



FREEDOM TO MARRY

PAGE 25

WINDY CITY TIMES

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LOCAL COLLEGE GETS LESBIAN PRESIDENT

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Public talks library issue

BY KATE SOSIN

When it was discovered in late January that the Gerber/Hart Library in Edgewater was moving, many people in the community questioned why it would relocate and who its board members were.

Board President Karen Sendziak declined to disclose either. (The other board members are Stan Huntington of Chicago and Don Landers of Arizona.)

In recent days, those most closely associated with the LGBT library have come forward with their feelings about its impending move and its leadership, after Windy City Times reported that the organization is struggling to stay compliant with its bylaws and the laws governing non-profits.

On Feb. 15, a group calling itself "Friends of Gerber/Hart Library" issued a letter to Sendziak, calling on her to open up the organization's governance and stall the move. (The letter is printed alongside this piece. Her response to it ran in last week's issue.)

Among the letter's authors was historian Sukie de la Croix. He left the board in July 2011, after eight months of service.

"Over the years, Karen Sendziak has been really, really excellent and helpful to the work that I do ... just wonderful," de la Croix said. He supported the library and its mission to preserve history.

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JOSE LOVE, YOUTH LEADER, INTERVIEWED

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History lesson

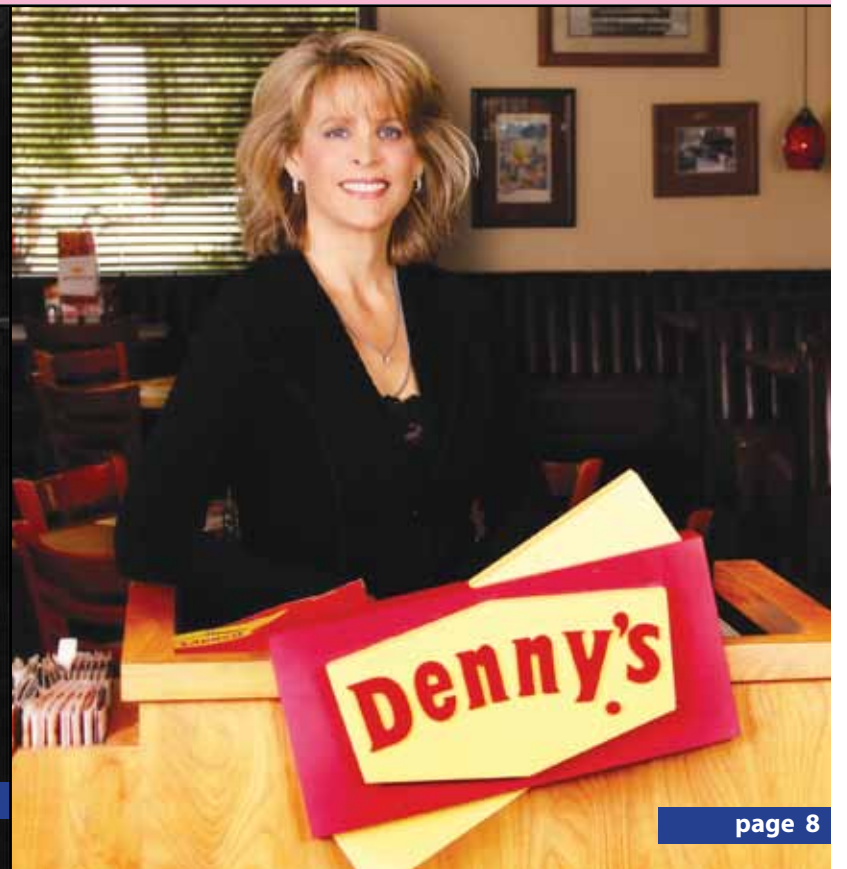
In the first of a multipart series, Windy City Times takes a look at the history of African-American queer culture on the South Side. See page 26. Photo of Tony Jackson courtesy of the Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center



Tea time

Gay-owned Chicago company Talbott Teas is going national, thanks to Jamba Juice. Pictured are Talbott's Steven Nakisher (left) and Shane Talbott—partners in business and life. See page 25. Photo courtesy of the company

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She means business

Dawn Lafreeda owns more than 70 Denny's franchises. Read more about her on page 8. Photo courtesy of Lafreeda



BRITISH SINGER RUMER

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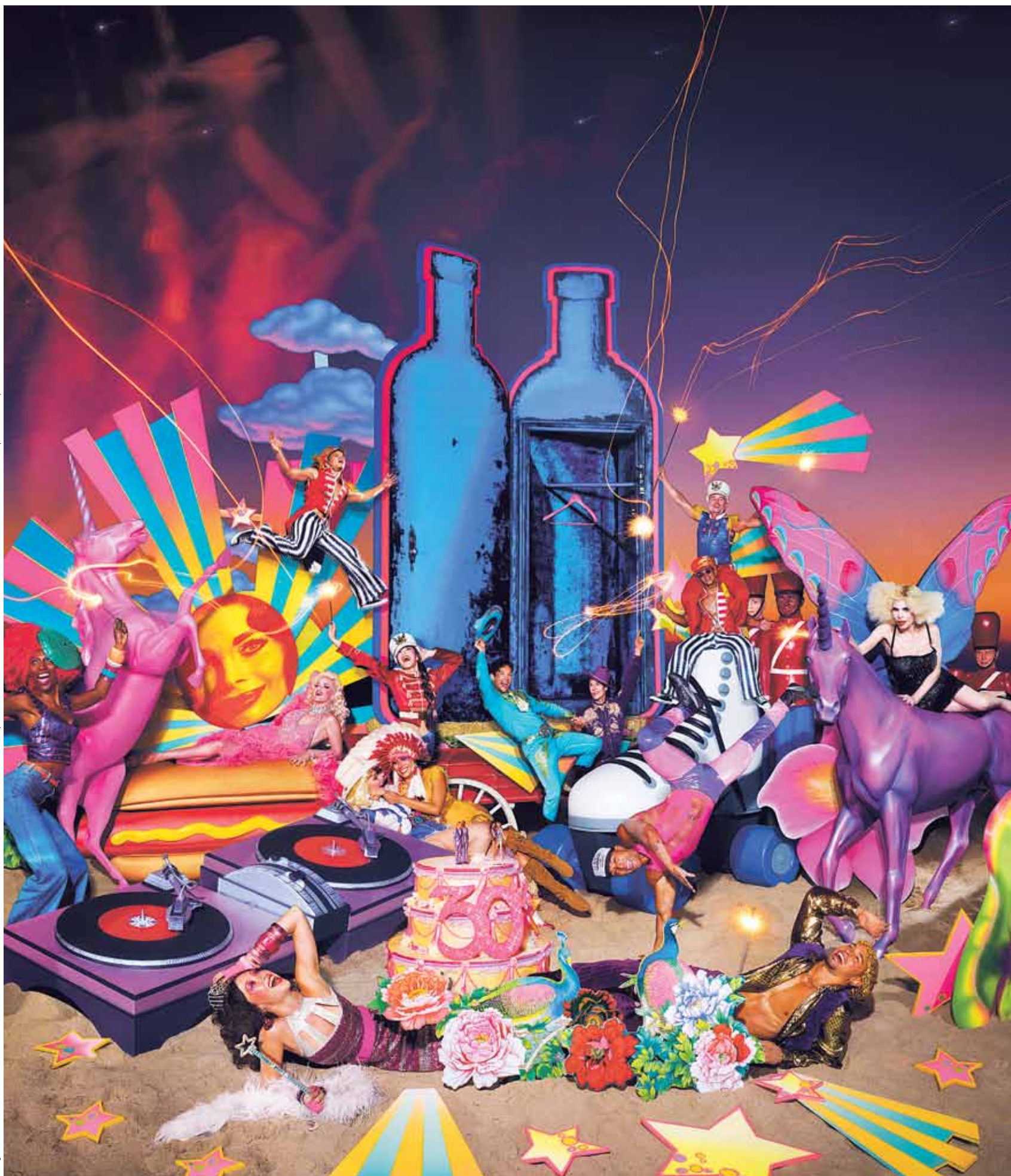
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Photos on cover (left, from top):
Freedom to Marry pic by Kat Fitzgerald;
pic of Dr. Susan Henking; Kink Crusaders
pic from Mike Skiff; PR photo of Rumer

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MOVIE KIND OF LOVE
WCT covered two Oscar parties this past weekend. See photos from both.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald



Check out photos from "For the Love of Chocolate" at Merchandise Mart.

Photo by Jerry Nunn



See why Massachusetts is a great travel destination.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

BEHIND THE RATE BALL
Financial expert Phil Sitar looks at refinancing and low mortgage rates.

UNCOMMONLY GOOD
See photos from events with Chicago rapper Common and out gay Ald. James Cappleman.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
Read entertainment news about Tyra Banks, Elton John and Cher.

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SOUTHERN COMFORT



Read Bent Nights to get the lowdown on a recent Blind Boys of Alabama show.

Photo of the Blind Boys of Alabama by Vern Hester

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Federal judge: DOMA is unconstitutional

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A federal district court judge in San Francisco ruled Feb. 22 that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) violates the rights of gays and lesbians to equal protection of the law.

The ruling, by Judge Jeffrey White of the U.S. District Court for Northern California, was the second time a federal judge has declared unconstitutional the federal law banning recognition of same-sex marriages. A federal district court judge in Boston made a similar ruling in July 2010, in consolidated cases brought by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This week's ruling came in a case, *Golinski v. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)*, brought by Lambda Legal Defense on behalf of a lesbian attorney, Karen Golinski, who is employed by the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

Golinski married her female partner of 20-plus years in August 2008, when it was possible to do so in California. She then applied for healthcare coverage for her spouse through her employer, the Ninth Circuit, which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Alex Kozinski ordered the court to provide Golinski benefits but the OPM, headed by openly gay appointee John Berry, instructed the insurance company not to enroll Golinski's spouse, noting that DOMA precluded the federal employer from recognizing Golinski's marriage.

Golinski's lawsuit, like that of the Massachusetts cases, challenges only Section 3 of DOMA—the part that limits the definition of marriage for federal benefits to straight couples.

White, an appointee of President George W. Bush, said the legislative history of DOMA is "replete with expressed animus toward gay men and lesbians" but he said he was "persuaded that something short of animus may have motivated DOMA's passage." That "something short of animus," he suggested, might have been a simple lack of "careful, rational reflection" or "instinctive" reaction to "people who appear to be different...."

Tara Borelli, the Lambda staff attorney who led Golinski's challenge, said White's decision "spells doom for DOMA." However, the decision will almost certainly be appealed given that House Speaker John Boehner has committed to funding a legal defense of the law. Boehner did so soon after the Obama administration announced, in February 2011, that it considers DOMA to be unconstitutional and would not mount a vigorous defense of it in court.

Seeming to anticipate criticisms that his opinion rendered him an "activist judge," White noted. "The fact that the issue is socially divisive does nothing to relieve the judiciary of its obligation to examine the constitutionality of the discriminating classifications in the law."

In his ruling, White said the appropriate level of review in scrutinizing DOMA was "heightened review," a level of scrutiny more vigorous than mere "rational review." If a law is subjected to heightened review, a court must find that the law treating one group of people differently is "substantially related to an important governmental objective." White said Congress failed to justify its disparate treatment of gays and lesbians under either rational or heightened scrutiny.

In the two Massachusetts cases, Judge Joseph Tauro, an appointee of President Nixon to the U.S. District Court in Boston applied only rational review when he ruled that Section 3 of DOMA violates the equal protection principles embodied in the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment and violates the Tenth Amendment by taking from the states decisions concerning which couples can be considered married. The



Judge Jeffrey White.

U.S. House Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group is leading the appeal of Tauro's ruling in the consolidated cases, known generally as *Gill v. OPM*. A three-judge panel of the First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals is expected to hear oral arguments in the first week of April.

DOMA was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1996. While Section 3 is the only part under challenge at this time, the law also includes a Section 2 which stipulates that states may refuse to recognize same-sex marriages duly licensed by other states.

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Truth Wins Out files lawsuit against ex-gay organization

Truth Wins Out has filed a defamation lawsuit against Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX) and its president, Greg Quinlan, after he claimed on a television show that Truth Wins Out Executive Director Wayne Besen tried to have him killed, according to a press release.

The lawsuit was filed in Virginia's Northumberland County, where PFOX is headquartered.

"We will not let PFOX's outright lies and bizarre fabrications go unanswered," said Besen. "Greg Quinlan's false allegations were deviously designed to damage my reputation and that of Truth Wins Out. We look forward to vigorously challenging Quinlan's delusional version of events and debunking them in a court of law."

According to the release, on Oct. 7, 2011, Quinlan said on WDCW-TV's News-Plus, "[Besen has] asked for people, you know, somebody needs to run Greg over. He needs to be hit with a bus. Somebody should inject him with AIDS. Those are the things that Wayne Besen and Truth Wins Out says about me. That's pretty hateful rhetoric."

Anti-domestic violence group's gala March 10

Connections for Abused Women and their Children (CAWC), a Chicago organization committed to ending domestic violence, will host its 26th Annual Spring Gala-Sounds of Silence Saturday, March 10, 6-11 p.m., in the Crystal Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker Dr.

The black tie-optional event, presented by Discovery Clothing Company, will feature a cocktail hour with silent auction and mystery wine raffle, followed by a seated dinner, live auction and dancing. This year, CAWC will present its Champion Award to Adams Street Partners.

Individual ticket prices begin at \$250, and VIP tickets can be purchased for \$500 each. For more sponsorship and ticket information, contact Anne Borg at aborg@cawc.org or call 773-489-9081, ext. 21.

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NATIONAL NEWS



—Hairstylist refuses to cut anti-gay governor's hair

—Ex-GOP senator criticizes Santorum's (left) anti-gay stance

—Lesbians allegedly assault gay man



Marine photo on Facebook.

Same-sex Marine photo goes viral

A homecoming photo of a U.S. Marine passionately kissing his boyfriend has gone viral after it was posted on Facebook, according to the Huffington Post.

More than 14,000 people "Like" the image, and the picture has received more than 3,000 comments since being uploaded to Facebook's Gay Marines group.

Blogger Joe.My.God has quoted Brandon Morgan, the Marine in the photo, as saying, in part, "To everyone who has responded in a positive way. My partner and I want to say thank you. Dalan, the giant in the photo, can't believe how many shares and likes we have gotten on this. We didn't do this to get famous or something like that; we did this [because] after three deployments and four years knowing each other, we finally told each other how we felt. ... Goodnight all, and Semper Fi."

Lesbian judge won't wed straight couples

In Texas, Dallas County Judge Tonya Parker has said she won't perform marriage ceremonies until same-sex couples can wed, according to NBCDFW.com.

During a Feb. 21 meeting, Parker told the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas, "I use it as my opportunity to give [opposite-sex couples] a lesson about marriage inequality in this state because I feel like I have to tell them why I'm turning them away." Parker has added that she passes marriage ceremonies on to other judges so they can be completed.

Parker was elected two years ago, and is

the first out lesbian to be elected a county judge in Dallas.

In a statement to the media, Parker said, in part, "I faithfully and fully perform all of my duties as the Presiding Judge of the 116th Civil District Court, where it is my honor to serve the citizens of Dallas County and the parties who have matters before the Court.

"Performing marriage ceremonies is not a duty that I have as the Presiding Judge of a civil district court. It is a right and privilege invested in me under the Family Code. I choose not to exercise it, as many other Judges do not exercise it. Because it is not part of our duties, some Judges even charge a fee to perform the ceremonies.

"I do not, and would never, impede any person's right to get married. In fact, when people wander into my courtroom, usually while I am presiding over other matters, I direct them to the Judges in the courthouse who do perform marriage ceremonies. If my deputy is not busy, I will even ask him to escort or help these individuals find another Judge who performs the ceremonies. I do this because I believe in the right of people to marry and pursue happiness."



Judge Tonya Parker.

Cassidy hosting job-resource fair March 2

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, will host a hiring/job-resource fair Friday, March 2, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Willye B. White Park, 1610 W. Howard St.

Call 773-784-2002 or email RepCassidy@gmail.com.

Maryland Senate OKs marriage bill

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The Maryland Senate, on Feb. 23, gave final legislative approval to a marriage-equality bill that the governor is expected to soon sign. The vote was 25-22.

Meanwhile, the Maine secretary of state confirmed the same day that activists have turned in enough valid signatures to put a pro-marriage-equality measure on the ballot there in November.

The vote marked the third time a state legislature has given final approval to marriage equality in the past two weeks. Two of the three states (in Maryland and Washington) are likely to be put the law before voters this November. The third state (New Jersey) had the legislation immediately vetoed by its governor.

The Maryland House of Delegates passed the marriage-equality bill Feb. 17 with a bare minimum of 71 votes, but there is no threat of veto here. Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, sponsored the bill and is poised to sign it.

