social Distance stars talk COVID-era series and pandemic dating

By Chris Azzopardi

File this under 2020's "Content We Lived" category: Social Distance, Netflix's anthology series completely conceived, cast and shot in quarantine. Tucked into the show's eight episodes is "Zero Feet Away," which follows a gay couple suffering from cabin fever who give a threesome a shot after they've had enough of each other.

"Zero Feet Away" stars Max Jenkins, who has a part on *Dead to Me* as Christina Applegate's gay real-estate partner; Brian Jordan Alvarez, who portrays Jack's husband, Estefan, on *Will & Grace*, and *Mozart in the Jungle* star Peter Vack.

In October, they talked about their longtime friendship, filming during a pandemic and Funfetti.

Chris Azzoparrdi: Did you guys know each other beforehand? Had you crossed paths?

Brian Jordan Alvarez: Very much so.

Peter Vack: Max and I's friendship goes back to childhood. We went to performing arts summer camp together, and then Brian and I met and became basically best friends our freshman year of college.

Alvarez: When he met me he told me, "You should meet my friend Max, you would like him," and it turned out to be true. We've all become friends now. Vack: I just want to underscore that these two are two of the people I love most in the world as friends. So often the job with acting is to become very close and intimate with people immediately; with this, it really felt like a party from moment one. It really was like a summer camp vibe. I think that is in part due to the fact that they allowed friends and, in fact, sought out friends to do this or people that had these deep, decades-long connections.

CA: Was the script set?

Alvarez: It was set, we had nothing to do with it. It was a totally wonderfully written piece that was just given to us. They were great about – sorry, am I bulldozing?

Max Jenkins: Shut up. Just talk. I love hearing you talk.

Alvarez: They were really generous, which always helps me in letting us improv. We also had a lot of freedom to just say the line slightly differently or improv. It was just cool to have that freedom.

CA: Max, did you improv the line "zhuzh my crack"?

Jenkins: I can't believe they used that! You know, that was the moment that we really hit on something beautiful. I thought it was "zhuzh my taint."

Alvarez: That might've been a different

Alvarez: That might've been a different take

Jenkins: Yeah. The director's cut has "zhuzh my taint," I believe. (Everyone

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Photo Courtesy of Netflix

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laughs.)

CA: Did you actually shoot on April 17, the day the episode says it took place?

Alvarez: No, no. I was gonna say it was funny that Peter called it summer camp because we were calling it that when we were doing it, but I don't think we realized that it was also the dead middle of summer.

Jenkins: The solstice.

Alvarez: (Laughs.) It was like literally,

what, mid July?

Vack: I now have some handle on it because I'm back in New York and it gets cold, but in L.A. with the coronavirus it was all one month.

Jenkins: That's why this experience was like, "before this and after this"; that was my only milestone.

Alvarez: Right, that's true!

Jenkins: And we're so lucky that we had this gift of breaking out of our quarantine, you know? And also, I'm working now and everybody is so

scared on *Special;* everyone's freaked out and it's like, girl, I ripped the Band-Aid off in July. We already did this, and it was a blast, and everybody is kind of more focused, so I feel very at ease working with all these stipulations and with all the PPE.

CA: Peter, when you come over with a mask on in the episode, that's now the reality for dating and hooking up. Did that speak to you on a personal level as much as it spoke to me?

Vack: Oh, totally. I have been both single and partnered in this experience and, yeah, it totally felt like... it's hard to even articulate. There's new rules now, I guess. And I am something of a hypochondriac, so that was very easy to tap into.

Jenkins: For me, I tend to be single. (Laughs.) I haven't really attacked it consciously, like this new challenge of dating. It's been more (like) if I'm truly obsessed with the idea of this person, I might hang out with them. There are so many more gates for my psyche to go through (laughs), and my psyche does not tend to clear those gates; therefore, there are few prospects.

CA: So no virtual pandemic dating for you?

Jenkins: Well, I have been doing quite a bit of that, but it tends to be boring. There's not so much going on in people's lives, there's not so much to





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catch each other up on. I find it just not... it's a facsimile of getting to know someone. It's like we're all doing performances of being chill and being our normal selves. That's just my experience.

Alvarez: Yeah, I was doing a lot more FaceTiming than ever.

Jenkins: I can't get down. I just (don't) feel like I'm really getting to know someone.

Alvarez: I guess I haven't done any real formal dates, but I have FaceTimed with people, you know, in maybe a more romantic way. (Laughs.) And yeah, it's definitely not as good as the real thing. (Laughs.) But yeah, I think after the lonesomeness set in after a while, FaceTime was really able to quell that in a way that just staring at my wall could not.

