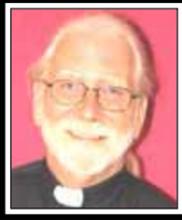




Stars of the Stage & their Possee's ~ New Orleans, Metairie ~ Photos by Hubert S Monkeys



## a community within communities

by The Rev. Bill Terry, Rector St. Anna's Episcopal Church,  
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### GAY PRIDE and FATHERS DAY!

Like Hurricane Season it happens every year. Every year we march out, we party, we show that the LGBT community live in solidarity AND we are more fun than most "protest marches." The foil of The Community is wit, pathos, humor, and sadness; mixed with the drama, can you imagine PRIDE without drama, and is or should be mixed with a degree of anger. Anger can be forceful and need not be destructive. It's just another emotion that sometimes generates action.

There is a long line of angry Justice Folks. Moses was angry and see what happened to Pharaoh! Elisha was an angry man and how did that work out for

Jezebel? Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and a host of other prophets all expressed one way or the other God's anger at abuse, disenfranchisement, and marginalization. Jesus entered his "Father's House" and was enraged at the desecration by neglect that he saw. He gathered reeds, made a whip, and had at the money changers.

For that very reason I so enjoy Krewe Du Vieux, I embrace the wit and wisdom in PRIDE. Sometimes it's not all bad to be "in your face." My hero, Jesus, was sort of an "in your face" kind of Messiah. Remember his several conversations with Pharisees and such?

I was once chatting with a conservative Episcopalian who was decrying

the church's move toward full inclusion. He said, "I was sitting on a beach when the announcement was made during convention. I wanted to throw up. Why do 'they' have to be so much 'in your face?'" Now this man is part and party to the same system that allowed Police back in the day to raid Gay Clubs (Stonewall), to bash friends of mine because they are Gay back in the day in Baton Rouge and, to make a felony of same sex love. How dare we "get in his face." The question is how dare we not?

What I like about PRIDE is the way in which 'anger' is worked out. Today, glitter replaces fire bombs, lavender replaces soot, and streamers replace billy clubs. During the parade last year the crowds were generally happy and supportive. This kind of anger transforms instead of polarizes. It is Peace Making work. Born out of prejudice, formed in anger, worked out in sarcasm and wit, it is Peace Making work. For those who will never know or come to know the LGBT community it is their loss. For those that do it is their gain and generally those who have allowed themselves to know the "other" in people are generally a lot happier, better adjusted, and less angry.

PRIDE falls squarely within the tradition of the Prophets of Old. PRIDE is about drawing in and accepting and "Walking upright with integrity." So, even if it is a hot and sweltering day, even if steam is rising from the pavement, step out of your community pub and join the crowd to affirm that THIS COMMUNITY IS A PART OF THE LARGER COMMUNITY and that it is good.

There is a lot to be angry about today: crime in the city, police brutality against our brothers and sisters, mis-spent public monies, broken education and health systems. There is a lot to be angry about: a Governor who is using his influence and power to feather his own nest at the expense of the citizens of this state. There is so much to be angry about: murderers in Africa stealing young women, ISIS in the East killing in the name of a Living God, massive unbridled consumerism that is altering the planet's atmosphere. Stand tall and be angry and in that anger find the sort of wit, wisdom, and creativity that has birthed PRIDE.

In the long line of Prophets of Old and Prophets of New we must stand in solidarity because if we do not who will speak justice? King, Gandhi, Steinem, Dorothy Day, who will be the Prophets today? Perhaps not a person but a movement. Not one voice but many voices. If social media can start a revolution in Egypt and alter world opinion in so many other areas perhaps we have been empowered to make our Community even more a part of the world Community. Come out come, come out where ever you are. Join the Parade, support the Parade, show our PRIDE just as the Prophets New and Old spoke justice – parade for Justice.