Like the House, the Senate debated and rejected a number of hostile amendments, including efforts to censor sex-education courses for students and to write into the legislation explicit statements saying that minors cannot marry other minors. One amendment sought an exemption for landlords who want to refusing housing to same-sex couples. Another sought to ensure that the state could continue to recognize "Mother's Day" and "Father's Day." Any amendment would have forced the bill back to

the House for a concurring vote.

Sen. David Brinkley, a Republican, slowed consideration of the bill by reading a prolonged letter opposing the legislation, citing religious objections. Senate President Thomas Miller, a Democrat, interrupted at one point and encouraged Brinkley to "speed read" or wait until others had a chance to speak before attempting his apparent filibuster.

Brinkley eventually sought approval for an amendment with a broad exemption for people, businesses, and religious institutions who have religious objections to same-sex marriage.

Six states plus the District of Columbia now have full marriage equality: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

Washington state Gov. Chris Gregoire signed that state's marriage equality legislation on February 13, but the law cannot take effect until June and will likely be delayed even longer by a referendum. Activists in Maine hope to establish marriage equality through a pro-active ballot measure this November.

Voters in North Carolina will be given an opportunity to establish a ban on same-sex marriage there in May. Voters in Minnesota will consider a similar ban in November. An effort to put a pro-active pro-same-sex marriage measure on the ballot in California in November recently dissolved but was never considered to be well-supported by the LGBT community.

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Chely Wright.

Chely Wright group opens LGBT center in Kansas City

The LIKEME Organization, founded by lesbian country music recording artist and Kansas native Chely Wright, will open its first LIKEME® Lighthouse in Kansas City March 10, according to a press release.

The Lighthouse is a welcoming and safe community center for the LGBT individuals, their families and straight allies. Doors will be open Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., and on Sunday 12-6 p.m.

The community center will offer educational resources on topics such as the coming-out process, gender identity and bullying. Additional services will include referrals to LGBT organizations and services; a computer lab; and an LGBT library and reading room, among other items.

As the first country music star to come out as gay, Wright created The LIKEME® Organization in 2010 after the release of her memoir, Like Me: Confessions of a Heartland Country Singer. First Run Features award-winning documentary Wish Me Away tracks the three years Wright spent preparing to come out publicly.

See www.likeme.org for more information.

Ind. LGBTQ license plate may be yanked

Indiana Youth Group (IYG) is fighting to keep a specialty license plate aimed at supporting LGBTQ youth, according to an organizational press release.

Recently, there have been three failed attempts by Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-District 28, to amend bills aimed at taking away IYG's specialty plate.

The House Roads and Transportation Committee voted 8-2 to advance a measure, SB327, that ends sales of specialty plates by organizations that sold fewer than 1,000 plates in 2011, according to the Indianapolis Star.

"We've been tracking these amendments for the last two weeks but have been trying to stay under the wire, thinking that the powers-that-be at the state house will do the right thing," said IYG Executive Director Mary Byrne.

Obama campaign announces co-chairs

Obama for America has announced the campaign's national co-chairs. They will serve as ambassadors for the president, advise the campaign on key issues, and help engage and mobilize voters in all 50 states.

Among the dozens of individuals named are Penny Pritzker, founder and CEO of PSP Capital Partners; Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese; actress Eva Longoria; Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee; Bill Daley, former White House chief of staff to President Obama and former U.S. Secretary of Commerce; Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel; U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill.; U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill.; Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick; and Caroline Kennedy, author and president of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.

To see a list of biographies of National Co-Chairs, visit www.barackobama.com/cochairs.

QUOTELINES

COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

"You all may know that I've recently teamed up with J.C. Penney. Very excited about that, not only because I think it's a great store but because I get a great employee discount, and I could use some new T-shirts. So, I'm happy about it, and J.C. Penney is happy about it, but there is a group called One Million Moms that is not happy about it... This organization does not think I should be the spokesperson because I'm gay. So for those of you who are just tuning in for the first time, it's true. I'm gay. I hope you were sitting down. I hate to break it to you this way."—Ellen DeGeneres, on her show, Feb. 7.

"The reason we're not rushing to get married is because I don't feel appropriate taking advantage of a right that's denied to my best friends. That's why we've been so hesitant. Dax and I have talked about it a lot, and this issue is very important to both of us. We're just standing up for what we believe in. Period.

Listen, we're on your side. I recently tweeted about this embarrassing poster that shows how many states where you can marry your same-sex significant other and how many more states where you can marry your cousin. It's fucking ridiculous."—Actress Kristen Bell to *Queerty.com*, Feb. 20.

"Many parents are abandoning the Girl Scouts because they promote homosexual lifestyles. In fact, the Girl Scouts education seminar girls are directed to study the example of role models. Of the fifty role models listed, only three have a briefly-mentioned religious background — all the rest are feminists, lesbians, or Communists."—Indiana State Rep. Bob Morris in a letter to fellow lawmakers, published in the *South Bend Tribune*, Feb. 21.

"I've been saving my clothes for her since before she was born. I was like, I'll bet you anything I'll have a daughter, and she'll be a really cool butch lesbian and be so above clothes, and I got a very clothes-obsessed child. So if she's a lesbian, she's a lipstick lesbian. She doesn't like anything avant-garde at all. She likes anything that's pretty, pretty, pretty or has a bow or a ruffle or is pink."—Actress Gwyneth Paltrow on her daughter Apple to *Harper's Bazaar*, March issue.

"Whenever someone opposes [marriage equality], I always counsel: you never know. You never know when it will be your child or your grandchild. And you will eat your words."—Former Washington state Rep. Betty Sue Morris, to *The New York Times*, Feb. 6.

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LIBRARY from cover

In December 2010, Sendziak recruited him onto the board. He joined reluctantly because he knew little about how boards worked. He told Sendziak that he would serve on the board to satisfy Illinois law that mandates non-profits operate with at least three board members, but he hoped they could find a replacement soon.

"We were supposed to have meetings every month but it didn't really happen," de la Croix said. Occupied with writing a book, he hardly noticed, but other things struck him as odd.

"There seemed to be no treasurer," he said. "There seemed to be no board members at all."

In July 2011, the board, including Huntington and Sendziak, convened for its first meeting in months, de la Croix said. On the agenda was if the library should purchase a building. de la Croix voted in favor of the move.

"I thought maybe we could get more people involved and clean out some of the rubbish because the place looks like a thrift store," he said.

de la Croix told WCT Sendziak responded to his suggestion to throw out "rubbish" by screaming at him. "That's when she went postal on me," he said. He resigned on the spot and ran from the building.

Another matter arose earlier at that meeting. John D'Emilio, a renowned LGBT historian, had expressed interest in joining the board.

D'Emilio, a professor of history and gender studies, is recognized nationally. A book he co-authored was cited in the landmark court decision to overturn U.S. anti-sodomy laws in 2003. He was a National Book Award finalist. D'Emilio had also been a board member before, and he knew Gerber/Hart well.

When D'Emilio offered to join the board, de la Croix was happy to report the news.

"[Sendziak] said, 'No, he's not coming onto the board; that's not happening,'" de la Croix said.

D'Emilio made the offer directly to Sendziak later. Last fall, he approached Sendziak and told her he saw her taking on most of the library's work and he wanted to help.

"I told Karen that I would be willing to recruit and put together a board of people with a range of skills and commitment to the organization so that there could be this turnaround and revival," he said. Her response, he said, was "hostile" and "antagonistic."

Sendziak told him she would consult her lawyer because D'Emilio might have conflicts of interest. He said he knows of none.

Until recently, Patrick Gourley, a former board member, had been a volunteer at the library for more than a decade. He was charged with management of the library, like waking up in the middle of the night when the burglar alarm went off. Gourley also runs the men's book group there.

Gourley echoed the concerns many have about Sendziak's leadership. In late February, after signing the "Friends of Gerber/Hart" letter, he resigned.

According to Gourley, the library's archives were a jumble of books and papers, disorganized and hidden.

"It's so far from being legitimate," he said. "We could never show it to anyone. It's the secret shame."

de la Croix said that when he did research in the archives, he discovered a room in complete disarray, and he found himself literally walking on archival material.

"Jon-Henri Damski's collection is sitting outside of the bathroom and has been for several years," he said.

Cheryl Pattin, who led the lesbian book group at the library, said that she too has watched the library go from "poorly functional to non-functional."

"It's been worse for years and years," she said.

In recent days, Gourley said, Sendziak has cleaned and organized the library as she has come under scrutiny.

One who sees Sendziak differently, however, is Kerry Eason. Eason served on the board for ap-



Gerber/Hart Library. Photo by Kate Sosin

proximately four years until 2008. An attorney, he advised Gerber/Hart on legal issues until 2009 when he left to work abroad. He has since returned to Chicago but not to the library.

Sendziak recruited Eason onto the board in 2004. Eason said Sendziak volunteered 40-60 hours per week at Gerber/Hart. Sometimes, she stayed so late that she slept in the building, woke up and continued working. When Gerber/Hart struggled to pay rent, Sendziak personally donated more than \$5,400.

Eason guesses that Gerber/Hart would not have survived without Sendziak, a statement that even those most critical of her concede is true.

During his time on the board, the library sent notices about its annual meeting and posted meeting details on its website.

"Each year that I was there, the board had the annual meeting, and nobody came," he said. Once or twice, one of the volunteers showed up, he said.

Eason reports he never saw an instance where a potential board member was turned away. Community members submitted resumes, and the board voted to accept that person onto the board, in accordance with the organization's bylaws.

*Letter from Friends of the Gerber/Hart:
Feb. 15, 2012
Dear Karen,*

We are writing as friends of the Gerber/Hart Library. We value it as a community institution and we have supported it in a variety of ways over the years. We have deep concerns about its future. The recent articles in Windy City Times have helped bring these concerns into focus, but have not caused these concerns.

We are very aware that you love Gerber/Hart and have devoted uncountable hours to it. Yet, the seven-plus years of your presidency have produced an increasingly difficult environment. The board has shrunk to almost no one except you. The space, once so pleasant and inviting, has taken on the look of a resale shop and storage room. Programming and exhibits have shrunk to almost nothing. The archives are impenetrable, and there is virtually no access to them except through you. You have made it impossible for others to take on leadership to help fulfill the mission of the organization. You have transformed a public institution that should be transparent and accountable into one that will not release its bylaws, will not list its board members, and has failed to file, despite multiple extensions, its most recent tax reporting form.

Sendziak is believed to be serving her eighth year as president. The last known copy of the library's bylaws allow for just four consecutive years on the board. WCT has asked Sendziak if the bylaws have been updated since, but received no response.

Eason said that Gerber/Hart needs more community support to survive, but he added few are willing to take on the work.

"The whole time that I was there, I never knew of a single board member or volunteer or anyone who said 'I want to be president,'" he said.

However, both the survival of the library and its leadership likely depend on its upcoming move, yet unexplained. WCT previously reported that building landlord Rae Ann Cecrle wanted the library to stay.

On Feb. 18, Sendziak emailed Cecrle and asked for a lease extension from the end of April until May. Cecrle wrote back the next day and said that she had found a new tenant and was therefore unable to extend the lease. (A contract has not yet been signed but Cecrle believes the deal is done.) On Feb. 20, Cecrle said, Sendziak asked for a one-month or year lease extension. Cecrle again declined.

Cecrle said that Sendziak "said in one of her

Of greatest concern, you seem to be unnecessarily forcing a move to new quarters at a time when you have little community support to carry out what will be a gargantuan task. Taken together, your autocratic leadership and decision-making are endangering a valuable and treasured community institution.

As friends of the Gerber/Hart Library, we ask two things:

1) That you immediately contact the owner/realtor and extend the lease on the current Granville space, thereby forestalling a need to move at the present time.

2) The organization's governance must be opened up to a new, more extensive board of directors and this must be done in a way that is transparent and easily accessible to the public.

Gerber/Hart's current difficulties can all be solved. But the way Gerber/Hart has been run for the last several years must end. It is making Gerber/Hart a shadow of what it could be and has created a public-relations nightmare for the organization.

Signed by (in alphabetical order):

Bill Bergfalk, Wil Brant, Scott Burgh, Tracy Curran, Sukie de la Croix, John D'Emilio, Patrick Gourley, Roland Hansen, David Howser, Michael Jogerst, Owen Keehnen and Cheryl Pattin

[emails] she didn't want to go public with what's wrong [with the building] which you are fully aware of."

Cecrle said she is not aware of any significant problems with the property.

The same day that Cecrle declined the lease extension, Sendziak wrote back to the "Friends of Gerber/Hart" group and said "no final decision has been made" about whether or not the library would move. She further wrote that extending the lease as suggested by the group would mean "acting unilaterally, ignoring the board of directors and setting aside all the study and negotiation that has been done up to now. What sort of leadership would it be for me to do that? In what way would that fulfill my fiduciary duty to Gerber/Hart?"

A number of people argue that lack of community support for Gerber/Hart is a result of Sendziak's micromanagement. Her own needs, they say, have become too mixed up in the needs of the organization, and her tireless effort to keep the library afloat has devolved into an equally indefatigable battle to maintain control over all aspects of the library.

In non-profit speak, this issue is commonly known as "founder's syndrome." According to an informational sheet provided by Mosher and Wagenmaker LLC, a law firm specializing in non-profit law, in such cases "the 'founder' may effectively cripple an organization by dominating it, even though it may seem such control is necessary in order to keep the organization working."

Founder's syndrome happens when an organization's leadership, honorably intentioned and unknowingly, becomes so fixated on seeing the organization succeed that it eclipses others community members. The result is usually shrinkage of community involvement rather than the growth it should exhibit over time.

Regardless of current controversies, however, Gerber/Hart's finances have improved under Sendziak.

WCT obtained documents that show that the year Sendziak became president, the organization closed out the year with just \$37,905. Going into 2011, Gerber/Hart boasted \$248,779. Much of that money was the result of bequests.

Such information is available because the library recently filed its missing 2010 IRS 990 form and released it to WCT, after the paper reported that the library failed to file the form amid questions surrounding its impending move. Sendziak submitted the form via mail to the newspaper.

The 2010 filing shows an organization added to its assets since 2009 when it reported assets totaling \$235, 936. It also indicates that Sendziak worked an average of 30 hours per week without compensation.

Four members are listed on the 2010 filing. They are Sendziak, Owen Keehnen, N. Elizabeth Reynolds and de la Croix. With the exception of Sendziak, all are believed to have since left the organization.

However, while the organization increased assets over the years, it also lost a grantor. D'Emilio said that Sendziak told him that the Alphawood Foundation did a site visit to the library and found that it was not fulfilling its mission. It consequently discontinued funding Gerber/Hart, a loss that, if similar to past years, cost the library approximately \$10,000-\$17,500 per year, \$5,000 of which was set aside for the archives.

More than a month since the story broke, WCT continues to request answers from Sendziak about the move and library operations. WCT has repeatedly asked Sendziak to respond to such questions and invited her to go on the record, without response. The paper has also requested a list of archival collections.

WCT has not been able to reach Huntington and Landers for comment, either.

Shimer College names lesbian president

BY JAMIE ANNE ROYCE

Dr. Susan Henking, an out lesbian, has been named the first woman president of Shimer College since its founding in 1853.

A first-generation college attendee, Henking began her education at Duke University, going on to complete master and doctoral work in religious studies at the University of Chicago. She was teaching courses on religious studies, women's studies and general education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Upstate New York before accepting the position at Shimer College.

An accomplished religious-studies scholar, Henking edited several books on the intersection of religion with gender and sexuality, including *Que(e)rying Religion: A Critical Anthology* with co-editor Gary David Comstock. The pair drew content from a wide variety of disciplines and spiritualities to compile the book, including unique perspectives on what constitutes religion.

"There's a piece in the anthology that's about leather culture, the spirituality of leather culture, which, at the time, was not something that mainstream religious studies thought of as religion," said Henking.

Henking's new home, Shimer College, is one of the few remaining traditional Great Books schools, featuring a curriculum based on books that tradition, institutions and scholars regard as best expressing the foundations of Western culture. Five years ago, the school relocated from Waukegan to Chicago, making it the only urban Great Books school. Located near the loop, Shimer has 150 students and 15 faculty members.

A colleague recommended Henking for the open president position at Shimer, who felt immediately welcomed during the hiring process.

"If you've ever had a job interview, you know they're not always fun, but this one was fun," said Henking. "The students were amazing and impressive. The staff was wonderful. The community was very open and welcoming. And intellectually, Shimer was incredibly rich."

Henking's work reflects her identities, which she thinks has influenced her as a scholar and a leader.

"I think [my lesbian identity] shapes my coursework and intellectual work a lot in the sense that my areas of specialty in my teaching and scholarship really are religion, gender and sexuality, so it lead me to certain kinds of questions," said Henking. "If you can stand in a place that defines who you are and use that to understand and emphasize with other people, it allows you to be a much better collaborative leader."

Henking highlighted students' diverse passions for literature and knowledge, as well as activism and social justice.

"There's activist work to engage in social change," said Henking. "There's educational work, the work of building institutions. We can build institutions that are welcoming for people."