Jenkins: At first I felt so sorry for myself. And I was like, "My friends who are partnered don't understand and they need to be checking in on me more!" Then I started to feel even worse for them than for myself, which I guess is what our episode is sort of about, a little bit: the challenge of that. Because I started to see them jumping out of their skins. (Laughs.) I started to see my partnered friends freaking the fuck out. Alvarez: I prefer the solitude to being bottled up with one other person.

Jenkins: Yeah. I'm already traumatized that I have to share my space with....

him. (He pans the camera to his dog, Rock.)

CA: Since you had a rapport, I imagine the threesome, when you actually get down to it, was very giggle-worthy. I was in stitches watching you guys. Was it even more hysterical actually doing it?

Jenkins: It was so normal, so oddly second nature.

Vack: Yeah.

Alvarez: It felt a lot like doing a play in the best ways. Because it's very physical comedy, almost farcical. Jenkins: It's true. Typically the crew is not laughing at you, so you have this kind of unresponsive audience. But in our case we were making ourselves laugh, so we didn't give a fuck about anything but what each other was saying about it.

Vack: It just felt like effortless fun. And I agree: The fact that it was just us there, it was giddy. It was just pure pleasure, top to bottom.

CA: How long did it take to shoot? Jenkins: A week. We had a week of isolating in the hotel prior to shooting.

CA: Did you use that time in the hotel to rehearse, or just screw around? Jenkins: We weren't allowed to see each other.

Vack: We'd be, like, on the balcony, far

apart.

Jenkins: With our masks.

CA: I thought that they would've made you a pod and put you all in a hotel room together.

Jenkins: We agreed that the pod thing could've worked, but they were determined to divide and conquer us any possible way. It was like every precaution you could think of. There was no precaution too silly-seeming. (Laughs.) We had to gargle mouthwash before every kiss.

CA: Is there anything about the episode you'd like to spotlight that happened behind the scenes?

Alvarez: We had like 30 jars of Funfetti. (Everyone laughs.) Because in filmmaking if you're going to do a lot of takes, you also have to have options. **Jenkins:** And on the first take I was just eating heaping spoonfuls and my body started to shut down pretty quickly. I mean, talk about coronavirus.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

To watch the entire Zoom Video Interview visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGMYYdM5MKk&t=33s

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GRAB SUSAN



Werner is a winner: A new interview with singer/songwriter Susan Werner

By Gregg Shapiro

Whether you know it or not, singer/songwriter Susan Werner is a national treasure. Born, raised and educated in the heartland, she firmly established herself as a performing musician while living in Philadelphia in the 1990s before embarking for Chicago in the early 2000s. While in Chicago, she began recording a series of concept albums, a format Werner still follows to this day, including her latest album, the Americana-style *Flyover*

Country (susanwerner.com). Over the course of the 10 songs, Werner gives us something to think about ("Snake Oil," "Only Later," "Barn Radio"), swoon about it ("How Much") and even smile about ("Wine Bottles"). Susan Werner was kind enough to answer a few questions about Flyover Country in November 2020.

Gregg Shapiro: Beginning with 2004's *I Can't Be New*, and the six

studio records that followed, you've been working in the realm of concept albums. What are the challenges and rewards of creating within the concept album format?

Susan Werner: I really like concept albums because they have a way of shrinking the task, narrowing the parameters. Maybe, in doing so, helps you to know when you're done. It rightsizes the target. I like knowing, going into something, things that are to the left of this are not going to be part of this. Things that are to the right of it are not it. I find that it enables me to go ahead and throw myself at something, knowing that it's just this. It's not everything, it's just very much this for this period of time. The problem with it is that no one knows exactly what you're going to do next. From a commercial standpoint, it is not the obvious route to success. But, if you can build enough of a reliable reputation as a person who can deliver

on the challenges, then it's a really rewarding way to make a life in this work.

GS: Among the concepts are the 21st century cabaret/standards of I Can't Be New, the "joy without the Jesus" (as you described it when I interviewed you about the album) spirituals of The Gospel Truth, and the Cuba-inspired An American in Havana. However, country and Americana appear to be the favored musical style on the albums Kicking the Beehive, Hayseed and your latest, Flyover Country. What do you find most appealing about the genre? SW: It's a little like growing up in a religious tradition. This is always going to be your point of reference somehow. I grew up Catholic. I can be an ex-Catholic, but I can't be a never Catholic. Growing up Catholic, you can be a lapsed Catholic, but you're still



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somehow Catholic.

GS: You can still name the saints.