## the legal corner

by Attorney Troy A. Tureau  
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### The Death of Kalief Browder and Your Constitutional Right to a Speedy Trial

Over the last few days, I have been heartbroken and disgusted to learn more about Kalief Browder, who recently committed suicide after spending three years in jail without being convicted of a crime. In 2010 the 16 year old African-American, a backseat passenger of a vehicle, was arrested for a robbery that he maintained he had not committed. Because he would not admit guilt and apparently could not make bail, he had to stay in jail to await trial. Unconscionably, three years later that trial date had still never been set. Meanwhile, Kalief spent almost two years of that jail-time in solitary confinement and missed his high school prom, his high school graduation and three years of his life. Then, one day in May of 2013, all charges were dropped and, as Kalief explained, he was released from Rikers Island without a word of apology or explanation.

Kalief went public with his story so that no one else would have to live through the hell that he endured. Surveillance footage reveals numerous attacks upon him by guards, officers and large groups of inmates throughout his incarceration. His story garnered the attention of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, who pledged to reform

the city's court system, presidential candidate Senator Rand Paul, and celebrities such as Jay Z and Rosie O'Donnell. An anonymous donor offered to pay for a semester of Kalief's tuition at a local community college. Despite all of this, the hell that this young man was put through haunted him. He suffered from severe depres-

sion, panic attacks and paranoia and was hospitalized on two occasions after surviving as many suicide attempts. Then one night he told his mother that he couldn't take it any longer. The next afternoon she found her youngest son dead along the side of the house, hanging from the second story window.

Kalief's case vividly illustrates the difference between jails and prisons. Jails are typically supposed to house those who are awaiting trial and prisoners who are serving less than a year sentence. Many "jails are jungles," according to CNN's legal correspondent Jeffrey Toobin, and have little to no supervision. Prisons house inmates serving longer sentences are almost always actively managed.

Things like this only happen in big cities like New York, right? Wrong. Before Hurricane Katrina, I remember visiting a potential criminal law client in New Orleans City Jail. I can't tell you how many people there had been held there for over a year while waiting for trial. Some of them, I'm sure, were mentally ill; others were lost in the system. Many of them had no one that they could call for help. I remember wishing so badly that I could help all of them. There was just too many. I pray that things have improved since Katrina.

While the Constitution does guarantee the right to a speedy trial, it does not spell out exactly how speedy that trial must be. One thing that I think we can all agree on, though, is that three years is definitely not it. What I described above should never have happened to anyone, let alone child! I urge you to watch over your jailed loved ones and friends and be sure to call an attorney if you believe that their constitutional rights are being violated.

As always, I invite your comments and questions.

(These are the personal views of Troy A. Tureau, and nothing here is intended to be legal advice of any kind.)  
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## spotlight features

### NOLA LEATHER TO GEAUX October 16-18, 2015

Plan now for year two of NOLA Leather to Geaux, slated for October 16-18. Whether a local or a visitor, this leather run weekend offers many opportunities for the indulgence of your desires. Participants will have the unique experience of wearing his/her leather/fetish gear while drinking in the streets with a "go cup" in hand. One may hang out in bars and take advantage of playful dark spaces while celebrating leather and kink in a way possible only in New Orleans.

Planned events will be at the host hotel, Oz, Phoenix and Rawhide. These include a welcome party, dance, BBQ, play party, beer bust, walking tour and a bar crawl featuring Lafitte's famous Sunday night napkin toss.

Full weekend package is just \$60 until July 1; \$75 until September 19 and \$100 after. To register, go to [www.nolaleathertogeaux2015.doattend.com](http://www.nolaleathertogeaux2015.doattend.com).

Hotel St. Pierre at 911 Burgundy in the Quarter is this year's host hotel, call 504.524.4401 and mention NOLA Leather to Geaux for the special group rate.

For more information visit [www.nolaleathertogeaux.wordpress.com](http://www.nolaleathertogeaux.wordpress.com) and like us on Facebook (NOLA Leather to Geaux).



*Happy Pride, New Orleans*



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# GAY PRIDE WEEKEND NEW ORLEANS

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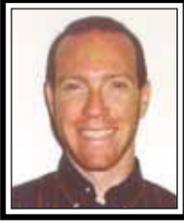
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## trodding the boards

by Brian Sands  
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### **Blackbird at Old Marquer Theatre through June 20**

Approaching *Blackbird* at Old Marquer Theatre, you have a choice. You can question things about it, small (would staff people leave their company lunch room so disgustingly littered?) and large (could the events that occurred *really* have happened?). Or you can accept what playwright David Harrower postulates and enjoy (though I'm not sure that's quite the right word) this highly provocative drama.