As president, Henking hopes to maintain Shimer College's unique curriculum, keep the school financially accessible, support the community and boost it to the national stage.

"Some people, because [the schools are] expensive, think small liberal arts colleges are increasingly becoming the place of the extremely elite. I really don't want Great Books schools to be schools for only the elite," said Henking. "Shimer's never going to be a place where everybody goes because it's small, but it certainly should be a place where all kinds of people can go. Reading the books together with a diverse group of people is what makes it interesting."

Henking wants Shimer students to not only



Dr. Susan Henking.

read the books but learn to critically engage the literature and translate it to the world around them.

"They're not separate things. It's not reading or living as an engaged citizen," said Henking. "It's about being an engaged citizen that has a historical awareness, a sense of the ideas that are out there and, frankly, who knows that when they read one of the questions to ask is, 'So what? Why does it matter?'"

When Henking came out as a lesbian in the mid 1970s, there weren't many resources for LGBT youth. This was around the time women's studies and other identity-based programs were getting their start in academia, creating a canon of work around the identities and making them culturally relevant.

"For my generation finding other LGBT people was very hard, so I went to libraries and read books," said Henking. "We go to the Internet now. Isolated teens in different places go to the Internet, but I also want them to be able to go to colleges."

To Henking, education and social justice are inherently linked, citing student driven social change, like the Occupy movement, and the literature they read to incite their activism.

"When I came out in 1976, there wasn't partner benefits yet, let alone some of the social change we've seen for LGBT people," said Henking. "I think part of being able to get the social change is the kinds of direct action movements, and I think, also, a strong education system that is about values and critical engagement with our world."

Young Black MSM wanted for study

Gary W. Harper Ph.D., M.P.H., of DePaul University is conducting a study that requires the input of young Black males 15-19.

The study is about developing/testing a culturally and developmentally appropriate HIV-prevention intervention for Black adolescent males who have sex with other males.

Those chosen to participate in this study will be in a discussion group with other youths that will take no longer than three hours.

Participants will receive \$25 each as compensation. Call project director Omar B. Jamil at 773-971-9633.

'Patty the Pin Lady' case continues

BY ERICA DEMAREST

A new court date has been set for Patricia Latham, better known as "Patty the Pin Lady," following an attack she sustained while fundraising in Rogers Park.

Latham, 68, a longtime LGBT activist and AIDS fundraiser, was assaulted by two 28-year-old men last Dec. 10 while grabbing a bite to eat at El Chorrito, 6404 N. Clark St.

According to Police News Affairs Officer Daniel O'Brien, the assailants entered the restaurant, stole a bag of fundraising candy from Latham and threw a vase at the front entrance, damaging the door. Latham, who is currently undergoing treatment for cancer, was punched in the back of the head during the scuffle. She fell to the ground and was left with several bruises.

"[One of the attackers] was screaming and yelling and calling me all kinds of dirty, filthy names," Latham said. "He turned around and shoved me down. He stole all my candy, jumped into a cab and took off."

O'Brien said the suspects fled westbound on Devon Avenue, but were later taken into custody by police who responded to the scene.

Latham faced her alleged attackers in court Jan. 3, but the case was not resolved at the time, according to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. A new court date has been set for March 28.

Latham claims the two men refused a plea deal that would've included probation, community service and a fee to replace her stolen candy.

With her bright hair, over-the-top outfits

and bubbly personality, Latham has been a vibrant staple in Chicago's queer community since the early 1990s. After a friend died of AIDS in 1991, Latham began selling pins, candy, red ribbons and other trinkets to raise money for Vital Bridges, a North Side agency that assists those living with HIV.

"I've been doing this for 20 years, and nothing's ever happened to me," Latham said. "I'm out late on the weekends. I'm always up by Jackhammer. No one has ever bothered me. Nobody. People have been really good to me; I don't know where these guys came from. I just don't know about people anymore."

Harris cracks down on abusive payday loan companies

House Bill 3935—state Rep. Greg Harris' measure aimed at cracking down on non-licensed illegal payday lenders—passed out of the Illinois House Feb. 22, according to a press release. It now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

"At a time when many families and individuals are just trying to keep the lights on and put food on the table, we find many fraudulent companies doing whatever is necessary to take advantage of them," Harris said. "This legislation will provide protections for Illinois residents against the illegal and abusive lenders who operate outside of the law."

Harris introduced the legislation after it was learned of unscrupulous loans offered to individuals over the Internet through foreign corporations, draining citizen's bank accounts with no legal recourse.

House Bill 3935 now moves on the Senate before it can be sent to the governor to be signed into law. For more information, call 773-348-3434 or e-mail greg@gregharris.org.

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Here comes the Dawn: Woman makes franchise history

BY SARAH TOCE

"Never be afraid to ask for help or for what you want. You might just get surprised and you might just get it all ... I did."—Dawn Lafreeda

Dawn Lafreeda successfully opened her own restaurant at the age of 23 and went on to become one of the top franchisees in U.S. history. The entrepreneur now owns 70 of Denny's restaurants in six states (Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Arkansas, and Oklahoma).

Windy City Times: A humble beginning often begets a daring passion for the unknown and a desire for success. How would you say you stood apart from other classmates your age when dreaming of your future place in the world?

DL: I was definitely far less fortunate than my other classmates, so I strived from a very young age to be successful and to make a better life for myself. I was forced to grow up quickly [and] was very mature for my age ... incredibly driven and always had the entrepreneurial spirit. I started working at age 10 and was always looking for ways to make money so I could get out of my situation. I spent my entire childhood visualizing a better life and dreaming big.

WCT: When you were 16 years old you took a job at Denny's as a hostess and, then, at 23, you bought your own restaurant (Hobo Joe's and Colony Kitchen—an acquisition of the Denny's brand). How did you know this was the right move for your burgeoning career at such an early age?

DL: I knew from a very young age [that] I would be self-employed. As a young girl, I recall sitting with my mother and [saying] to her, "One day I am going to own my own company and make a lot of money." She said to me, "Of course you are."

I always felt empowered and kept that dream. When the opportunity arose, I was a little scared and worried about failure, but my mom gave me the magic words that have forever changed my life: "What is the worst thing that can happen? You start over at 26?" That made all the sense in the world to me so I took the risk and I never looked back. I also never feared taking risks of any kind again, whether it be professionally or personally. To this day, whenever I am faced with a challenge I still ask myself, "What is the worst thing that can happen?"

WCT: Twenty-five years later, you now own 70 Denny's restaurants—making you possibly the top female franchisee in history. How do you keep your head on straight and continue

improving your brand when you must have so much responsibility to juggle? How does one manage it all?

DL: I don't know that I am the top female franchisee in history, but I do know it is a very small club. When you work in a 24-hour/365-day-a-year business, you have to keep your head on straight, as there is never down time. Something is always happening and the ramifications are too great should you let something slide. The type of business I am in requires a huge commitment and a lot of responsibility. It is a lot to juggle, but I am blessed with great organizational skills, a brand that has wonderful systems in place and, most importantly, an amazing team of people that help me do it all. They let me have the vision and—day in and day out, no matter what the task or challenge is—they always deliver and make it happen.

WCT: Financially speaking, was there a lot of convincing done on your part to attract initial investors?

DL: I am fortunate that I was able to build my company without any investor partners so I never had to go down that path. I did have to put together financial packages so that I could borrow money to build new restaurants. Early on that was a challenge, but as my company grew, it became easier. I bought my very first restaurant off credit cards, I re-invested everything I made and was able to turn it into a 70-unit restaurant operation with more than 2,500 employees.

WCT: Did you encounter any difficulties as you were climbing the ladder into that proverbial glass ceiling female entrepreneurs speak of so often?

DL: I did early on. I looked very young when I started out so no one took me seriously. They usually thought I was a waitress and never believed I actually owned the restaurants. I had trouble opening bank accounts, borrowing money, buying real estate, and so on. I was fortunate that Denny's corporate believed in me. They continued to offer me opportunities, they supported my growth and development and they still do today.

WCT: As a female entrepreneur myself, I often find it a bit tricky to balance the art of work and home life. How have you made this substantial collaboration work and, in that vein, has either aspect of your life taken a back seat at any given time?

DL: So many times that I have lost count. It is definitely a juggling act and I am certain that, at various times, either my family or my work suffers. I work very hard, but once I had children, I made the decision that I wanted to



Dawn Lafreeda. Photo courtesy of Lafreeda

spend as much time with them as possible. I wanted them to experience all the things I never got to experience and I wanted to be a part of it and share it with them. Being in six states and sitting on the board [of Denny's] often has me on the road so when I vacation with my family, I do my best to make it all about them.

On the other hand, when you have a tornado, a fire, a key player quits—you name it—your family takes a back seat. I must say, I have the best partner in the world. We have been together 18 years and she understands the business. When the family does have to take a back seat, she picks up the slack at home and completely supports me. It is a true partnership and she gives me the freedom I need to juggle the things needing the most attention at the time.

WCT: What has been your biggest hurdle professionally in the past five years?

DL: The financial crisis in 2008 was tough. There were several restaurants I wanted to buy and financing became almost extinct. It was very difficult to get money and if you did get it, the hoops you had to jump through were enormous. What once took a week to get approved was taking months and the cost of the money and loan terms were not favorable. For someone like me who likes to expand and develop, it felt like death. I am pleased to say this is no longer the case.

WCT: What has been your biggest hurdle personally in the past five years?

DL: Balancing my family life with work. My

partner and I have eight-year-old twin sons and I never feel I have enough time with them.

WCT: What is your involvement on a day-to-day basis within your franchise? Do you take more of a hands-on approach or run from afar?

DL: I am very involved every day in my business and I try to touch all parts of it. I don't think I am the type of person who can run [the business] from afar. I need to know what is going on in all departments. I don't need to know every detail, but I definitely have to be in the loop and informed.

WCT: Denny's is open to customers 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Do you struggle with working around the clock to keep up with company and employee needs, or are you able to turn off work mode when necessary?

DL: My 70 restaurants serve over 1 million guests per month so I am always on call. I have done this so many years now that I have learned how to turn it off. It doesn't mean I don't check my email or that I am unavailable; it just means that I know how to balance it so that I can sleep at night and have a quality of life. My VP of operations and I have worked together so long now that she knows when to give me the middle of the night call or if it is a situation that can wait until morning.

WCT: Your charitable contributions and in-

Turn to page 9

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Alderman to introduce trans CPD ordinance

BY KATE SOSIN

After more than two years of pushing by local organizations, Chicago Ald. Proco "Joe" Moreno is poised to introduce a transgender police ordinance to the City Council next month.

According to a fact sheet put out by veteran activist Rick Garcia and Anthony Martinez, executive director of The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA), the ordinance will mandate a policy for interacting with transgender detainees and set up a mayoral-appointed commission to oversee the treatment of transgender arrestees.

"It's a human-rights issue," said Moreno, who added that the ordinance is intended to address a "hole in the policy of the police of Chicago."

The policy comes after years of complaints from transgender people who have reported being harassed or misgendered by police officers.

Moreno said he hopes the ordinance will tackle distrust of police widely felt among transgender communities.

"We can't expect our police department to deal with a segment of the population if they're not trained in how that segment wants to be addressed," he said.

The Lakeview Action Coalition (LAC) began talks about writing a CPD policy approximately two years ago when they received a report from a transgender woman who said she had been arrested for solicitation while trying to grocery shop.

"The reality is that the most vulnerable people are the ones most frequently interacting with the police," said Jennifer Ritter, executive director of LAC. "The police don't have the proper tools, which is what I think brings them to the table with us."

Martinez cited a recent survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality that asserts that 46 percent of respondents did not feel comfortable asking the police for assistance.

"In Chicago, we've heard from folks who have

experienced harassment [by police] specifically for being transgender," he said.

Transgender people have reported being denied access to hormones while behind bars and being placed according to their birth gender in jail facilities, even when doing so might put them at risk for violence.

LAC's policy work was inspired by pre-existing policies around the country—most notably Washington, D.C., which has had a transgender police policy for the last five years. Martinez said that activists found one major flaw in the D.C. policy—it lacked oversight from the community, making enforcement precarious.

If passed, the ordinance would establish an 11-person volunteer commission to oversee CPD handling of the policy. Six of its members would be representatives of the transgender community while five would represent CPD. Members would serve four-year terms.

The LGBT citywide coalition of 30 groups has signed on in support of the plan.

Moreno said that getting support for the ordinance may be a challenge, but he argued the ordinance is necessary.

The ordinance was slated to be introduced Feb. 15, but Moreno held off, he said, in favor of continuing talks with police and other aldermen.

According to Max Bever, a spokesperson for gay 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney, aldermanic sponsors will be meeting in the coming week to strategize on the ordinance. James Cappleman, the openly gay alderman of the 46th Ward, could not be reached immediately for comment.

The ordinance could be part of the legacy of transgender activist Lois Bates, who died in November 2011 at age 41. Bates, who many referred to as the "mother" of Chicago's transgender community, was active in the policy's initial conception as part of her work with LAC, and she fought to garner support for policy in its early stages.

Bob Green, ex of anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant, dies

BY KATE SOSIN

Bob Green, a man whose fame was made in the shadows of anti-gay activist Anita Bryant died Jan. 26 in Miami at age 80, according to the Bellingham Herald. Green spent two decades married to Bryant and joined her in her campaign against gay rights.

Green, a radio DJ, married Bryant in 1960, at a time when her music career was just taking off.

According to Bryant's biography on the Anita Bryant Ministries International website, the marriage "introduced into Anita's life a tumultuous relationship—each were strong-willed. Bob became a Christian on the night before their wedding."

Green began managing Bryant's career and the two traveled the country together.

When Bryant was initially told she could not have children, the couple adopted a baby boy in 1963, Robert Elnar Green Jr. The son currently works as a copy editor in Chicago. Green Jr. did not immediately respond to a request to comment.

Bryant and Green had three other children together: twins Billy and Barbara, and Gloria Lynn, all by birth.

Green was at Bryant's side as she took on the gay-rights movement. The couple battled the Dade County, Fla., ordinance that banned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In 1997, the ordinance was overturned.

By then, Bryant and Green had become symbols of the anti-gay movement, working against gay protections around the country. But their efforts tarnished their images and cost Bryant her job as the spokeswoman for the Florida Citrus Commission.

According to the media reports, the battle also caused the unraveling of their marriage.

In 1980, after almost 20 years of marriage, Bryant announced she was divorcing Green.

According to People magazine, Green issued a plea for Bryant to reconcile. "Let us both put aside all other earthly considerations," he wrote, "and reunite in Christian love."

Bryant remarried in 1990, while Green remained alone.

According to the Bellingham Herald, Green was on kidney dialysis at the time of his death and had been suffering heart problems.

First trans pride event coming to Chicago

BY KATE SOSIN

Come July, Chicagoans will celebrate the city's first pride celebration for transgender and gender-variant people.

Transgender Gender non-conforming Intersex Freedom (better known as T.G.I.F.) is scheduled for July 29 in Union Park and is believed to be the city's first transgender pride event.



KOKUMO.

According to KOKUMO, a local transgender activist and the lead organizer, the four-hour event will feature a speak-out, a keynote address, poetry, skits, a rally and a picnic.

"It's just a matter of giving voice to transgender non-conforming intersex people, in particular youth of color," KOKUMO said.

The event—sponsored by KOKUMO's personal media project, KOKUMOMEDIA—lists collaborating organizations as Dyke March, Affinity Community Services, Southwest Youth Collaborative, Center on Halsted, Broadway Youth Center, About Face Theater and others.

However, the event, while intended to supplement pride events that focus on gay and lesbian lives, is not exactly a pride event, she said. "It's actually becoming a festival," she said, adding that the event will be both celebratory and political. "I really feel a big part of it is empowering TGI people of color."

The group is currently raising funds for the event. They are planning a fundraiser in March, the details of which are yet to be announced.

Search Facebook at "T.G.I.F. (trans, gnc, and intersex freedom) Rally and Picnic."

DENNY'S from page 8

vestments in the community are very flattering in light of the current economic stress the U.S. has encountered. Personally, which organizations are closest to your heart?

DL: I am particularly passionate about the Family Equality Council. I learned about the organization while on an R Family Vacations and instantly knew I wanted to be involved. Family Equality Council works at the federal, state and local levels to create a world where all loving families are recognized, respected and protected.

I am also very involved with Equality Texas, Special Olympics and Big Brothers, Big Sisters. My partner is equally (if not more) passionate about giving. Years ago, she noticed I was giving little bits to so many groups that I was probably not being effective. Since she came from a non-profit background, she was able to help me and together we now pick the organizations that are nearest to both of our hearts. We have a formal method for giving and now, hopefully, we are making a difference.

WCT: Have you discovered that the Denny's brand philosophy is in line with your own personal convictions? As a franchisee, how much control do you have over this aspect?

DL: Yes definitely. If we weren't in line it would be hard to continue to grow and develop restaurants for them. I believe in their philosophy, their strategy and all that this iconic brand stands for. After all, it was because of Denny's that I was given a chance and an opportunity and, as a result, I am their largest sole owned franchisee. I am truly living the American Dream. Yes, I am in line!