SW: Yes! You still call things sins. For those of us that grew up in Middle America, playing guitar from early on, this was my native language. My dad playing the radio in the barn, the radio on the tractor, country music in the house, country music acts coming to town and playing at the fairgrounds, which they still do. It's a language you speak, even if you never wind up using it again. It's there and it's on the hard drive. It kept bubbling up, this style of music, because there was more attached to it. There was more of what was in my younger years and growing up years attached to it. It felt fertile with more than just nostalgia. There was

something more there. Some of that, I think, attached itself to these songs and this genre at this time.

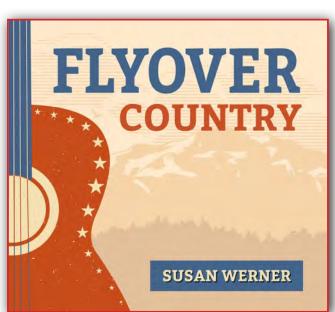
GS: I love the political voice on "Snake Oil". It made me wonder, first of all, how much responsibility you think a songwriter has to address issues of this nature? Because of your background in folk, did that also play a role? SW: Yeah, I think that's right. Some of the songs we were singing when I was a little kid, yes, there was some Peter, Paul and Mary in there. The hootenanny stuff appeared in my little fiveyear-old life. I suspected there was something, "Ooh, there's a war, but some of

this music isn't entirely positive about it." The nuns were the first politically aware people I ever met in my life. It was the nuns who were playing the guitar in my little town. It was the nuns who had been to Guatemala and Nicaragua and seen what happened there and experienced violence directed against them. It's funny how we bring back the idea of being a lapsed Catholic, but, again, some of it stays with you. I think those political leanings show up, somehow, when you hold a guitar. It's like a tool that can be aimed to any task. My guitar, like a divining rod, tends to the left [laughs].

GS: "How Much" is one of the best love songs I've heard this year; a wedding song for all weddings. What is the most challenging thing about writing a meaningful and universal

love song?

SW: This one came about because when I start a project it's like a language immersion course. I listen to only that music for about a year. People ask me all the time, "What are you listening to?" I don't really talk about it because I think friends of artists are always hoping that they're listening to something really interesting or into something really fascinating that's hip and will be of interest to them. Actually, no. I feel like more of a craft person. I'm obsessing on this little, tiny world that may not really be of appeal to other people. One day became Willie Nelson day. I was just listening to his love songs and his ballads. They were always so plainspoken, economical, unadorned, to the point. They have no irony. That feels



to me like the only way that I've been able to write certain kinds of songs. To serve more as a medium for the song, than it to be a personal expression from me to someone else. I don't know why, and I don't need to know why. The muse is doing something. Well, don't be an idiot, don't slam the door on the muse. Let it come in and occupy the living room for a couple hours.

GS: Am I reading too much into the lines "Only later did we learn/That the family down the road/Had a truth they never told/'Bout their oldest son" in the song "Only Later" or is it the queerest song on the album?

SW: [Laughs] it's certainly a song that lots of my queer friends have responded to. It may be that line. But it may also be the sense that – and it's interesting that you point to this song – because I do think us queer folks growing up in the

middle of nowhere, in rural America, miles from other people, those of us queers from a certain generation and a certain geographical background, I think it takes some of us longer to assemble ourselves. We did not have a lot of role models.

GS: No points of reference.

SW: Yes, to confirm who we feel we may be. Also growing up in the '80s, I don't know how many of my friends who turned out to be gay, knew they were gay or to describe themselves as gay. It was a long way out of there out there. One of the joys of having a long career that takes me around the country has been reconnecting with high school friends and junior high friends and even elementary school friends. Finding,

years later, we're like, "Oh, hey. This is your partner. These are your kids. Oh, my God, the lives that we have put together for ourselves." It's such an interesting and wonderful connection with gay friends who came from my little town, because we have had to put together a life so much from our own volition and our own energy and our own desire to integrate ourselves. We've turned out to be some of the most interesting people to come from there. I've got to say it's joyful to connect with queer friends from high school and from my hometown. Game recognizes game. I think we see in each other, "You had to do this. You had to put together a self." We had no playbook at all.

GS: In the midst of all the seriousness, there's the wicked funny "Wine Bottles", co-written with John Gorka. How important is it for you to retain a sense of humor in your songs?

SW: I do feel it's part of my mission to show an audience a good time. I do feel that. I know that some people think that maybe that detracts from your reputation as an entirely serious artist. When you do a show, it's the uptempo fun that kind of prepares the landscape for the ballads that can drop like bombs.

GS: You don't want to be a total downer the whole time.

SW: Yes! Also, it creates an environment in which when you slow it down people really tune in. Plus, it's fun for me. Look, we've got to keep this fun or we won't do it. I feel like a good time is also when you draw in an audience so you can

surprise them with something. It's like the bait for drawing them in so they hear something like "Snake Oil."