I chose the latter and was rewarded with a very satisfying evening of theater.

The play begins when a young woman, Una (Ashton Akridge), shows up unannounced late one afternoon at the sterile suburban office building where Ray (John Neisler) works in middle management. He takes her into that staff room and refuses to close the door though she wants more privacy.

For the first 10 minutes or so of *Blackbird*, a mystery hangs in the air as to the nature of their relationship. And then it comes out (slight spoiler alert)—fifteen years ago, when he was 40 and she was 12, they had a three month relationship that started at a barbecue in her parents' backyard and ultimately turned sexual.

Ray wound up going to jail for this and, when he got out, moved across the (unidentified) country, changed his name and began a new life for himself. Una remained in her home town, and has gotten on with her life as best she could while being "talked about, pointed at, stared at."

Drawn back to the man who had violated her after seeing a photo of him in a trade journal, Una seems to be looking for closure, maybe more. Inspired by an actual event, Harrower leaves open the possibility that Una hopes to pick up where she left off with Ray. It's as tangled a love story as is imaginable.

As Ray and Una's verbal sparring gives way to a more measured recounting of their past, Harrower explores what details we remember of momentous events and expertly packages exposition into an engrossing reconstruction of their shared history. While never condoning what Ray did, Harrower conveys the consensuality of his and Una's actions, and shows how these two gentle souls were forever scarred as they try to make sense of what they did.

If, perhaps, Set Designer Matthew Symon Collier overdoes the trash strewn about the break room, he gets everything else, down to the vending machine and frosted windows through which we see Ray's co-workers passing by, perfect. In this focused environment, Meghan Shea's simple but effective direction brings out the script's

gladiatorial aspect as though we're watching two boxers or wrestlers go at each other with jabs, feints and defensive maneuvering.

As Ray, Neisler begins so intensely taut you'd expect him to jump if you tapped him on his shoulder. Scared that his past history might be outed to his colleagues, Neisler, in a masterful performance, makes Ray nervous, tortured and, especially, haunted by what he did. Stumbling between his words with an utter naturalness that the layout of the script only hints at, Neisler's Ray wholly acknowledges that there are "No excuses" for what he did to Una, but still hopes to figure out why he did what he did; the tragedy is, in Harrower's insightful rendering, there may never be an answer.

Akridge's expressive faces registers the range of Una's turbulent emotions without resorting to mere mannerism. At times the aggressor, at others she folds her arms across her chest defensively. Combining winsomeness with a longing desperation, Akridge well-handles the challenges of Una's bravura monolog recollecting the night she and Ray spent in a hotel room and its aftermath.

That said, Akridge's performance could be even a little more textured. Watching it, I was not entirely convinced that this is the adult that the 12-year-old described by Harrower would evolve into; there were additional layers of hurt, knowingness and wounded pride that remained unexpressed. As scheduling forced me to see the first performance of this production, I would like to think that additional shadings will be added as the run continues.

Winner of the 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play, *Blackbird* is a small but very powerful drama that should engender probing discussions. Thank you Old Marquer for giving it its regional premiere.

### **The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe at Mid-City Theatre thru June 21**

It's good to have Lily Tomlin back in town again, and not just on her new Netflix series *Grace and Frankie*.

No, I mean with the return of *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* at Mid-City Theatre we have Tomlin's delightful spirit back, as, since its Broadway debut in 1985, which garnered Tomlin a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play, it will always be associated with her.

Of course this brilliant play, and it is a play not just a one-woman comic act, was written by Tomlin's artistic and life partner Jane Wagner. And brilliant it remains with its slyly intertwined stories that follow about ten different characters—from Trudy the bag lady to the Upper East Side matron Kate to the 15-year-old would-be punk rocker Agnus Angst—along with individual zingers ("I don't want to sound romantic about going crazy but, now, days are more fun filled," says Trudy) interspersed throughout.