As franchisees, we buy into a concept so we don't have a lot of control over their philosophy. I am fortunate that I sit on the Denny's Franchisee Association Board so while I don't have control over what the brand does, I do have a voice. I also think Denny's respects that I have a very large investment in the brand. They frequently invite me to participate in groups and sit on committees that help make decisions for the entire brand.

Following is a list of the Denny's owned by Dawn Lafreeda in the Chicago area:

- 4609 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge, Ill., 60656
- 4824 N. River Rd., Schiller Park, Ill., 60176
- 126 Frontage Rd., Bolingbrook, Ill., 60440
- 975 E. Dundee Rd., Palatine, Ill., 60067
- 890 Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills, Ill., 60061
- #20 Orland Square Dr., Orland Park, Ill., 60462

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COMPILED BY KATE SOSIN

Rebecca Kling

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Life's work

"I'm a performance artist, focusing primarily on self-written solo work exploring gender, sexuality, and identity. A big part of my motivation in the work that I do is the idea of, well, if no one else is going to tell my story then I have to."

When did you start questioning gender?

"I can't remember a time when I wasn't questioning gender. From as early as I can remember having a concept of gender, I knew 'male' wasn't right for me. It took me a long time to realize that "female" was right for me, and even longer to act on that realization, but I can't remember a time when gender seemed simple and this-or-that. Two check boxes have never felt adequate or complete to me."

What is the best thing about being trans/gender-variant?

"Being trans has forced me to question my identity and how I present myself and interact with the world. That's been extremely difficult at times, and sometimes it would be nice to feel like I could easily fit into a box or an identity or a style of presenting myself. At the same time, I know I am who I am because I choose to be, not because I'm forced to be."



To nominate a person for T in the life, email: Kate Sosin
sosin@windycitytimes.com

"I also feel I'm on the way to being exceptionally at home in my body. I understand my body in a way that my cisgender (non-transgender) friends sometimes don't seem to get. This becomes particularly apparent around sexuality - I know exactly what my body likes and doesn't like because I've put extremely long hours into deciphering what my body means to me. I think lots of queer folks go through that experience, so I'm not trying to say "Only trans people can know their bodies," but I think being trans often forces the issue."

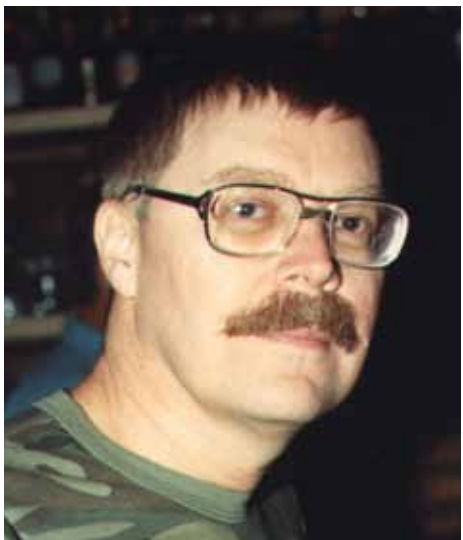
Do you have a coming out story?

"When I came out to my parents, around the age of fourteen, my mom said, 'We will love you, no matter what.' My dad said, 'We'll love you whatever you are, as long as you're not a Republican.' I'm really fortunate in that way: I never had to doubt my parents' love. At the same time, their love didn't mean they necessarily understood."

How do you explain the way you feel about gender to others?

"More broadly, gender is both socially constructed and innate. If it weren't socially constructed, if it were purely innate and biological, all societies across all times in history would have the exact same idea of 'man' and 'woman.' That's obviously not true. Even in the last fifty years, women wearing pants has gone from something to be talked about to something commonplace. In the end, gender is what each individual decides it is, for them."

Remembrance for Paul Varnell April 15



Paul Varnell. Photo by Rex Wockner

Friends of the late Chicago-based gay columnist Paul Varnell will celebrate his life in an event Sunday, April 15, at 2 p.m. at the Etienne Auditorium of the Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave.. See <http://varnell.lionwood.com/> for more details.

The website states, "Paul has been variously described as a Renaissance Man, a curmudgeon, brusque, one of the kindest and most compassionate men alive, conservative, libertarian, a gay activist and advocate, a journalist, social commentator, art critic and enormously multifaceted. In fact, he was all of these things and much more. Paul passed from this life on December 9th, 2011 and it is overdue that those who knew, admired and even loved him gather together to share remembrances, console one another and mark the passing of a dear friend, colleague and citizen."

The organizers of this event, Milan Vydareny and Gregory Nigosian, are still finalizing details.

As details of the memorial program and possible dinner event become available they will be posted to the website.

Varnell, a longtime columnist for the gay press, died Dec. 9 of complications from pneumonia and a stroke. He was 70.

Varnell held nontraditional jobs and began his activism in full force in Chicago. He was a board member of Parents and Friends of Gays in Chicago from 1983 to 1984; chaired the Media Committee of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force from 1983 to 1990 (for part of that time he was also IGLTF's research director); was a member of the Chicago AIDS Task Force from 1982 to 1990; was a co-founder of CARGO, the Chicago Area Gay Republican Organization, in 1984; and helped to promote the Gay History Month founding in 1994. (Some sources list him as co-founder, but he was not a founder of the event, although he was very supportive of the efforts.)

Varnell was also appointed by Dr. Bernard Turnock, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, to its AIDS Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee in 1985. (He also lobbied for the creation of that committee.) When Varnell was appointed, GayLife reported in its Dec. 5, 1985, edition that Varnell "had one of the best records of attendance at meetings of the Chicago Area AIDS Task Force. He has been in relentless communication with representative[s] of Abbott Labs, the New York Native, and other prominent organizations at the forefront of AIDS research."

Varnell, who eventually turned his activism and letter-writing campaigns into a regular columnist role with Windy City Times newspaper, joined with fellow gay columnist Rex Wockner of the competing Outlines newspaper for a moment of journalist activism in 1989.

See the original obituary at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Writer-activist-Paul-Varnell-dies/35183.html.



Merry Mary. Photo by Israel Wright

Memorial service for Merry Mary March 11

A community memorial service will be held Sunday, March 11, for activist and ally Merry Mary, who died Dec. 30, 2011, after a short battle with cancer. She was 77.

The memorial will be 2-4 p.m., at Cellblock bar, 3702 N. Halsted St. Mary was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a friend of the community in 2005. The honor was based on her dedication as a volunteer to numerous LGBT health and cultural groups, starting in 1979.

Mary was especially passionate about the city's two gay choruses, Windy City Gay Chorus (under the umbrella of Windy City Performing Arts, or WCPA) and Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (CGMC), and the Chi-Town Squares. Other groups that benefited from her volunteer work included Howard Brown Health Center, the NAMES Project, Unison, Dignity/Chicago, Archdiocesan Gay and Lesbian Outreach, Little Brothers-Friends of

WCT seeks nominations for 30 Under 30

CHICAGO—Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for its annual 30 Under 30 Awards.

Nominees should be 30 years or under as of June 30, 2012, and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, sports or other areas.

The deadline to nominate individuals is Friday, April 20.

Individuals, organizations, co-workers, etc. can nominate a person by e-mailing Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or faxed to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609. Self-nominations are welcome.

The nomination should be 100 words or fewer, and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information and the age of the nominee.

Note: Following the policy instituted in 2005, individuals can only win once. Those have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards.

Honorees will be notified in May and recognized at a free ceremony Thursday, June 28, at 5:30 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

the Elderly and Vital Bridges' GroceryLand Pantry.

Her first volunteer work in the community was in 1979 with what was then known as Howard Brown Memorial Clinic. In 1987, she was honored with HBMC's Friend for Life award and in February 2005 the clinic honored her for 25 years of volunteering.

See the full obit at www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/PASSAGES-Community-ally-Merry-Mary-dies/35468.html.

Santiago among CFW's 2012 Impact honorees

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) has announced the honorees of its 2012 Impact Awards.

The awards will be presented Thursday, March 15, at the Venue SIX10 at Spertus Institute. The reception is at 6 p.m., and the awards ceremony is at 7 p.m.

Among the 10 awards is a posthumous one to local lesbian activist Christina Santiago, who died last year. Among the other honorees are Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer, attorney Katherine M. Schon and lawyer/former Personal PAC Chair Jerry Newton.

For more information and tickets, see <http://www.cfw.org>.

Gay Latino authors featured at March 2 event

The Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) and the HIV/AIDS agency Vida/SIDA are co-hosting "Una Noche de Orgullo y Cultura" ("A Night of Pride and Culture") Friday, March 2, 6:30-9:30 p.m., at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, 3015 W. Division St.

The event will feature gay Latino authors Jesus Ramirez-Valles, Alfonso Ramirez and Charles Rice Gonzalez. There will be book-readings, a gay-art exhibit and a silent auction.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Call 773-661-0926 or visit www.ALMACHicago.org.



Tomas Soto

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROSS FORMAN



Tomas Soto tackled the Chicago Triathlon last Aug. 28 with a lot on his mind—and not just that it was his first tri ever.

"I've lost many, many close friends in this 30-year fight against AIDS and I wanted to honor them, as well as honoring my close friends who are currently living with HIV," said Soto, who trained for the tri with the Team To End AIDS (T2), the endurance-training program of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC). "[Plus], the date of the triathlon, Aug. 28, was the one-year anniversary of my neck surgery for cervical stenosis.

"In August 2010, I was laid up wearing a neck brace 24/7 with minimal strength in my right tricep. Although I wasn't at 100-percent strength [during the triathlon] in my right triceps, it was a milestone in re-claiming my health."

Soto also raised nearly \$5,000 for AFC, thanks to the support of family and friends.

"I decided to start competing in triathlon at the age of 50 through T2 for many reasons," Soto said. "First, the fight against AIDS isn't over. While progress has been made, the epidemic is far from over, and HIV/AIDS budget cuts loom in the future."

Soto has worked at AFC for almost five years.

"AFC is a professional organization that still maintains a community-based feel," Soto said. "The projects I evaluate I find very interesting. We focus on real world solutions to better the lives of the clients we serve. I also get the opportunity to work with some bright, motivated co-workers who share a similar passion to social justice, and a strong desire to make a difference.

"I know that things can get kind of crazy when we need to submit a federal grant on short deadlines. There's lots of running around, little sleep, and long hours. That said, it's a great feeling when we do get awarded a new grant; it's something you need to experience."

Before joining AFC, Soto was working in academics and doing independent consulting, but needed a change.

"We work hard, but also play hard," at AFC, Soto said. "I can always count on somebody making me laugh after a long day at work."



**Thursday, March 1
7:30 p.m.
Claire Bidwell Smith
The Rules of Inheritance:
A Memoir**

**Carol Anshaw
Tuesday, March 6
7:30 p.m.
Carry the One
Simon & Schuster
Swedish American
Museum Center
5211 N. Clark St.**



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Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois

Age
50

Neighborhood
Roscoe Village

Relationship status
Partnered

Job title
Director of research, evaluation & data services; AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Hobbies
Working out, Brazilian jujitsu

Favorite local restaurant
Rio's

Cannot live without
"My partner and my dogs"

Cubs or White Sox
Cubs

It's a fact
Won a gold medal in martial arts at the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam

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Freedom to Marry event about progress, journey



Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)



BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

For 11 years Lambda Legal has hosted a Freedom To Marry reception in Chicago. The free event held on Feb. 22 is open to the general public to raise awareness about the marriage rights under state and federal laws that are not afforded to same-sex couples.

Lambda Legal has been organizing around marriage equality for more than 10 years. Each year, the Freedom to Marry reception has been a marker for many in the LGBT community of the progress or lack thereof around the issue of marriage. Since the civil-unions bill passed in Illinois last year, it has been reported that close to 4,000 same-sex couples have held ceremonies across the state. Recently, Maryland and Washington joined six other states to allow gay couples to marry and the Obama administration announcement last year that the Department of Justice would no longer defend the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

The National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA) in Pilsen has been the venue of choice for the past four years. "We moved here because when we began the civil unions fight we had some Reps and Senators telling us that they could support us if they had gays or lesbians in their district, but they just didn't," explained Jim Bennett, Midwest regional director at Lambda Legal.

When the civil-union bill went into effect in Illinois June 1, 2011, Lambda Legal partnered with Equality Illinois to create a "Illinois Civil Union Tracker." The database has allowed both organizations to approximate how many couples have taken advantage of the new law as well as collect other demographic information. Lambda Legal used this database to invite couples to a VIP reception an hour ahead of the event.

One of those couples, Shanelle and Tenisha Moffett, participated with over 30 other couples in a public civil-union ceremony at Millennium Park last summer. "Event though we are in a lesbian relationship, I still have old school values, I still believe in marriage," said Shanelle. She added that it was important for her to have a civil union because it allowed her family and co-workers to take their relationship more seriously.

Jennifer Kirk and Cecilia Flores attended the cocktail reception because they wanted to get more information. Both got a civil union last November and still have many questions. "We don't really know how to go about certain situations, like filing taxes and what other benefits we get as a couple now," said Kirk.

Rosa Yadira Ortiz, community educator at Lambda Legal, introduced Johana Morelli, who spoke about the importance of educating straight allies. Morelli's brother and partner have a daughter together and are in a civil union. Morelli said she was not informed about the rights that they didn't have and says that this is part of the problem. "A lot of people don't know. I think there probably are not so many people that are opposed; it's more ignorance," she said.

Playwright Coya Paz entertained the crowd by reading a piece on non-traditional families. Guests enjoyed food by Las Dos Fridas, desserts by Sweets by Lulu and a complimentary open bar.

Guide to the gays

The March 20 primary elections feature several openly gay and lesbian candidates for office. (All of the candidates are in the Democratic party.)



Paula Basta

Race: State House (14th District)
Web site: PaulaBasta.org

The skinny: This increasingly contentious race between Basta and incumbent state Rep. Kelly Cassidy took on intrigue because it's possibly the first political contest in the state pitting two out lesbians against each other. (On Jan. 19, for example, Basta's campaign issued a press release accusing Cassidy of implying through a phone-survey question that Basta's campaign was in violation of federal law.) Basta's website highlights her LGBT-related accomplishments and "deep understanding of the intricacies of aging and City services."



Kelly Cassidy

Race: State House (14th District)
Web site: CitizensForKellyCassidy.com

The skinny: Once a part of the Cook County state's attorney's office, Cassidy became a state representative in May 2011 after Harry Osterman stepped down to successfully run for alderman. Recently, she has protested library cutbacks, and helped introduce a marriage-equality bill and a gender-identity amendment.



Greg Harris

Race: Illinois State Representative (13th District)
Web site: GregHarris.org

The skinny: Harris, who is openly HIV-positive as well as being openly gay, has represented his district (which includes Uptown, Ravenswood, Lincoln Square, North Center and Bowmanville) since being elected in 2006. Although his name has appeared most prominently in LGBT publications in connection with the issue of marriage equality (introducing a civil-marriage bill), he is intimately involved with a host of other issues, such as the state budget, foreclosure mediation, children of incarcerated parents and insurance reform. He is currently running unopposed.



Deb Mell

Race: Illinois State Representative (40th District)
Web site: DebMell.org

The skinny: Deb Mell started her first term making history as the first open lesbian in the Illinois General Assembly—and then did something historic in being the only representative to vote against impeachment of then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich, her brother-in-law. A staunch advocate for marriage equality, Mell is running unopposed in the primary, although it looks like she'll face Republican Antoinette "Toni" Puccio-Johnson in the general election.



Mary Trew

Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Ninth Subcircuit, Epstein vacancy)
Web site: www.VoteTrew.com

The skinny: When she was the executive director of Domestic Violence Legal Clinic, she helped create one of the nation's first on-site civil court clinics for orders of protection in the Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse. In November 2010, Trew was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to the James R. Epstein 9th Subcircuit Vacancy.



John Ehrlich

Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Eighth Subcircuit, Cole vacancy)
Web site: EhrlichForJudge.com

The skinny: Another race pitting two out candidates is a judicial one involving John Ehrlich and Brad Trowbridge. As deputy corporation counsel in the City of Chicago's law department, Ehrlich oversees almost three dozen attorneys and a staff of 15. He's personally handled cases such as the Wrightwood porch collapse and the E2 nightclub tragedy.

Brad Trowbridge

Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Eighth Subcircuit, Cole vacancy)
Website: BradForJudge.com

The skinny: On his website, Trowbridge discusses his legal and counseling/social service experience, and has worked at agencies such as the Northwestern University Counseling Center and the AIDS Legal Council. He also authored the "Alternate Family Relations and Civil Unions in Illinois" chapter for Illinois State Bar Association Family Law Handbook.

Alex Arroyo

Race: State House (84th District)
Web site: Arroyo2012.com

The skinny: Arroyo was born and raised in Aurora. The former chair of the Aurora Democratic Party is an active union member in good standing with the Association of Flight Attendants-Communications Workers of America. Arroyo also sits on the board of directors of the Illinois Coalition of Community Services in Springfield.