GS: There's a variety there.

SW: There has to be variety. It broadens your audience. If you show people a good time, everybody will buy in. "We're having fun! She just snuck this one in there and then we're back to the good time!" An hour or two hours later, the audience might go home thinking, "Hmmm, what was that

one song doing there?". You've reached some people outside. I think that impulse comes from growing up in rural America. My small town is proud of itself. It's proud of its ability to reach out and help other small towns in cases of emergency. Like this terrible derecho that ran through lowa this summer. My hometown ran down the highway with big barbecue trucks and electric service people, lineman who bring electricity back online. The generosity of my town, the willingness to engage like this, to be proud of your desire to be of assistance to others; I think this still runs in me. I think it's part of why I feel like the show better be entertaining. A boring show is the end. It's the death of everything.

GS: "To Be There (a Hymn in Times of Pandemic)" reminds me of Dolly Parton at her most

bluegrass. How much, if at all, do you consider Dolly to be an influence. especially in the country/bluegrass sphere?

SW: Dolly is such an entertainer. She shows everybody a good time. She smiles the whole time. And then she will, in fact, say something during the course of a show that certainly will surprise and challenge certain members of the audience. But it's the entertainment that gets them in the door. It's also these

sorts of songs where we can all meet together, whatever our political affiliation, whatever our political leanings. We can all meet together on these kinds of songs. That's country music. She came from a family of 12. I'm from a family half that size, six, of which I think you know four of us are LGBT. We're gifted!

GS: That's a good description. **SW:** To say something about country

Photo by Scott Montgomery

music; it's a community kind of gathering music. It is a social music. What's a bluegrass ensemble other than four people agreeing for four minutes at a time? I think this nature of playing guitar on the porch, we actually did this. We sang with all the cousins in the house and the uncles and the aunts. I grew up in a family where we got in the car and we would go to grandma's house and we were all singing in fourpart-harmony. We didn't even know other people didn't do that. I didn't

know other families weren't like this.

GS: Maybe if you were a McGarrigle or a Wainwright or a Roche you were doing that.

SW: Yes! But not a lot of families did this. I think to come back to some of that magic is part of the appeal of this project for me. To be clear about this song, there is a longing in the song to sing shoulder to shoulder with your family. I took my parents to mass in

February. I went back to

lowa for the lowa Caucus. I took my parents to mass, not because I felt the need to go to mass, but because it's a chance to see everybody. This is where you see people in a small town, which is important to understand about the church. When you target the church, be aware that what you're targeting for some people is their entire community and community center. When I took my parents to mass in February and I saw my cousins and my best friends from high school, [laughs] you see everybody, I was sitting between my mom and my dad. We were singing out of the hymnal. I could hear one in each ear. Now. of course. I haven't been back to see them. It's not safe to do it and lowa's especially terrible. I think that the comfort of singing, in close proximity to those we love most and especially to those we are related to whose voices may sound like our own, like what they call in country music

"blood harmony," this is really powerful.

GS: Of course! But because churches, and singing in churches, has become such super-spreader settings, who knows when that's going to come back again.

SW: But when it comes back it's going to come roaring back. The excitement of it will be so intense. I think it will be like Copenhagen in June. No one will sleep. They're going to be partying!

GRAB A HIT

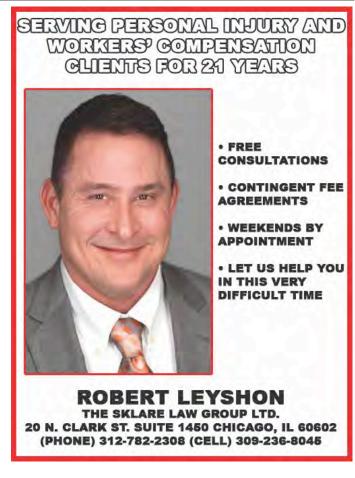
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	Artist	Title
1	Gryffin & Audrey Mika	Safe With Me
2	Chris Lake & Armand Van Helden	The Answer ft. Arthur Baker & Victor Simonelli
3	Bingo Players x Felguk x Fafaq	Devotion (Will Sparks Remix)
4	KREAM	Water ft. Zohara
5	MAKJ X JYYE	Promises
6	Ofenbach & Quarterhead	Head Shoulders Knees & Toes ft. Norma Jean Martine
7	Wilson x ManyFew x Kelli Leigh	No More Chances (Radio Edit)
8	Fedde Le Grand x Ally Brooke	Gatekeeper
9	Joel Corry	Head & Heart ft. MNEK
10	Brando	Don't Call Me (Galantis Remix)
11	DJ D Sol	Someone Like You ft. Gia Koka
12	French Original	History (Moodshift Radio Remix)
13	Justin Mylo	Still Around ft. SMBDY
14	Anabel Englund x MK	Underwater
15	Jonas Blue x Paloma Faith	Mistakes

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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 pay checks 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 in 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 sever 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 incompetency 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 gradute 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.