In the current production, Yvette Hargis reprises her solo performance from 20+ years ago. Working with Fred Nuccio, she has trimmed the script and, I think, wisely so, of Lynn and her two friends' account of their lives and how these have paralleled feminism from the birth of *Ms.* magazine to Geraldine Ferraro's ascension to the Democratic ticket in 1984; while tremendously trenchant in its time, there was the fear that this section would now come off as dated.

Yet while the show still feels of a whole, with a 35-minute first act and an Act Two that runs just 25 minutes, its overall heft seems to be missing something; one wishes Wagner would have written new material to bring us up to right now as Hillary begins her second campaign for the White House.

Nuccio is credited in the program as "Creative Consultant to Miss Hargis, based on her original direction and staging by Ricky Graham." That's all well and good but Nuccio, perhaps in the well-intentioned interest of avoiding a lagging pace, too often has Hargis delivering passages a bit too quickly for her, and the audience, to fully savor Wagner's uniquely delicious lines (looking at the ingredients of non-dairy creamer, an alien exclaims "That's exactly what we're made of!").

Hargis is a wonderful comic actress and in the second act, through altering her body language and vocal inflections, transforms with sublime precision into Chrissy, a dear spacey gal who's looking for a job while doing yoga and who "just thinks of the Kennedy family and bursts into tears."

She's also terrific as Tina and Brandy, two NYC hookers, one white, the other black, just trying to make an honest buck.

But, especially in the first act, Hargis doesn't bring enough detailed individuality to Wagner's creations and they tend to blur together; a friend commented that he had to explain things to his companion who had never seen *Search* before. In a show with no props, costume changes or scenery,

Robert Burgual's monochromatic lighting doesn't help. It's a shame as I can imagine, under Graham's original direction, that Hargis delivered Kate's plaintive "I'm sick of being the victim of trends I don't understand" with just the right bitterly woeful edge.

Still, when Hargis launches into the difference between life (a Campbell's soup can) and art (Andy Warhol's print of a Campbell's soup can), and that only the latter can provide "the goose-bump experience", it is goose-bump time indeed.

### **And Further More...**

June used to be a quiet time for theater. Not any more. Here are some other things worth checking out:

There's one more weekend, through June 21, to catch Lisa D'Amour's acclaimed *Detroit* that **Southern Rep** is presenting at Ashé Power House Theater (1731 Baronne St.). A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, *Detroit* details the changing nature of the relationship between two couples in a nameless suburb and, by extension, the shifting fortunes of those who seek the American Dream.

For a double header, head to Tulane where its **Summer Lyric Theater** kicks off its season with *Damn Yankees*, the classic Tony Award-winning musical about baseball and a deal with the Devil (June 17-21). At the **Shakespeare Festival** there, *Cymbeline* offers directors many ways to deal with its mix of characters caught up in a tale of innocence triumphing over jealousy. You can see what path Director Rob Clare, a veteran of the Royal Shakespeare Company and Britain's National Theatre, chooses through June 27.

June 25 brings the *Indigo Girls* to the **Saenger Theatre** in Mobile with that city's own **Kristy Lee & Dirt Road Revival** as opening support, along with **The Good Graces**.

You'll have a chance to see two very different comic legends on successive Saturdays.

On June 20, **Sandra Bernhard is #blessed** arrives at the **Joy Theater** on Canal Street. In her first performance in New Orleans in over a decade, this singular entertainer can be expected to blend theatre, rock-n-roll and stand-up with a little burlesque and cabaret. I saw her the last time she was here at House of Blues and then had a chance to chat with her when she wound up afterwards upstairs at one of the establishments at Bourbon and St. Ann. Who knows where she'll wind up this time?

And this might be your last chance to see "Mr. Warmth" himself **Don Rickles** when he plays **IP Casino Resort** in Biloxi on June 27. The 89-year-old king of the insult comics was a headliner long before Bianca was a gleam in anyone's eye. Put a wig and a dress on him and you just might see a resemblance.