Mike Forti

Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (Simmons vacancy)
Web site: MichaelFortiForJudge.com

The skinny: Forti has been practicing law for more than three decades and has been with the City of Chicago's law department for 17 years. In an interview with Windy City Times, he said, "This is not an instance where people have to pick either someone that is highly qualified someone that is a member of the LGBT community. I think that people in the LGBT community want and deserve both, just like the rest of the population."

John Dalton

Race: 16th Circuit Court, Kane, "A" vacancy
Web site: JohnDaltonForJudge.com

The skinny: Dalton—who would be the first openly gay judge elected outside of Cook County if he prevails—has been an arbitration chairman for more than a decade and an attorney for more than two decades. Dalton plans to fund his campaign without accepting donations from attorneys—a rare position among Illinois judicial candidates. Also, Dalton is an active member of Elgin's First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Debra Shore

Race: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District board
Web site: DebraShore.org

The skinny: Shore has been on the board since 2006. One of nine elected commissioners, she chairs the committees on stormwater management and state legislation and rules. Fun fact: Shore has climbed 42 of the 54 mountains in Colorado more than 14,000 feet high.

Andrea M. Schleifer

Race: Cook County Circuit Court Judge (12th Subcircuit, Rochford vacancy)
Web site: ElectJudgeSchleifer.org

The skinny: A resident of Des Plaines, Schleifer (a member of the LGBT organization the Alliance of Illinois Judges) has been serving as a Cook County judge at the Richard J. Daley Center for more than a year. She is currently hearing custody/visitation and child support matters, and is responsible for more than 6,400 cases.

There are also LGBTs running as presidential delegates, including for President Barack Obama. Those include Gail Morse, Ald. Tom Tunney, Debra Shore and Center on Halsted's Modesto "Tico" Valle.

Anti-gay former state rep. Penny Pullen is running as a Santorum delegate.



AIDS Foundation of Chicago: Looking at 2012 and beyond

BY JOE FRANCO

David Munar took over as president and CEO of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) in early 2011. While the overall mission of AFC has changed little since the organization's inception, the implementation of that mission is modern, fresh and ready for the new age of AIDS and HIV.

According to Munar, AFC aims to "improve the lives of those living with HIV and AIDS through the promotion of public advocacy, the promotion of fundraising efforts like Team to End AIDS and Dance 4 Life, the coordination of all stakeholders in the general welfare of those living with HIV/AIDS, to provide housing to prevent HIV and reduce the public's risk and to increase the visibility of those living with AIDS and increase the visibility of those fighting against HIV and AIDS."

This year and the next two years promise to be the most challenging for AFC since the organization's founding.

"The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) goes into full effect in 2014. AFC is strategizing as we speak to determine what this new law will bring to the table for those living with HIV and AIDS. Currently, more than half of those with HIV and AIDS have no access to quality healthcare," said Munar.

"I should distinguish PPACA from the Ryan White Care Act," he said. "The Ryan White Act provided over \$2 billion in national funding last year to AIDS-related agencies. But the future of that continuing funding is in doubt."

With the current climate in Congress, it is very possible that the Ryan White Care Act could be completely phased out, its budget slashed sharply or even kept at current funding levels. But with PPACA, many more individuals who

would not normally qualify for benefits under Medicare and Medicaid would, according to the Act's mandates, qualify for care. As Munar put it, "It's a landscape of change. Our duty at AFC is to rethink how to improve our position in light of that landscape."

Munar foresees a closer partnership with community centers to better understand the changing needs of those with HIV and AIDS as well as those with an increased risk of exposure.

"PPACA will actually strengthen the focus on community health centers," he said. "Good clinical care and treatment can dramatically improve the health of those with AIDS and HIV. The community health centers are a key way that we can curb infections."

Munar pointed to AFC's new partnership with Heartland Alliance in the creation of The Bridge Project. Now in its eleventh month of operation, the bridge project focuses on men of color from the South Side who have already been diagnosed or who are at extreme risk for infection of HIV and AIDS. "This is a great example of AFC working with a community-based organization for testing and prevention as well as care. We would love to see the project expand. It's making a definitive impact," said Munar.

Currently Munar and the AFC are working to finalize the organization's three-year strategic plan.

"We've spent the past year gathering data, hosting focus groups and speaking with those populations who are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS. We've also spoken to the 'stakeholders.' That's not only those living with HIV but lawmakers as well who have a stake in the state of public health," said Munar.

The AFC has already made huge gains politically lobbying for efforts to get HIV and AIDS care recognized. "The AFC lobbied for three



David Munar, president and CEO of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. Photos courtesy of AFC

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A logo for AIDS education.



David Munar with Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

years to get a National AIDS Plan and in 2010, we got just that. The State of Illinois also has adopted a statewide plan and Chicago, as part of its 'Healthy Chicago' initiative also has a plan in place for HIV and AIDS prevention, education and care. It is AFC's collective efforts that keep the public focused on results," said Munar.

The upcoming year will also keep AFC busy investigating and working more closely with "those populations disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS." AFC plans to concentrate its resources where new HIV infection is most pronounced.

Munar's own questions regarding these populations are, "Are we reaching those affected effectively?" and "How can we better target those populations who are affected by HIV/AIDS?"

Munar admitted that these populations represented a noticeable shift in the direction of the thought process of AFC as a whole.

AFC also has numerous visibility and fundrais-

ing efforts planned for 2012.

"On March 27, Pulitzer Prize-winner Tony Kushner will be on hand to celebrate the opening of Angels in America at the Court Theatre in Hyde Park. AFC is the beneficiary for tickets sold on April 14. We have, as always, the Team 2 Ends AIDS and their various events throughout the year. Dance 4 Life will be returning to another sensational year at the Auditorium Theatre. This year we're also very excited about the AIDS Run and Walk on Sept. 29, which begins in Soldier Field. Toward the end the year we plan on commemorating World AIDS Day on Nov. 29 with a chocolatier exhibition for charity."

Munar certainly has a full plate of work ahead of him. Still, he remains focused on the mission of AFC—to improve the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS. "That is what we are constantly working towards," he said.

See aidschicago.org.

Dr. David Ostrow: Following the trajectory of AIDS

BY KATE SOSIN

In 2011, Dr. David Ostrow marked two 30-year anniversaries. The first was the discovery of the virus that started his life's work. The second was the infection of that virus in his own body, although he did not discover that until half a decade later.

It is nearly impossible to tell the story of AIDS in Chicago, or nationally for that matter, without Ostrow, a founding member of Howard Brown Health Center and an inspiration behind the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), the oldest and largest HIV/AIDS study to date. And while he concedes he is "always involved in controversy," his imprint on the city's LGBT community will last well beyond his impending retirement.

Ostrow was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in New Jersey. Itching to get out of his hometown, he came to Chicago in 1965 to attend the University of Chicago.

What he found there was a hotbed of political activism. It was there that Ostrow met Quentin Young, the activist physician who went on to head the American Public Health Association and the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board.

Influenced by the socially conscious doctors around him, Ostrow volunteered his skills as a medic during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, an event that went into the history books as a bloody crackdown on political protest. Ostrow still remembers the sound and sights of the protest.

All of the sudden it just exploded between the cracks of these clubs on people's heads and the flash of reporters," he remembered. "It became a war zone."

The protest had a profound effect on Ostrow, who with other medics, treated more than 500 protesters. An activist from that point forward, Ostrow began taking on social justice issues in his medical work.

Still closeted, he joined a group of university students in starting the Gay Medical Student Association in 1972. The group put an advertisement in a local paper advertising an unlisted phone number, which Ostrow had installed in his Hyde Park apartment.

People called Ostrow seeking advice on STDs, coming out and other LGBT issues they couldn't ask straight doctors about. Ostrow counseled them through the questions, which he was not always prepared to answer. Ostrow himself was still coming out as gay.

Around the same time, a group called Gay Horizons was opening a coffee shop near Diversey and Clark. The organization reached out to Ostrow and team and suggested they open up an STD testing clinic in the same building.

"We had no money," Ostrow said. "We had to steal whatever supplies. When I say steal, I mean we had to get samples from drug reps."

Ostrow dragged his kitchen table up to the North Side, and in 1974, Chicago's first clinic serving LGBT people opened.

The Gay VD (venereal disease) testing site, as it was called then, was not an easy operation. It took convincing to get the city health department to process test samples. A code had to be created so that patient samples could be identified without outing them as gay.

The group ran the clinic every Wednesday night until a \$10,000 insurance fine landed on them. Until then, the students had been working without malpractice insurance, but as their work grew, so too did the risk. By 1975, it was unavoidable. They would have to raise the \$10,000 or cease operation.

It was an opportunity for Ostrow and team to create something larger than a weekly clinic, and Chicago's gay community rallied behind them. The money was raised, and a clinic was renamed in honor of Dr. Howard Brown (1924-1975), a gay New York City Health Services Administrator who co-founded what became the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

After founding Howard Brown Memorial Clinic (now called Howard Brown Health Center), Ostrow would go on to make a name for himself nationally as an HIV advocate and physician, particularly in the area of psychosocial health.

It was Ostrow who successfully pushed for the start of the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), the longest running and most extensive HIV/AIDS research study to date. He was part of the team at the University of Michigan that started the Coping and Change Study, which tracked mental and behavioral responses to HIV using MACS data. Ostrow published hundreds of articles, several books and won numerous awards in his long career.

He also served as director for STOP AIDS Chicago, worked in psychiatry at Illinois Masonic Medical Center and taught at University of Illinois School of Public Health.

In the midst of his efforts, while out West at a conference on AIDS, Ostrow became ill.

"I remember being sick with flu-like symptoms," he said. It was an ominous sign.

The year was 1986, and doctors who tested Ostrow determined that he had likely been positive with HIV since the winter of 1981. He was living Michigan at the time he was sick, and his sister flew out to be with him.

He describes the diagnosis as "catastrophic." It eventually led to the end his long-term relationship at that time.



Left: Dr. David Ostrow circa late 1980s. From the Outlines newspaper archives. Right: Dr. David Ostrow in 2012, at his Lakeview home. Photo by Kate Sosin

"There was no effective treatment, but there was lots of stigma," Ostrow said. "I was pretty devastated."

Ostrow decided not to go on the early medications. He felt his immune system was strong enough to keep the virus in check, and he had seen those who went on early drugs die. So, he bided his time for a better option, a decision that he now thinks saved his life.

Ostrow's work eventually earned him a place in the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1997, where he is described as "a bold, innovative leader in addressing critical issues of gay men's health."

But his career has hardly been simple nor without tumult, something he readily admits. "I'm always involved in controversy, whatever it is," he said.

His latest is his fierce support for medical marijuana. His past controversies include being ousted from Howard Brown Health Center, a pattern that continued with his involvement with other organizations.

"I have been criticized for being pushy and wanting to do things my way," he said.

But Ostrow appears hardly concerned with clearing his name. He wants to talk about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), the controversial

method of preventing HIV infection by giving HIV medications to HIV-negative people.

Unlike many who have rushed in support of PrEP or rallied against it, Ostrow is optimistic but cautious.

"We don't have all that much information about how it's going to work at a population level," he said. "Any new preventative medical technology will be accessed by those who least need it first and those who most need it last."

Ostrow worries about sexual behaviors in a community fast forgetting the AIDS epidemic that ravaged the community 30 years ago. He is also concerned about what it means to age with HIV, something he has studied as lead of behavioral health on the MACS and something he is facing personally now.

Ostrow, for the first time in his life, is slowing down. On his sunny porch in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, surrounded by his garden, he marvels at the progress made in the fight against AIDS.

"I never thought we would have treatments that are as effective as they are for AIDS," he said.

Ostrow, a man who the odds predicted to die two decades ago, is soon to celebrate retirement.



A Feb. 1986 Windy City Times article about the Chicago Area AIDS Task Force and Ostrow's controversial role in a separate group run by Health Commissioner Lonnie Edwards.

Dr. Carl Bell seeks to revolutionize HIV prevention and treatment

BY JOE FRANCO

When asked, Dr. Carl Bell defined a "family" as a "network of mutual commitment." The National Institute of Mental Health uses this same definition.

This definition is one that most aptly applies to the types of "families" that LGBTQ individuals create as well as many of those in marginalized racial, social and economic groups.

Bell and Willo Pequegnat co-edited a collection of essays *Family and HIV/AIDS: Cultural and Contextual Issues in Prevention and Treatment*, by Springer books.

The book's main premise is that there is "evidence that family strengthening-prevention intervention can increase the likelihood that youth can be prevented from engaging in risky behaviors that lead to HIV infections."

Bell compared this type of social intervention strategy to the same kind of strategies adopted by Jane Addams more than 100 years ago in Chicago.

"After the Chicago fire, there were large waves of European immigrants coming to the city," Bell said. "As it turned out, the domestic homicide rate was 75% higher in those immigrant communities than in other communities. Jane Addams developed settlement houses. These individuals learned socio-emotional skills. For example, if you find out your wife might be cheating on you, it is not a good idea to kill her. The children of these disrupted and fragmented families were also affected."

Bell further explained that a juvenile brain first develops the limbic system. This is the same system that causes a human's fright, flight or fight response. Although Addams did not know it then, this overdeveloped limbic system and underdeveloped frontal lobe of the children of troubled families was exactly what she was dealing with at the turn of the last century.

"Children under the age of 26 are all gasoline but have no brakes and no steering wheel," Bell said. "Brakes and a steering wheel during these younger ages are found within the community and within their families. Read any ancient literature and those people knew that, though they did not know the biology behind it, they still knew it."

In essence, families that better monitor their children's behavior, teach children appropriate social and emotional skills, and improve the personal relationship between "parent" and child, keeping those children protected from trauma and victimization, like bullying and domestic violence, have a better chance at preventing HIV than "families" who suffer a dearth of these essential skills.

"If a kid is going to engage in risky behavior, it doesn't matter what race or socio-economic status they hail from," Bell said. "It's all the same kid. It is up to the adults to improve their communication and connectivity with children. If you're going to pursue anything serious in your life, you need a team. Changing behavior is extraordinarily difficult."

"When you're younger, you don't know what the hell you're doing. You may understand the difference between right and wrong but you haven't developed the capacity to weigh the consequences of your actions."

Bell pointed out seven field principles, as he called them, that can help not only actual parents strengthen their families but can also work within the self-created families of LGBTQ individuals.

"These principles will only work if they are



Dr. Carl Bell. Publicity photo

both deliberate and intentional," said Bell. First, we need connectivity to each other. Second, we need access to both ancient and modern science and technology. Third, we need a sense of self-esteem. Fourth, we need social and emotional support and skill building. Fifth, children and young adults need protective adult shields. Sixth, we need to be sure to minimize the trauma of young people. And finally, we need to rebuild the "village" and reweave the social fabric of a community.

These principles are based on research done in South African communities as well as on the many decades of field research from Bell himself. "We went to South Africa to help and the Zulu people basically asked, 'Who the hell are you?' We're Americans. So we have money. If you want some of it, you'll calm down and listen. As it turns out, the principles worked," Bell said.

Bell found that young people who engage in risk-taking behavior more often than not come from social groups that are products of "multiple deficiencies." Bell opined that, "Whether you're Black, gay, poor, a female or an immigrant, you can either conform to that deficit or you can observe, 'I am being denigrated and only I will define who I am. What happens to me does not define who I am.' This is taking a frontal lobe picture, an adult picture as opposed to taking a limbic or young adult or child's picture."

It does "take a village" to raise our children and Bell's research and theories are now finding that when done properly, these children, with the proper direction from their "families," not only are less likely to contract HIV, but that this involved a host of other societal ills that also

are less likely to be present.

"When we wrap these kids up in a homeland community system, like when we say, 'Stop it! I'm your mother!' or 'Stop it! I'm an adult!' it turns out that such behavior modification over time actually works. Family strengthening-interventions also reduce youth violence, substance abuse, suicide rates and high school drop-out rates, in addition to lowering the infection rate of HIV," said Bell.

Despite these revolutionary studies, we may be years away from implementation strategies for family-based HIV-prevention and treatment.

"Science must be popularized in the public consciousness," said Bell, "before it can become public policy."

But the climate for prevention of disease and societal ills is shifting.

"We are slowly turning helplessness into hopefulness. There is actually a non-partisan push for prevention," Bell said.

The preface of *Family and HIV/AIDS: Cultural and Contextual Issues in Prevention and Treatment* hypothesized that "the causes of behavior are multi-determined and without a model of health behavior change that involves multiple levels of culture, society, social class, ethnicity, family dynamics, developmental stages and personality and biological dynamics our programs to address HIV risk factors in families will fail."

As Bell had put it, our futures and the futures of our children are determined by our own actions. "We should be focused on practicing medicine not money or focused on health and not disease."

NEWS BRIEFS

WCT AIDS @ 30 series up for GLAAD award

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) has announced the nominees for its 23rd Annual GLAAD Media Awards.