GRAB HOLLY

What We Want to Hear

By Holly Maholm

It was Monday morning when Sassy Pants found me in my room at the stable. "Holly, the Queen needs to see you urgently," she announced. I pulled myself up on her back and we trotted off to the Horse Rescue, where the Queen waited. Arriving there, Sassy took me to the pole barn, to the stall in the back where I had previously installed an LCD monitor hooked up to that device which provides Siri what little "physicality" she can claim.

The Queen spoke. "I'm glad you're here. There is something you must see." She turned, "Siri, please be so good as to show that video you recorded yesterday, and please tell Holly what it is."

Siri replied. "As you wish, Your Majesty. Holly, this is a program broadcast yesterday on the Local Access cable channel. It is a recording of a church service held at the True Holiness Baptist Church on Pine Street in our city." The video began, and I saw this.

The camera was centered on a middle-aged man standing behind his pulpit – rather less of him visible than he might have wished, but then it was up to him to get a box to stand on if he wanted to reveal more to his listeners. He was short, heavy-set, and memorable for one

aspect of his appearance.

He had one of the most audacious comb-overs I have ever seen attempted. It commenced at a point just above one ear, ventured boldly up-over-and-across a sterile expanse of skin giving the appearance of having been transplanted from the belly of a carp, and finally exhausted itself at a point just above the other ear. I was curious what kept it in place, but I soon noticed that his scalp was so liberally bathed in sweat that there was no danger of his few anemic strands escaping from that oily adhesion gluing them in place. His sermon follows:

"Brothers and sisters in Christ, I preach this morning to call attention to a great and intolerable sinfulness which has overtaken our town. In the past, we witnessed various freaks and fornicators standing on street-corners, plying that Oldest Profession. And we could not avoid them; they exposing themselves shamelessly in public, dressed as common whores, violating every law of man and God. And that was bad enough.

"But now, we see those same evildoers have begun to flaunt their sinfulness during daylight hours, and in store-fronts located right here on the Square! Yes!

"They started by taking over that old

horse carriage, using it in one of their vulgar ceremonies they preposterously declared a 'marriage.' Next, they took over the old bakery and made it a haven for harlots and the homeless. Most recently, they have taken up the use of horsedrawn carts - driven by silent, moody men having no regular place of abode parading up and down the street so as to demonstrate their contempt for honest, hard-working townsfolk.

"Who are these Godless sinners, you ask? Well, according to the Bible, they are faggots and trannies - persons whom Leviticus judged to be 'abominations.' And friends... if they had hidden themselves away from normal, God-fearing citizens, we might have decided to ignore them. But now that they have thrust themselves out into the light of day, where we are forced to confront their existence, we cannot be silent!



"Here is a puzzle from the Bible: Leviticus declares those sinners to be 'abominations.' And he's crystal clear about his language: He describes a faggot - though he means to include lesbians and trannies, too. But we recall that our Savior, Jesus Christ, is quoted as saying – in many places, and never with any ambiguity – that 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"So here's the puzzle: Leviticus used very specific language to condemn fags and trannies, while Our Savior – who lived a thousand years after him – used words that represent a complete repudiation of what Leviticus wrote. So who's right?

"I will tell you. Here's something I learned from a lawyer. It's a rule of 'Statutory Construction,' and it states: If you have two bits of legal terminology – that are in conflict with one another – then the rule is, you are required to apply the language which is more specific. You adopt the 'specific' language, not the 'general' language.

"So what's the answer to our puzzle? The words of Leviticus are clear and precise, whereas the words of Jesus are nebulous and obscure. Honestly, Christ's commandment is nothing but a vague generality that could apply to anybody.

"Accordingly, I'm going to advise you – my brothers and sisters in Christ – that where those fags and trannies are concerned, you are entitled to disregard entirely the words of Our Savior. Instead, you should apply the words of Leviticus, who tells us exactly what we want to hear.

(To be continued)

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

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GRAB DYLAN

Texting and Driving

By Dylan Seitz

The time has come for when the Chicago roads are covered in a blanket of snow and ice which for some is a jubilant and magical time of year. For those of us that drive, that means encountering people on the road that seemingly forgot how to do just that. As the son of an autobody repair mechanic, that means having a never-ending line of cars that need repair from accidents. Of course, no one is an absolutely perfect driver, but one thing that can help you to become a better one is to drive while you are not distracted; namely texting and driving! I've done it, you've probably done it, all of us have taken their smart phones out while in the car. Today I'd like to talk about texting and driving and what you need to know.