Windy City Times is up for an award in the newspaper article/series category for its AIDS @ 30 series, which started in April 2011 and continues at least through March 2012.

A complete list of GLAAD Media Awards nominees may be found here: www.glaad.org/mediaawards/nominees. Additional facts and figures about this year's 151 nominees may be found here: www.glaad.org/mediaawards/23/factsandfigures.

Gov. Quinn proposes cuts for Medicaid, HIV programs

Facing a grim fiscal situation, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn proposed a \$33.9 billion state spending plan that includes a \$4 million funding reduction for HIV programs, according to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC). The governor also proposed deep Medicaid funding cuts, which would severely hamper access to healthcare for people with HIV.

The governor's proposal seeks \$25.4 million in FY12 state funding for HIV services through the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), a reduction of 14 percent from the current fiscal year. Budget blueprints indicate Gov. Quinn proposes no funding cuts for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), which provides life-saving medications to people with HIV. As a result, the entire \$4 million funding cut would reduce community-based HIV prevention, housing, corrections, minority health-promotion and harm reduction programs.

While AFC lauded Quinn's recommendation for full ADAP funding, it strongly opposed the overall funding cut that will decimate community-based HIV programs.

"We are committed to working with members of the General Assembly and the Quinn Administration to restoring proposed funding cuts," said AFC President/CEO David Ernesto Munar. "AFC urges people affected by HIV and their advocates to register for the April 18 HIV/AIDS Lobby Days in Springfield, so we can send lawmakers a loud, clear message: Proposed funding cuts will cost lives and must be reversed."

The reductions will severely impede Illinois' efforts to reach the goals established by the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which was released by President Obama in 2010. The strategy establishes ambitious targets to reduce new HIV cases, link more people with HIV to medical care and reduce health disparities.

To reduce the HIV funding crisis, AFC urges the General Assembly to lift a moratorium on Medicaid expansion to allow the Cook County Health and Hospitals System to implement an 1115 Medicaid waiver. The program would allow Cook County to receive federal Medicaid matching funding for care provided to uninsured Cook County residents, including people with HIV, without increasing state spending. The waiver, if approved by the federal government, would shift costs for HIV medication from the state to the federal government, yielding savings to Illinois that could be used to strengthen HIV care and prevention efforts.

Unfortunately, Gov. Quinn also proposed over \$2 billion in funding cuts to the Medicaid program. Although he left implementation to the

Jose Love: Youth activist tries to make a difference

BY JOHN J. ACCROCCO

In a country where an alarming amount of young people take their lives in response to bullying over sexual orientation, organizations like Chicago-based Youth Pride Services are vital.

For nearly a decade, this national program has provided leadership and hope to a generation of Black, queer, youth. "Youth at hope, not at risk," is the YPS slogan on their Facebook page. This member-driven initiative has helped shine light on issues of sexual orientation and HIV awareness within young, ethnic MSM (men who have sex with men) communities via outreach events, lectures and resources.

"They have been a heart to the youth in Chicago," said Michigan chapter leader Jose Love, 20. "From helping mold the mindset of the youth so that they can be good citizens and so much more. I am forever thankful that they put faith in me to be the bridge for Michigan, to do the same with my team here."

This year, YPS/Code Red are sending Jose Love to the Black Treatment of Advocates Network (BTAN) National Steering Committee. BTAN is being backed by the Black AIDS Institute and Jose Love will be part of a very public platform that will help initiate teams and services for getting all Black Americans living with HIV into treatment.

Love, along with another YPS member, were selected by their peers by election as a representative for YPS to the BTAN National Steering Committee.

Empowerment at large is what this service is all about. The national YPS collective, Code Red, is comprised of the top LGBT youth leaders in the country. Code Red members also act as the national faces and public voice of YPS and meet via teleconference to discuss issues facing their demographic.

"I am most grateful in being selected! I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be on such a platform so soon in my life. God has something for me to do here and this is just the beginning," said Love.

Jose Love nee James Ferguson was born and raised in Detroit. He was born with strong connections to the church—he's the son of a pastor. "I'm a very optimistic person. ... The church has been a big part of my life. I think it's helped form the foundation of my activism. I don't care if you're gay, straight, bi, Christian or Jewish, we all have the divine right to be treated equal," Love said.

Life as an openly gay man has not been particularly easy for Love. He attended a Detroit

public high school that he recalls as being "full of machismo. In a predominantly Black high school it was so hard to be the first openly gay guy. It took me two difficult years to change most of their minds about homosexuality. And I try not to define myself as just gay. I'm human and I don't want me or anyone else to be treated like a leper for making our life decisions."

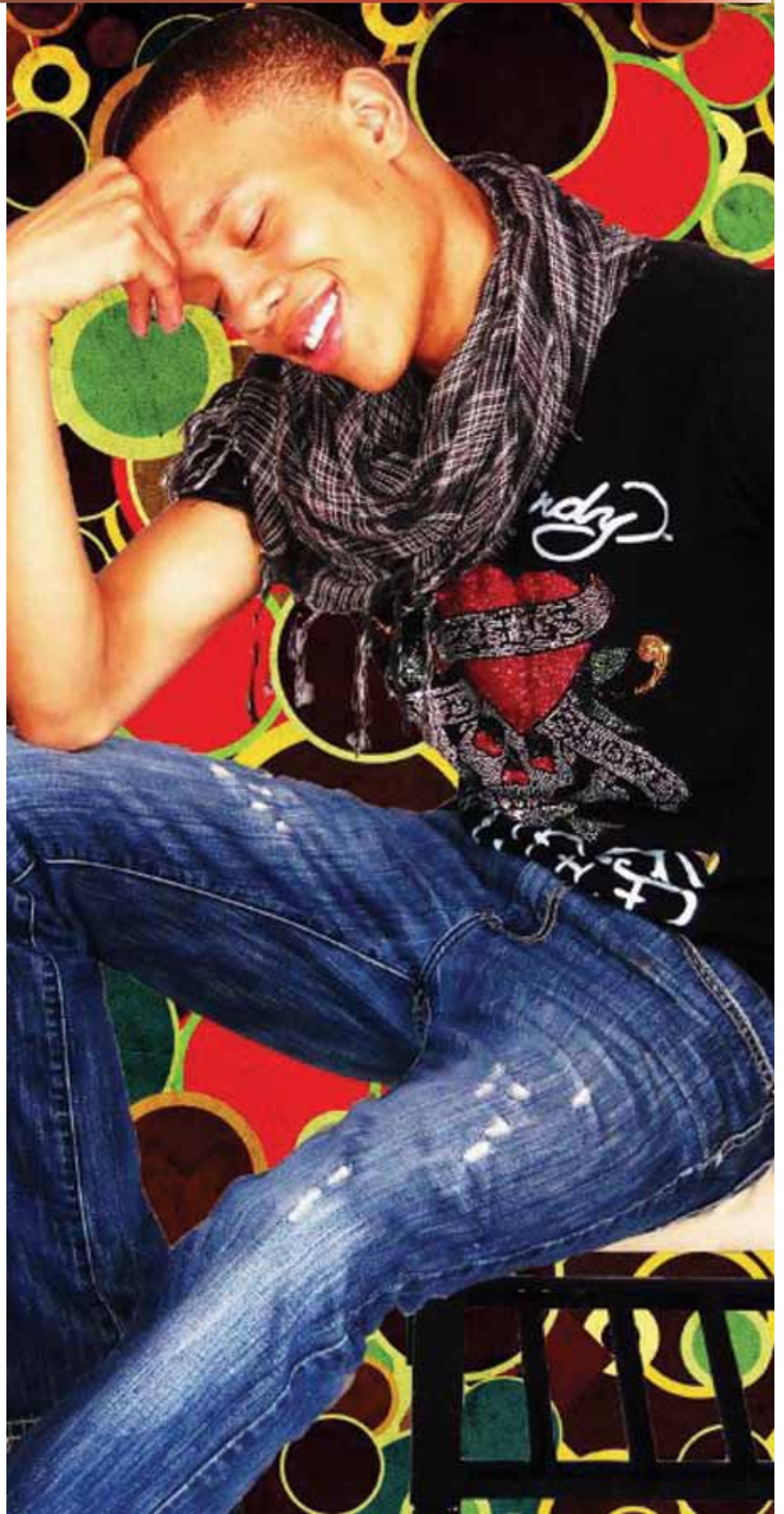
On coming out of the closet to his family, Love was met with more adversity: "Sweet Jesus it was hell. My mom took it so hard: we fought, cursed at each other and I was put out. My name was blackened in the family. However, my father's side handled it with grace. All he said was that it was between me and god. Were they happy? No, but in the end they wouldn't judge me for who I am. My mother's mindset has since changed because of how I carry myself and who I have become."

After graduating high school in 2010, Love got involved with Code Red when a friend told him about YPS. "The mission statement was something that I believed strongly in, so I got active." In his short time with YPS, Love became a part of the more administrative Code Red where he is a youth mentor and an open ear for the problems facing the YPS members he guides. "I tell my folks to show their true colors. When I show my true colors, I attract so many more people," he said.

"I believe I have always been an activist and not just for the LGBT community, but the world and what is right," Love said. "It pains me to see the things going on, and not just in the gay community. My problem with my specific community is how far apart we have become. As I look at documentaries about the struggles that so many have undergone so that we can be where we are today, it saddens me. People have lost their lives and in return we act uneducated. That's not who we are and that's why the world has such a negative viewpoint of us, because of the ignorance some people are displaying."

Now that Love is part of an even bigger committee, his guidance will be more important than ever as BTAN's National Steering Committee has much to accomplish. "I'm hoping through being on this platform that I can touch nations and be a voice for the people that don't know and don't have the resources to know."

In addition to Love's commitments with YPS and BTAN, he is studying psychology and counseling at Schoolcraft College in Michigan. "My life is headed in a very positive direction. As well as being a student, I just became a Balie Dai model. I'm on the right track I believe. My career goals are simple."



Jose Love. Courtesy of Love

BRIEFS from pg. 16

General Assembly, Quinn said that eligibility levels, provider payment rates to providers and benefits are all subject to changes.

AFC will fight Medicaid cuts. The program is the foundation of national health care reform, set to begin in 2014, and provides vital health care to low-income people with HIV and other chronic health conditions, including millions of disabled and homeless individuals.

The 2012 Illinois HIV/AIDS Lobby Day is Wednesday, April 18 in Springfield. Now in its twelfth year, Lobby Day will again bring hundreds of AIDS advocates from throughout Illinois to the Capitol.

See www.aidschicago.org.

Rep. Norton warns of HIV epidemic

"We are spreading death among ourselves." Those are the fiery words of D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton in Thirteen Percent, a new documentary now in production that investigates HIV and AIDS in the among African-Americans.

"I think the growth in numbers, especially among women, should be a wake-up call among the entire community," the Congresswoman says in her interview, an excerpt of which can be viewed at www.13percentmovie.com.

Norton is in her 11th term in the House of Representatives and a member of the Congress-

sional HIV/AIDS Caucus. The nation's capital has the highest infection rate of the country.

Thirteen Percent, which will debut at the XIX International AIDS Conference in D.C. in July, takes a probing look at statistics such as these, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

— The rate of new HIV infections among Black men is more than six and a half times as high as that of white men. In particular, among men who have sex with men, one of the highest-risk groups, more new HIV infections occur among young Black men, ages 13–29 than any other age and racial group.

— The estimated rate of new HIV infections for Black women is more than 15 times as high

as the rate for white women.

The first financial support for Thirteen Percent came from DC's Riverside Church. Partners include the Balm In Gilead, which educates on HIV through more than 30,000 black churches. The team has launched a crowd funding page on Kickstarter: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/drmfactory/thirteen-percent>.

VIEWPOINTS

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"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.

 Community Marketing, Inc.



REV. IRENE MONROE

Perhaps the most dangerous Black gay man

Cleo Manago is despised by some in the LGBTQ community. Descriptors like "homo demagogue," contrarian, separatist and anti-white are just a few that can be expressed in polite company.

However, to a nationwide community of same-gender loving (SGL), bisexual, transgender and progressive heterosexual African-American men, Manago is the *man*. He is seen as a visionary, game changer and "social architect" focusing on advocating for and healing a group of men that continues to be maligned and marginalized—brothers.

"Without an understanding of the deep hurt that Black men have around issues of masculinity and their role as a man, you can't hope to eliminate anti-homosexual sentiment in Black men. There has been no national project to address the psychic damage that White supremacy has done to Black men. But there is always some predominantly White institution waiting, ready to pounce on a Black man for behaving badly," Manago wrote in his recent article, "Getting at the Root of Black 'Homophobic Speech,'" in which he castigates the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) for demanding that CNN fire Roland Martin for misconstrued homophobic tweets.

Unapologetically Afrocentric in his approach in addressing social, mental, and health issues plaguing communities of Black men, Manago has created a national study on Black men and has built two organizations that for more than two decades have had national recognition and have successfully secured millions of dollars in funding—Critical Thinking and Cultural Affirmation Study, AmASSI Centers for Wellness and Culture,

and Black Men's Xchange.

Manago's study, called "Critical Thinking and Cultural Affirmation" (CTCA), is a culturally informed preventive health strategy that addresses positive mental, sexual, and community health, encouraging self-actualization, cultural empowerment and responsibility. CTCA has been in practice since 2002.

As the founder and CEO of AmASSI Health and Cultural Center, Manago was one of the first innovators in the AIDS movement to provide HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention services utilizing a psychosocial, mental health model that was culturally specific to the African-American identity. AmASSI has been in practice since 1989.

Manago is the national organizer and founder of Black Men's Xchange (BMX), the oldest and largest community-based movement devoted to promoting healthy self-concept and behavior, cultural affirmation, and critical consciousness among SGL, bisexual, transgender males and allies, with chapters in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit, Denver, Atlanta, Minneapolis and Philadelphia. BMX has been funded by the Center for Disease Control's Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative program. In addition, the CDC positions BMX alongside other legacy community Black organization such as the NAACP, the Urban League, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and American Urban Radio Networks. BMX has been in practice since 1989.

A native of south central Los Angeles, Manago began a vocation in social services at the age of 16. While many would call him a social activist, he does not like the term "activist" applied to him. He considers Black LGBTQ advocacy tethered to mainstream white privilege, ideology and single-focused gay organizations culturally dissonant and limited in scope to be meaningful and beneficial to not only African-American LGBTQ communities but also to the larger Black community.

To many in Manago's community and beyond, he's an unsung hero greatly misunderstood and intentionally marginalized by LGBTQ powerbrokers.

One factor Manago would say has contributed to his marginalization was the debacle between him and Keith Boykin during the 10th anniversary of the Million Man March.

In commemorating the anniversary, the Nation of Islam decidedly chose one LGBTQ organization over another. That choice highlights much of the political, class and ideological differences in the African-American LGBTQ community at large.

Boykin—the founder and then-president of the National Black Justice Coalition, an African-American LGBTQ-rights organization of which I was then a board member—was dropped from the event. However, Manago was not.

Both men had much to bring to the 2005 Millions More March, but Manago mirrored the fundamental sentiment of Farrakhan's theology—a conscious separation from the dominant white heterosexual and queer cultures—and he spoke at the 1995 Million Man March.

In his open letter, Manago wrote in 2005: "BMX knows the Nation of Islam (NOI). It's an independent Black organization not funded by the HRC or any white folks. The NOI does not, nor does it have to succumb to White gay press laden, Black homosexual coercives who want to ram a white constructed gay-identity political agenda—that even most Black homosexuals reject—down their throats. Over the years, several members of the Nation of Islam have been to BMX. As some of you may know, almost 10 years ago BMX co-sponsored a very successful transformative debate on Homosexuality in the Black community with the Nation in L.A."

As a queer separatist organization, many LGBTQ African-Americans applaud BMX for being unabashedly queer and unapologetically Black. But the terms "queer" and "gay" are not descriptors Manago and his organization would use to depict themselves. That would be "same-gender-loving" because Manago believes terms like "gay" and "queer" uphold a white queer hegemony that he and many in the African-American LGBTQ community denounce. As a matter of fact, he is credited with coining the terms "men who have sex with men" (MSM) and "same-gender-loving" (SGL).

To some in the LGBTQ community Manago is a dangerous demagogue. However, to tens of thousands African-American brothers and generous funders, he's seen as a brother driven with a dream. Perhaps, Manago is dangerous because he's effecting change.

LETTERS

Heart to Hart

To *Windy City Times*:

Considering the recent articles in the *Windy City Times*, I felt it was my duty to express my positive experience as a doctoral student and researcher [starting in 2006] at the Gerber/Hart Library. While I am not a Gerber/Hart "insider" (as labeled by a previous *Windy City Times* article), I believe my experience as an "outsider" should be taken into consideration as I have spent countless hours throughout the years conducting research at the Gerber/Hart for my dissertation on Boystown.

As a library and archive, Gerber/Hart is a success! In the bigger picture, Chicago is lucky to have such an organization still in existence. I found the archives and special collections completely accessible. Restrictions placed on the archives are completely justifiable, as archives ANYWHERE have restricted access. I had absolutely no problem getting any of the information I needed and Gerber/Hart enabled me to explore and discover.

As a community organization and space, Gerber/Hart is also a success! Karen and the librarians (who volunteer hours upon hours of their time) were more than helpful. Karen was always available to show me where I could find the articles I needed, and she was always referenc-

ing other sources for me to check out. But more than that, I developed friendships with all of volunteers after spending day after day conducting research.

On my birthday, Karen even bought me a slice of vegan chocolate cake! The librarians at the other local libraries (including my own university library, where I spent even more time) never even knew my name. Because of my positive experience with the library, I volunteered my time at its book sales and also the annual run. As a result, I was able to build even more connections with the LGBT community. Witnessing the daily stresses and challenges of leading and running the organization, I am appreciative and humbled by the dedication of Karen and her staff.

Is there room for improvement? Of course! Everything can be improved upon.

For instance, the library could use newer and better storage solutions. If the library has outgrown its current location (which is a great location for many reasons), maybe a more spacious location would also be an improvement. But running and maintaining a non-profit library with such an extensive archives, is no easy task (especially with such a small staff).

It takes money and a lot of time by experienced individuals to catalog and maintain archival materials, let alone run the entire organization. This is why I never saw any "room for

improvement" as a leadership issue.

My purpose for writing this letter is to show support for Gerber/Hart. As a library/archives, Gerber/Hart has been an invaluable resource and has provided me with access to historical records that have formed the foundation of my dissertation research. As a community organization, Gerber/Hart has had a positive impact on my life by being a great resource for establishing relationships with other scholars, students, and community members. In the face of criticism, it is vitally important that we recognize the contributions of Gerber/Hart and the positive impact that it continues to have on the community and LGBT research.

Zachary Blair
 Chicago

Send letters and viewpoints to
 Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
 Items may be edited for length or clarity.

GOINGS-ON



WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



PR photo

SASHA FIERCE

Before "Stars on Ice" comes to town, Windy City Times talked with famed skater Sasha Cohen (front row, second from right). See page 34.

DISH

Not-so-plain Jane's.
Page 28.

Photo by Ed Negron



TELEVISION

By George.
Page 24.

Photo from E!



MOVIES

Leather or not.
Page 22.

Photo of Gary Iriza from Mike Skiff



SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Out playwright Sarah Gubbins on her work, 'fml...'

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

If you're unfamiliar with teenage text-speak, don't be offended by out Chicago playwright Sarah Gubbins when she explains the meaning of the title to her world premiere play *fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life*.

"'fml' is text lingo for 'fuck my life,' and so we wanted to keep the lowercase and make the title look almost like a text message," Gubbins said about her commission for *Steppenwolf* for Young Adults. The production is a companion piece to *Steppenwolf's* earlier stage adaptation of author McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* from earlier this season, and how the teaching of that same novel has an impact on characters within Gubbins' drama.

Gubbins already made a splash earlier this theater season with About Face Theatre's production of her lesbian pregnancy drama, *The Kid Thing*, at Chicago Dramatists. But now Gubbins turns her attention to the much-in-the-news issue of school bullying with *fml*.

"The title of the play is the title of the graphic novel that we see get constructed," Gubbins said about her teenage lesbian protagonist, Jo (played by Fiona Roberts), who gets inspired to create in part by reading McCullers' novel as part of a school assignment. "The content of the graphic novel is one teenage girl's journey toward writing that graphic novel, so it's a little bit of a Russian nesting doll going on with the plot."

McCullers' novel comes at a pivotal moment for Jo, who finds a kindred artistic spirit in the au-

thor's writing to help "expunge and alleviate some of her loneliness." Although the novel features many characters, there's one that Gubbins said is probably a stand-in for McCullers herself that expresses her conflicted feelings about her sexuality and her drive to create things artistically.

"For me it's very easy when you read [*The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*] as a teenager to really identify," Gubbins said.

Jo also has a passionate English teacher in Ms. Delaney (Lily Mojekwu) and the school's only other openly gay student named Mickey (Ian Daniel McLaren), who also helps her out in expressing herself in high school.

"[Mickey] kind of has a role as Jo's culture guru, I guess," said McLaren, adding that the high school in Gubbins' play does not have a gay-straight alliance to offer support for the gay characters. "If I were to project 20 years into Mickey's future, I would see him as a hotshot editor agent or someone who really likes to encourage other people to find the best they have to offer artistically."

So, in many ways, Gubbins' *fml* stresses the importance of having helpful teachers, friends and artistic works for gay youth to survive high school, especially when bullying is involved.

"I think Sarah has done a really nice job kind of exploring what is a very specific incidence of bullying and the culture today," McLaren said. "But also it's not a sob story or an indictment of any one group in particular. It's more about exploring the ways in which everyone, but specifically youth, are bullying and hateful toward each other."

Despite the efforts of sex advice columnist Dan Savage and his much-publicized "It Gets Better Project" reaching out to gay youth, it's still saddening to hear news reports of gay teenagers who are still taking their lives.

"I've never worked on a play that felt more timely," Gubbins said. "It's hard when you're told that it gets better. The problem is that it's very, very bad for a while and you know sometimes students feel that they're just not strong enough to wait it out."

Both Gubbins and McLaren are excited to see the full realization of *fml* under the direction of Joanie Schultz—particularly the graphic novel that comes to life onstage thanks to the work of set designer David Hyman and projection designer Mike Tutaj. But more importantly, Gubbins and McLaren are looking forward to getting *fml* in front of school audiences.

"I'm very excited about the schools that are coming to see the production. They will be in direct dialogue with us, the artistic team and *Steppenwolf* teaching artists, some of whom will be going into schools in advance to talk about the play and then facilitate conversations afterwards," Gubbins said. "Also it was very important to me that that students who are out and gay have a representation onstage—that they're seen as legitimate characters."

Steppenwolf for Young Adults' production of *fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life* plays in *Steppenwolf* Theatre's Downstairs space, 1650 N. Halsted St., through March 18. Weekday matinee performances are for school groups only, but public performances are scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Saturdays (except March 3) and 3 p.m. Sundays (except March 11). Tickets are \$20 and 2-for-1 on Sundays. \$15 student tickets are only available via phone or box office. A special post-show discussion with sex advice columnist Dan Savage (co-creator of the *It Gets Better* Project) and his brother, Northwestern University professor Bill Savage, is scheduled to follow a special 7:30 p.m. performance on Friday, March 9. Call 312-335-1650 or visit www.steppenwolf.org.

Fiona Roberts in *fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life*. Photo by Sandro





Hit the Wall. Photo by Ryan Baroque

THEATER REVIEW Hit the Wall/ Oohrah!

Playwright: Ike Holtter/Bekah Brunstetter
At: The Inconvenience/Livewire Theatre
at Steppenwolf Garage, 1624 N. Halsted St.
Tickets: 312-335-1650;
www.steppenwolf.org/garage; \$20-\$45
Runs through: April 8

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It sparked a revolution, that steamy summer night in 1969. Amid an America shaken by war protesters, hippies, feminists, the Youth International Party, the Black Panthers and assorted factions renouncing the status quo, a routine police-raid on a Greenwich Village gay bar brought forth a resounding “No More!” from a still-invisible minority and a movement, united in pride and fellowship, was born.

Ike Holtter’s 90-minute docudrama is not content to echo the legendary (and frequently spurious) lore surrounding this benchmark event, but instead has drawn upon interviews with documented witnesses to winnow the story down to eight representative archetypes: Latino Tano and African-American Mika, the observers; Newbie, the suburban WASP; Gay-A, the Wall Street WASP; Carson, the proud transvestite; Peg, the teenage butch-lezzie; Cliff, the counterculture drifter; Roberta, the motor-mouth activist; Madeline, the uncomprehending family member; and Cop, the voice—and muscle—of authority. Each

will play their part in forging a collective identity capable of demanding change.

The Inconvenience replicates the atmosphere of that fatal evening with an accuracy as vivid and visceral as a punch to the belly. The crash of live rock music as we enter (earplugs are available at the box office) is our first warning of what is to come. Over a quick 90 minutes, we will move from simmering stoops in Sheridan Square to a sweaty dance floor in the Stonewall Inn bar, and outside to revel in an orgy of violence, culminating in the rallying cry of “Out of the closets and into the streets!” The band was smart to choose Stevie Wonder’s “Sir Duke” for its post-curtain farewell on opening night. Not since *Among the Thugs* has there been adrenaline-pumping spectacle to incite audiences to beating on car hoods and kicking over trash cans on their way home from the theater.

Oh, there’s something about a man in uniform—everybody in Bekah Brunstetter’s keenly observant family drama *Oohrah!* agrees on that—but where they differ is on what that uniform signifies to them. Brunstetter is to be commended for her exploration of hitherto-overlooked issues reflecting multiple perspectives—solitary wives, alienated children, eager groupies, gaming wannabes, envious 4-F rejects, and the returning GIs, themselves—but this makes for two hours containing enough material for two, or even three, plays, in order for each of her provocative insights to receive the discussion they deserve.

SPOTLIGHT



Jeff Award-winning director Rachel Rockwell is behind Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s latest abridgement of the Bard for families in **Short Shakespeare! The Taming of the Shrew**. See how the fortune hunter Petruchio (Matt Mueller) goes about taming the fiercely independent Katherina (Erika Ratcliff) in one of Shakespeare’s most controversial comedies. Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s *Short Shakespeare! The Taming of the Shrew* plays Saturday mornings at 11 a.m. through April 7 at Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave. Tickets are \$16-\$20; call 312-595-5600 or visit www.chicago-shakes.com. Photo of Matt Mueller as Petruchio and Erika Ratcliff as Katherina in Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s *Short Shakespeare! The Taming of the Shrew* by Michael Brosilow



THEATER REVIEW A Catered Affair

Playwright: Harvey Fierstein;
Composer/lyricist: John Bucchino
At: Porchlight Music Theatre at
Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-327-5252;
www.porchlightmusictheatre.org; \$38
Runs through: April 1

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It’s easy to see why the 2008 musical *A Catered Affair* didn’t last too long on Broadway. Out playwright/actor Harvey Fierstein and composer/lyricist John Bucchino’s musical adaptation of the 1956 film *The Catered Affair* is so intimate and personal that it would seemingly get lost on Broadway that is often geared more toward tourist trade rather than serious theater lovers.

Thankfully, Porchlight Music Theatre is presenting the Chicago premiere of *A Catered Affair* in a wonderfully intimate space at Stage 773, allowing the musical’s heartfelt family drama to blossom and sing in up-close quarters. Porchlight’s *A Catered Affair* is also strong all-around in large part to the insightful emotional guidance of director Nick Bowling and music director Doug Peck.

The main conflicts in *A Catered Affair* arise when grown daughter Janey Hurley (Kelly Davis Wilson) plans a quickie and no-frills wedding to longtime boyfriend Ralph Halloran (Jim Deselm) to take advantage of a borrowed friend’s car for a cheap cross-country honeymoon. While Janey’s cash-strapped parents initially agree to the speedy wedding, mother Aggie (Rebecca Finnegan) starts strong-arming her taxi-driving husband, Tom (Craig Spidle), and others to make sure that the wedding will be an expensive, traditional wedding and reception (in part to make up for Aggie and Tom’s neglect of their daughter in favor of their now-deceased military son, Terrence.)

Fierstein and Bucchino’s musical adaptation flows from song to speech in a near seamless fashion, heightening the working-class drama set in New York’s South Bronx in the 1950s. Yet Fierstein and Bucchino also bring modern rel-



A Catered Affair. Photo by Brandon Dahlquist

evance to the musical, particularly in refashioning the Hurley bachelor uncle, Winston (Jerry O’Boyle), into an openly gay man who isn’t afraid to speak up. Some may argue that Winston would have been more closeted in the era, but the addition of a gay uncle makes a strong statement about how all kinds of family members should be included.

There is a lot of kitchen-sink dramatics for the cast to chew upon, and they all bite into the material with gusto and emotion. Finnegan and Spidle, in particular, shine as a couple re-examining the simmering resentments and long-held disappointments in their hardscrabble marriage.

If there are complaints to be leveled at Porchlight’s *A Catered Affair*, one could take issue at how clean and tasteful Brian Sidney Bembridge’s set design looks (especially when compared to the grimy and cramped look of the film that inspired the musical), and with the patchy sound design of Victoria (toy) Deiorio on opening night.

But otherwise Porchlight’s *A Catered Affair* is a deeply affecting musical that offers rich emotional drama on an intimate scale. Thank goodness for theater companies like Porchlight offering *A Catered Affair* another chance to shine.

THEATER REVIEW Fulton Street Sessions

Playwright: TUTA Ensemble
At: The Utopian Theatre Asylum (TUTA)
at Chicago Dramatists,
1105 W. Chicago Ave.
Tickets: 847-217-0691;
www.tutato.com; \$30
Runs through: March 25

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

These are not post-adolescent Second City/SNL-wannabes trudging through exercises now as formalized as Kabuki. No, the actors of The Utopian Theatre Asylum (TUTA) are accustomed to stewing in Chekhov, Brecht and Eastern European gloom, not fizzing over with hit-and-run ebullience. Knowing this, it’s only reasonable that a different kind of “improvisational” theater emerge when such an ensemble is turned loose without scripts.

This doesn’t mean that their process simply abandoned them to drift unanchored. Their embarkation point (as they explain during a “rest break” in the 80-minute presentation) was the 2011 blizzard—specifically, the isolation imposed upon the population by the aftermath of that meteorological disaster. This is physically illustrated at the top of the show with a bewildered man first given a cold bath, then swaddled in layers and layers of winter gear. Despite this cumbersome wardrobe, however, he soon ventures forth to communicate with his fellow citizens. Indeed, one of

the most exhilarating scenes proposes a group of shivering strangers uniting in spontaneous harmony for a robust street-concert rendition of “I Just Called To Say I Love You” before shyly redispersing.

An episode where a choirmaster withdraws with a chorister for some reinvigorating private time (leaving the remaining vocalists to continue gamely with “Nearer, My God, To Thee”) displays an intuitive accessibility, as does a company member’s account of bedding a transsexual (the surgical details of which quickly put his companions to rout). Other scenarios suffer from an excess of enigma, like the pushing war with an old-fashioned safe—a metaphor of snow-shoveling neighbors encroaching on each other’s boundaries?—or the connection between an African-American folk song featured early in the show called “Black Betty” and the later appearance of a pivotal character named Betty (who is *not* Black).

Whatever your interpretation, the results are a welcome relief from the hackneyed conventions nowadays defining this genre of thespic experimentation. If the subtexts are often elusive (what’s the significance of the off-stage party projected on the floor by hidden camera, or the chandelier that swings down from the ceiling?), we can all bask in TUTA’s trademark musical interludes, performed with professional panache by the cast and concluding with a springtime madrigal reconfigured to the rousing, foot-stamping, hand-clapping, drum-beating tempo of a Klezmer orchestra to send us home through a winter not yet fully departed.



Man Boobs. Photo courtesy of David Zak

MUSICAL REVIEW

Man Boobs

Playwright: J. Julian Christopher
At: Pride Films and Plays at Mary's Attic, 5446 N. Clark St.
Tickets: 1-800-838-3006;
www.BrownPaperTickets.com; \$15
Runs through: March 10

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Lions and tigers and, especially, bears will like this show. Actually, anyone who's ever had issues with body image and intimacy will be able to relate, and that's 100 percent of us, right? It took me years to accept my status as a muscle god who intimidates lesser men even before peeling off my skin-tight T-shirt.

The basic set-up of Man Boobs is familiar. For decades, playwrights as disparate as David Mamet, Terrence McNally and Tennessee Williams have written two-character dramas about romance gone awry, and some of those plays dealt with body image, at least in part. However, J. Julian Christopher makes it the central premise and issue of Man Boobs, with the craftsmanship to keep his 90-minute work moving briskly and keep his characters interesting. It would be good to see one of his larger works.

Christopher's characters, Marty and Spence, already know each other as the play begins; a smart move that allows them to discuss things that wouldn't emerge during a first-time hook-up. They've tricked several times before and are ready to move on to something more meaningful, at least Marty is. Spence, however, who insists on having sex in dark places or with the lights out or with clothing on, isn't so sure. He sees Marty as a manly, virile stereotype (Marty is a trucker) who has his pick of men. Spence, a librarian, sees himself as unattractive and jiggle-breasted and can't accept that Marty is attracted to him.

As cast by director David Zak, Marty (Michael Hampton) is of similar body type and size as Spence (Rick Heintz), which emphasizes Spence's inability to view himself (and others) objectively. The words of the play also might be interpreted to suggest different body types, but Zak's choice makes Spence's neurosis more extreme. Hampton and Heintz handle their characters well and certainly seem comfortable in their own skins, which are of a shape we don't often see shirtless on our stages, especially in gay-themed theater.