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), approximately 1.6 million accidents occur due to cell phone usage while driving. Of this number, about 400 thousand injuries, about one in four car accidents, occur due to texting and driving. Surprisingly, you are approximately six times more likely to cause an accident compared to drinking and driving. I could go on and on about statistics, but I think the point here is pretty clear to avoid picking up the phone. Over the years, I have seen dozens of people I know post their horror stories of totaling their vehicles from being distracted, especially in winter.

You are probably questioning as to what you can do to prevent being in an accident yourself. Thankfully, there are many options you can do to better prepare from being distracted by texting and driving. On iPhone-based devices with iOS 14, you can go to "Settings" "Control Center"; and can add "Do Not Disturb While Driving." Another option I like to do is use Airplane mode so that I'm not tempted to get any notifications whatsoever. Depending on your level of integration of your own Apple products, you can use Apple Car Play to listen to messages while on the road or if you have a pair of AirPods Pro can have one of them in to listen to any incoming messages automatically and use Siri to dictate any responses so you can keep your eyes on the road at all times. If you have an Android based device, you can open "Assistant settings"; tap "Getting Around"; "Driving mode" and turn it on. Airplane mode is also a good option as well. Research your device and operating system accordingly to verify access to these features.

Now that we have covered the "texting" part of the article, let's address the "driving" part to guarantee a safer



driving experience. First and foremost, you want to make sure you have the proper tools. In the winter, it is essential to rid all of your windows and mirrors of snow and ice.

A cheap tool many use is an ice scraper. I, however, do not recommend it as the end that clears the ice away may damage the glass, molding, or paint where used. A brush with a de-icer spray is more effective and will not cause any of that damage. If none of the above are available for you, a few bowls of cold water will clear your windows and do the trick. Just have your car defrosting so it doesn't freeze back over. Make sure your window wipers are good as well. Under no circumstances should you use hot water. The difference in temperature from the cold glass will have a higher likelihood of cracking it.

Once your mirrors and windows are all clear, make sure your headlight and taillights are also clear of ice and snow. You'll want your headlights, taillights, and side markers to be fully operational so other drivers can see you on the road whether it be day or night. If any are out, research your vehicle, and get the proper bulb type from your nearest auto repair store. Most bulbs are typically inexpensive and easy to replace yourself. This makes a large difference in inclement weather conditions.

If possible, determine what the recommended pressure per square inch (PSI) rating of your front and rear tires are that your car's manufacturer recommends. These measurements can typically be found within the inside driver-

side door jam. For myself, I typically like to take these measurements and drop them about 5 PSI. The reason I do this is because it increases the surface area of your car's tires to the road which improves traction and stability. You can find tire gauges at your local auto repair store and air compressor at some gas stations if you are running low.

Lastly, determine which drivetrain your vehicle has whether it is front wheel drive (FWD), rear wheel drive (RWD), or allwheel drive (AWD). Cars that typically do better in snowy conditions are FWD and AWD cars due to more weight on the driving axels which increases traction. For those with RWD cars, it is recommended to put sandbags in your trunk to increase weight and grip the road better. Depending on your vehicle, you may need to do a tire rotation which means putting your tires with the most tread on your driving wheels. This can be done yourself, but for the average person I'd recommend going to a mechanic. Just make sure you have a spare tire and a jack in the unfortunate event a tire may go out!

All this being said, there are many things to do to improve your driving experience. Make sure you don't become another statistic by ensuring you are not tempted to look at your phone while driving. Make sure you have all the proper tools to operate your vehicle. Exercise caution while driving in inclement conditions and allow for a greater stopping. Now that you are equipped with this information, you are more prepared to be a responsible driver. Be safe!



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Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Calls for 2021 Nominees



The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, celebrating its 30th year, is seeking nominations for new inductees. The deadline for nominations is May 31, 2021. The nominations will be reviewed by a committee comprised of current Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame members, after which a slate of inductees will be voted in. Nomination criteria and nomination forms are available at

www.chicagolgbthalloffame.org/nominate.

The ceremony for inductees will be held in October 2021. At this point, it has not been determined whether it will be an in-person ceremony or a virtual one. Last year the Chicago held its first virtual induction ceremony for its 2020 inductees.

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame is the first city-sponsored hall of

fame dedicated to LGBT people, organizations, and community in the United States. It was founded in 1991 as the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame. Its purpose then, as now, is to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago.

From its founding in 1991 until 2016, the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame relied on financial and staff support from the City of Chicago. The city ceased funding the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2016 under then mayor *Rahm Emmanuel*. At that time, it was rechristened the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame and has since been supported and maintained by the Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, with approval from, and the cooperation of, the City of Chicago.

Current board co-chair *Kathy Caldwel*, a 2017 inductee explained, "We have assembled a strong cadre of volunteers and board members who are committed to keeping the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame vibrant." The group includes some fresh voices, such as recent new and current board members; secretary *Gary Liss*, treasurer *Marcia Hill*, Greg McFall, tech whiz *Kevin Bryson*, and experienced community

organizers Jorge Valdivia and Dalila Fridi. Former board members Gary Chichester, Israel Wright, Owen Keehnen, Mary Morten, and Phil Hannema are valued advisors. Rick Karlin, the board's co-chair added, "It is important to continue to recognize the achievements of Chicagoans, past and present, especially since so many of the community's original movers and shakers have passed on. We feel it is was essential to pick up the baton and to ensure that their achievements are not forgotten."

The first Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame ceremony took place during Pride Week and was held at Chicago City Hall. Mayor Richard M. Daley hosted the ceremony and afterwards, photos of the inductees were displayed in City Hall. The Hall of Fame has no physical facility but maintains a websité which allows anyone to visit the Hall of Fame at any time. Traditionally, the City of Chicago has displayed the Hall of Fame materials during induction periods, Pride and in October, Gay & Lesbian History Month. For more information, email outreach@chicagoLGBThalloffame .org, visit the organization's web site chicagolgbthalloffame.org/ or its Facebook page, https:// www.facebook.com/groups/ 56108152083/.

334 Out LGBTQ Candidates Won Elected Office So Far in 2020; Most Ever in Any Election Year



Washington, DC – More openly LGBTQ candidates won elected office in 2020 than in any other election year in United States history. As of today, a total of 334 out LGBTQ candidates won their races out of the 782 known out LGBTQ candidates who appeared on the ballot in 2020. More than 1,006 LGBTQ candidates ran throughout 2020. Of the 782 known out LGBTQ candidates who were on the ballot, 390 were endorsed by LGBTQ Victory Fund.

Among the key takeaways from the new data:

 42.7 percent of known out LGBTQ candidates on the ballot won their races in 2020, and 57 percent of Victory Fund endorsed candidates were successful; • In 2020, LGBTQ cisgender men ran in much higher numbers than LGBTQ cisgender women, yet the cisgender women candidates won at a higher rate (50 percent to 38.9 percent);

• 36.9 percent of known out trans women who ran for office in 2020 won their races;

• 35.7 percent of LGBTQ candidates who ran in 2020 were people of color and 37.1 percent won their races; • In 2020, 76.4 percent of LGBTQ candidates ran as Democrats and 41.5 percent won, whereas 2 percent of LGBTQ candidates ran as Republicans and just 36.9 percent won.

Statement from Mayor Annise Parker, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund

"In one of the most vitriolic and unprecedented election cycles of our time, LGBTQ candidates continue winning elections in numbers and in parts of the country thought unthinkable a decade or two ago," said

Mayor *Annise Parker*, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. "LGBTQ people span every community – we are people of color, women, immigrants, and people with disabilities – and we are able to use that life experience to connect with voters from many backgrounds. This beautiful diversity provides an opportunity to connect on some level with every single voter in America. That is the reason LGBTQ candidates are winning in unprecedented numbers, and this will only accelerate in the years ahead."

To see the key takeaways and a demographic and informational breakdown of the 782 out LGBTQ candidates who were on the ballot in 2020 – looking at sexual orientation, gender identity, race/ethnicity, incumbency, office level, party affiliation, and whether they won or lost. complete breakdown visit https://www.victoryfund.org

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WERE YOU NAUGHTY OR DID SANTA FORGET YOU?



Paper Jackets Share new 2020 Anthem "i'm depressed."



LA based alternative - pop band Paper Jackets have shared a new single titled "i'm depressed.", a track written about the mental toll the downfall of 2020 has taken on all of us this year, juxtaposed with an upbeat pop sound. "i'm depressed" was

produced and co-written by the production duo *HEAVY* (The Unlikely Candidates, lovelytheband).

On writing the new track, Paper Jackets vocailst *Aimee Proal* shares, "The 2020 experience heavily influenced this track. After months of limited human interaction, I found myself out of content to write about. I told James I was too depressed to write anything. Oddly that's exactly what became the song in the most sincere form while keeping a sense of humor in the lyric at the same time. From there, we teamed up with HEAVY and 'i'm depressed.' took on a life of its own."

"i'm depressed.' is an angsty anthem and a beautiful tantrum. As adults there's no way for "normal people" to scream, so we're doing it for you. The thing people tend to forget these days is that life has always been hard and this is just the new version.

We like to stay apart of the journey," vocalist James Mason adds.

HEAVY is an LA based songwriting/ production duo made up of two incredibly versatile multiinstrumentalists; *Jordan Miller* and *Jason Bell*. Together they've amassed over 175+ mil streams on Spotify and had 3 Top 10 Alt hits over the past year.

"i'm depressed" follows up Paper Jackets' recently released single "Drugs & Honey," the first offering from the band's upcoming collection of songs, Souvnenirs Volume Two, due to be released in 2021. In July 2020 the band shared their latest album, Souvenirs Volume One, the first part of a collection that stretches and pulls at the genre of alternative rock while revealing a nostalgic theme throughout; touching on creative moments the band has experienced together to addiction and its many forms.

For more information visit http://www.paperjackets.com/

Band Of Silver Release Debut EP *Always*



Rising pop-rock band, Band Of Silver, release their debut EP, *Always*.

Recorded in Los Angeles with producer *Mike Green* (Paramore, All Time Low), the EP features five tracks ranging from arena-ready rock anthems to new wave-inspired pop songs.

inspired pop songs.
Band Of Silver—made up of Avery
Silvernagel (vocals), Alex Silvernagel
(guitar and vocals), and Evan
Silvernagel (drums)—are a breakout
sibling trio out of Nashville. Their music
blurs the lines between vintage rock,
80's new wave, and modern pop, and
their explosive, electrifying performances
hint at everything from Def Leppard and
Madonna to Weezer and Panic! At The
Disco.

Their debut EP, *Always*, out now, is Band Of Silver's first collection of polished studio material. The EP

showcases Band of Silver's youthful exuberance, while at the same time reflecting the trio's remarkable maturity and restraint.

"We wrote most of our debut EP, 'Always,' in the fall of 2019 coming off of major changes in our team and personal lives," shares vocalist Avery Silvernagel. "The songs reflect the feeling of breaking out of the rut I had felt trapped in before and the sense of optimism I had (and still have) for the future." Avery continues, "Because of this, the EP is high energy and radiates positivity and hope. We're thrilled with how the project turned out and can't wait for our fans to hear it!"

Stream the album here: https://smarturl.it/BandOfSilverAlwaysEP.

PALE WAVES Release Video For "She's My Religion"



British indie-pop band Pale Waves have partnered with British film director *Jess Kohl* to release an intimate video for their latest single "She's My Religion," which features *Heather Baron-Gracie* and her girlfriend *Kelsi* in a series of candid, vulnerable vignettes showing that even the most mundane moments can be transformative when paired with the right person.

The raw and nostalgic second track from their forthcoming full-

length Who Am I? — out February 12, 2021, via Dirty Hit — is a non-typical love letter that sees frontwoman Heather embracing her sexuality to represent a real, queer relationship without hiding behind the cliches of oversexualization or playful experimentation.

experimentation.

Who Am I? — the follow-up to the band's 2018 debut album My Mind Makes Noises which amassed over 70 million streams worldwide, opens up a bold new chapter for Pale Waves. Heather's songwriting holds the last few years of her life up to the light, reflecting on her own mental health and growing pains — depression, distraction, and feelings of darkness — but also her experience of falling in love and becoming more open about her sexuality, emerging with a newfound clarity and optimism.

newfound clarity and optimism. Who Am I? acts as the Pale
Waves manifesto, inspiring inclusivity, self-discovery, and the notion of being whoever the hell you want to be. On the making of the album, Heather says "for me, music and art is for people not to feel so

alone and isolated. I want to be that person my fans look up to and find comfort in."

Who Am I? was recorded primarily in Los Angeles alongside producer **Rich Costey** (Muse, Foo Fighters, Sigur Rós), before the Coronavirus lockdown forced the making of the album to go virtual, with Heather remaining in LA and the rest of the band returning home to record their parts in their bedrooms, sending them back to LA to be added into the record.

Pale Waves – comprised of front woman *Heather Baron-Gracie* (she/her); drummer *Ciara Doran* (they/them); guitarist *Huge Silvani* (he/him) and bassist *Charlie Wood* (he/him) – made an immediate splash when the debuted on the music scene a few year ago, hitting the Top 10 on UK Album Chart, winning the NME Under The Radar award, making the BBC Sound of 2018 shortlist, touring with fellow Dirty Hit label mates and mentors The 1975 as well as Muse and The Cure.

For more information visit www.palewaves.co.uk

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