Christopher laces his play with references to

Charles Bukowski, Kafka, Frankenstein and The Hunchback of Notre Dame, all summoned by the bookish Spence as images of the grotesquely Spence sees himself as being. This all works well. What works less well is Spence's harrowing account of how he was abused and taunted as a teenager by other boys and an especially nasty physical-education teacher, an account that sounds more 1960s than 1990s (when Spence was a teen).

Within the limited confines of Mary's Attic, the physical production is simple but suitable, although the noise from the stairway and street door (even early in the evening) is distracting. Hey, hush up! We're doing bare bear drama up here and it isn't half-bad.

CRITICS' PICKS

Gypsy, Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, through April 1. Klea Blackhurst gives a human and powerhouse vocal performance as Madame Rose, usually just written off as "the stage mother from hell." This glorious rendition of the hit musical based upon the memoirs of burlesque queen Gypsy Rose Lee shouldn't be missed. SCM

Punk Rock, Griffin Theatre at Theater Wit, through March 11. Simon Stephens's drama of affluent private-school Brit adolescents is savage but rings true, and is performed by a truly brilliant ensemble of young Chicago actors. The brutal ending is not for the faint-of-heart. JA

Superior Donuts, Mary-Arrchie Theatre at Angel Island, through March 24. Tracy Letts' post-Osage County tale of urban redemption and resurrection is a perfect fit to the cozy Angel Island loft, where Rich Cotovsky and Preston Tate, Jr., generate the kind of up-close chemistry at the heart of Chicago theater. MSB

Unnecessary Farce, First Folio Theatre at Mayslake Peabody Estate, Oak Brook, through March 4. Chicago actor Paul Slade Smith's 2006 police farce finally receives a standout local debut that constantly leaves you in stitches thanks to a fine-tuned comic cast who wring multiple laughs out of the silly script. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

BPI Black Playwright's Festival March 19-24

Black Ensemble Theater (BE) announces its 7th annual Black Playwright's Festival, March 19-24, as part of the company's Black Playwright's Initiative (BPI).

The festival—at the Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center, 4450 N. Clark St.—brings new scripts to the stage for readings after being developed through the BPI in workshops and rehearsals.

There will be an opening party and tribute to award-winning playwright, actor and director Regina Taylor March 19 at 7 p.m. The festival includes full-length plays by Leonard Ferris, Creola Thomas, Wendell Etherly and Rueben Echoles, and 10-minute works by Wendell Etherly, Loy A. Webb and Andre Wright.

Tickets (\$15 for each evening, or \$50 for the entire festival) are available at www.ticketmaster.com or at the box office; also, persons can call 773-769-4451.

'DreamGirls' LGBT night March 3

DreamGirls Chicago will hold its LGBT audience night Saturday, March 3, at the Harold Washington Cultural Center, 4701 S. Martin Luther King Dr.

Doors open at 7 p.m. The show starts at 8 p.m.

The show runs March 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 23-25 and 30-31.

Tickets are \$30 each for the March 3 show, and comes with a concession card that allows the purchaser one of three options: two

drinks, a tapas plate or a commemorative photo. Call 773-779-2399 or 773-459-7043.

March 5 revue to feature Resnik, Butler

The Sarah Siddons Society will hold a musical revue, "God, I Hope I Get It"—featuring 13 musical-theater performers—Monday, March 5 at the Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Dr., Lincolnshire, at 8 p.m.

Three recipients of the Sarah Siddons Society's Leading Lady Award will perform: Hollis Resnik, Heidi Kettenring and the 2011 award winner, E. Faye Butler. Among the others joining them are Rod Thomas, Bethany Thomas and Alene Robertson.

Tickets are \$50 and all proceeds go to the Sarah Siddons Society Scholarship Fund. Current students can purchase seats for \$10. Tickets may be purchased online at www.brownpapertickets.com (search "God I Hope I Get It") or by phone at 800-838-3006.



Hollis Resnik (left) and E. Faye Butler. Photo by Steve Starr

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

BY
RICHARD
KNIGHT, JR.

Kink Crusaders DVD; film notes

When International Mr. Leather founder Chuck Renslow describes his almost 35-year-old pageant, ostensibly a contest for members of the leather community, as being “all-inclusive,” he isn’t kidding. In documentary filmmaker Mike Skiff’s *Kink Crusaders*, a record of the 2008 IML pageant, the parade of tattooed and pierced humanity dressed in their finest kink wear—everything from leather to rubber accessorized with dog collars, the usual chaps, leashes, harnesses, belts, whips, etc.—is enough to titillate anyone interested in this wide-ranging aspect of queer culture. The film, which played at last fall’s Reeling Film Festival, is now out on DVD from Breaking Glass Pictures with a raft of special features.

Seemingly, everyone in the Chicago queer community knows that IML weekend—a three-day celebration of all things kinky—happens



Kink Crusaders. Photo courtesy of Mike Skiff

over Memorial Day. It’s been that way since 1979, when Renslow’s Mr. Gold Coast pageant outgrew the confines of his leather bar and moved to roomier quarters at a series of large hotels mostly catering to business conventions and tourism. However, city officials and the hospitality industry quickly learned to not only tolerate but actively court Renslow and pageant officials, thanks to the lavish revenue the contest’s popularity and enormous attendance guarantee city coffers. (Renslow now cites a figure of \$18 million dollars a year.)

Acceptance for the once admittedly fringe community, with its extreme uniforms and far-reaching sexual components, have taken longer to reach mainstream approval. Skiff’s breezy, entertaining tour of the pageant’s festivities

(including the infamous, eye-popping fetish market and something called the IML Pup Party, in which participants act out their doggie fantasies) incorporates interview footage that touches on this with Renslow who relates its history along with former IML winners accompanied by archival footage.

Glimpses of the actual pageant and backstage interviews with several of the unique 2008 contestants—a South American hunk representing Palm Springs (the eventual winner), a paraplegic, a Viet Nam war vet and senior citizen, and even a straight guy—round out the footage. The film concludes with yet another triumphant assertion of Renslow’s “all-inclusive” mantra. This was the crowning of the 2010 winner—a wheelchair-reliant, female-to-male transgender who exclaims with delight, “I’m going to Disneyland!” At that moment, the ironies inherent in this once completely fringe culture as it has increasingly become familiar to the mainstream (coming this year to Chicago—it’s *Kinky Boots* the musical!) are palpable.

Of related interest: A complete biography of Renslow and his impact on queer history in Chicago and beyond is detailed in *Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow* by Windy City Times’ publisher Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnan. The 414-page book is available at www.amazon.com, Women & Children First Bookstore and Unabridged Bookstore. It is also on Kindle and Apple eBooks.

Film notes:

—**Cinema Q II**—the free, LGBT-themed, weekly mini-film series—returns for the second year on Wednesdays in March at the Chicago Cultural Center with screenings at 6:30 p.m. in the Claudia Cassidy Theater. Admission is free.

This year’s series, focusing on queer youth,

kicks off March 7 with a screening of lesbian director Jamie Babbit’s hilarious 1999 black comedy *But I’m a Cheerleader*; it’s about a notorious “ex-gay” camp for teenagers and stars Natasha Lyonne, Clea DuVall, Cathy Moriarty, RuPaul, Melanie Lynskey and Michelle Williams.

Subsequent installments in the series include 2003’s *Blue Citrus Hearts*, a gritty, coming-of-age/coming-out tale (March 14); 2009’s *I Killed My Mother*, the funny, moving dramedy of a 16-year-old gay teenager and his daily battles with his single mother, from French Canadian queer auteur Xavier Dolan (March 21); and *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, about the early struggles and later triumphs of the civil-rights pioneer who was also openly gay.

Documentary filmmaker Bennett Singer will attend the screening and dessert reception (courtesy of Ann Sather) following a post-screening discussion (March 28). The series is a joint presentation of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Center on Halsted, the Legacy Project, Queer Film Society and Chicago Filmmakers (presenting organization of the Reeling Film Festival). Windy City Times is one of the series’ media sponsors. www.queerfilmsociety.org

—**The Talking Pictures Festival** kicks off on Thursday, March 8 and continues through Sunday, March 11. Now in its fourth year, the festival, organized by the non-profit Percolator Films, celebrates the diversity to be found in indie cinema.

The opening-night screening is *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, a documentary examination of the breast cancer movement by Canadian filmmaker Lea Pool. It will take place at NEXT Theatre at the Noyes Cultural Center (927 Noyes St., Evanston) at 7:30pm. The film will screen in honor of International Women’s Day and many of the fest’s entries are selections by women filmmakers.

Performance artist and former Chicagoan Paula Killen, starred, wrote and produced *Fully Loaded*, the tale of two feisty, single moms who hook up with a sexy loner (Dweezil Zappa) on a rare night on the town. Killen and the film’s director, Shira Piven (of the Piven theatrical family), will attend the Saturday, March 10 screening (also at NEXT Theatre), taking place at 7:15 p.m. Another highlight of the fest includes *Joffrey: Mavericks of Dance*, about dance mavens and onetime couple Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino (which I reviewed recently for WCT). It screens Friday, March 9, at 8:15 p.m. at Northwestern University-Medill School of Journalism/McCormick Tribune Center, the other venue for the festival (1870 Campus Dr., Evanston). Director Bob Hercules will be in attendance. Complete film line-up and schedule at www.talkingpicturefestival.org

Check out my archived reviews at www.windycitymediagroup.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.

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‘Artist’ takes Oscar gold

Silence was golden at the Oscars this year.

At the Feb. 26 event, the French black-and-white silent movie *The Artist* won five Oscars, including Best Film, Best Director (Michel Hazanavicius) and Best Actor (Jean Dujardin, who edged George Clooney of *The Descendants*).

The movie made history as the first silent film to win the award since 1929. Also, Dujardin, 39, became the first French actor to win an Oscar.

“Sometimes life is wonderful. Today is one of those days,” Hazanavicius said.

The Martin Scorsese movie *Hugo* also won five Oscars, with the 3-D adventure film prevailing in the technical categories, including Best Cinematography.

The Best Actress race was considered a two-woman contest between Viola Davis of *The*

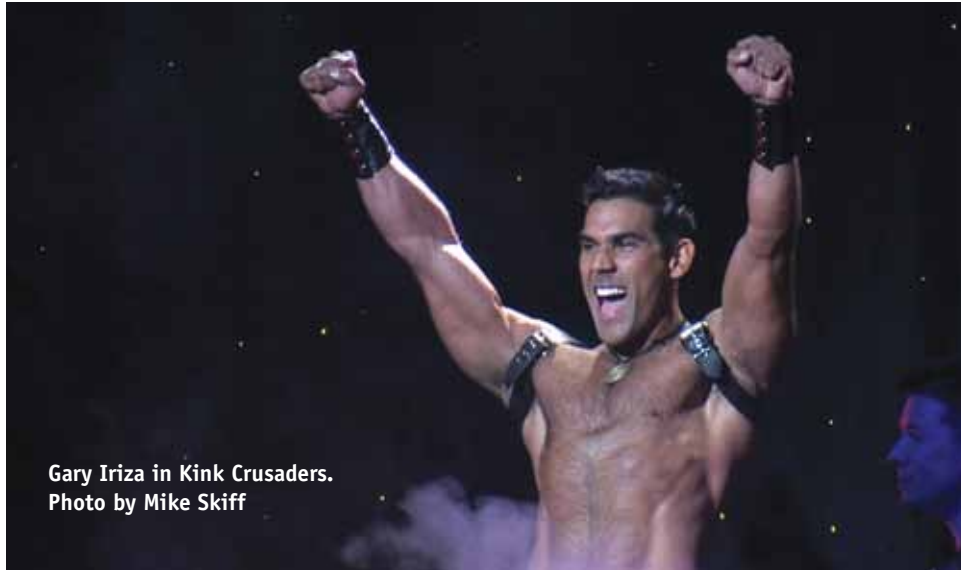
Help and Meryl Streep of *The Iron Lady*. In the end, Streep prevailed, winning her third Oscar. (She has been nominated for 17.) This was her first win since 1982, when she nabbed the award for *Sophie’s Choice*.

Adding an LGBT edge, Christopher Plummer won Best Supporting Actor for playing a 75-year-old gay widower in *Beginners*. In the process, Plummer became the oldest actor to win the Award at age 82.

Octavia Spencer was the favorite for Best Supporting Actress for *The Help*—and, to no one’s surprise, she won. Many considered her tearful acceptance one of the night’s highlights.

Billy Crystal returned as host of the 84th annual event, and received mixed reviews. For example, USA Today’s Robert Bianco wrote, “You may have smiled much of the way, but with Crystal we’re used to laughing from beginning to end.”

Leather world: Documentary looks at IML



Gary Iriza in *Kink Crusaders*.
Photo by Mike Skiff

BY JOE FRANCO

"We wanted to make people feel the humanity and the community of those involved. We wanted them to be able to relate to the men and women of the leather community. We did not focus on the sex but on the culture of this unique community," said the mind and the eye behind the documentary *Kink Crusaders*, Mike Skiff. "I did not want this film to be an 'American Idol' for leather. I wanted the viewer to be the omnipresent third-party."

Kink Crusaders is Skiff's first directorial endeavor in the genre of documentaries. The film has won accolades from the international community with "best documentary" at Cinekink and the U.K. Film Festival as well as the Bronze Palm Award in the Mexico International Film Festival. "Our film is now opening and closing film festivals worldwide," said Skiff. "I'm not sure I could have done this without my amazing crew. It's wonderful to be able to see everyone else's work in the film itself."

The film takes the viewer behind the scenes of the 30th Annual International Mr. Leather competition (IML), which took place in 2008. For those not "in the know," IML allows men from around the world to compete for the title of Mr. International Mr. Leather. *Kink Crusaders* seeks to delve "into the lives and aspirations of its contestants and spectators with humor, tasteful eroticism and pathos. ... This sexy, smart documentary dares to ask, 'Is there a Kink Crusader in us all?'" said Justin Cook, the press and social media representative for the producers of the film.

Gary Iriza, the winner of the competition as a participant and subsequent judge, had a slightly different view on IML, its role in the cultural context of gay men and the film itself. "You don't even notice the cameras are there since you are so focused on the competition," said Iriza. The Mr. Palm Springs-Leather 2008, who originally hailed from Venezuela, looked the part, and he made sure he did. "I spent over six months watching all of the old IML competitions. I listened to the competitors and studied them. Whatever your view is, Mr. IML needs to look good. He needs to look like the logo," said Iriza. He attributed his victory to studying leather and the leather culture from its Neolithic roots through the present day. "IML is 30 years of changing. The looks. The atmosphere. I'm not sure I like the changing face of leather," said Iriza. "I like the exclusivity of the leather community. We had to follow a protocol. It was what attracted me to leather in the first place."

Iriza also had some thoughts on his experience as a judge. "This was much harder than compet-

ing. You are under tremendous pressure to agree that one person who is supposed to represent your community. Imagine having to ask 55 questions, read their applications all the while maintaining yourself as the reigning Mr. Leather and being expected to perform those duties as well." Iriza, like predecessor Mike Gerle, Mr. IML 2007, believed that the "hot man that everyone looks at regardless of race, creed or color is what IML should be about. IML is about the kink and the fun," said Iriza.

Iriza seemed pleased overall with the film, but his criticism came from his deep-seated belief about what leather is all about. "We now have this 'well-behaved church lady' representation of the leather community. What happened to that party boy—the pretty boy that everyone's eyes are on? The film gave you some sense of the leather community but I still like the more traditional image of the leather community," said Iriza.

Skiff admitted that he believed that 15 percent of the people actually attend for the competition while the others are there for something else entirely.

"People want to see IML as a sexual event," he said. "If you were to just walk into IML, you are not seeing what goes on in private. The film showed the perspective of someone who does not go to IML for the sex alone. Sure, we showed some risqué shots from the market [an IML event], but they were porn stars trying to hock their films."

"I did not want this to be a 'gay documentary' and I wanted to show the cross-culturalism that is now a part of IML. This is a place for all men and women. That's why we added the perspectives of the two young Asian women, Vicky and Christine. Sure, they were shocked at what they saw but not disgusted."

Skiff credited the making of *Kink Crusaders* with not only saving his life but also with the creation of his second documentary, *The Bruno Project*. "Shortly after we filmed *Kink* I was physically assaulted by a crew working on Sasha Baron Cohen's film, *Bruno*," said Skiff. "I was working as a news cameraman for *Real Gay*, filming a tense protest just prior to the Prop 8 vote, when Cohen, dressed as Bruno, was supposed to be doing something. I was in the way and these men let me know it." The *Bruno Project* will focus on not only Skiff's personal physical assault but, as he put it, "the assault on the people of California and the assault on the gay community."

***Kink Crusaders* is scheduled to be in wide release Feb. 28. For more information on the film, visit www.breakingglasspictures.com.**

NUNN ON ONE

James Duke Mason: Belinda Carlisle's son is actor, gay activist

BY JERRY NUNN

James Duke Mason is an actor and LGBT advocate currently living in California. He is the son of singer Belinda Carlisle and Morgan Mason. The 19-year-old spoke to *Windy City Times* about the relationship and coming-out process to his Go-Go mother.

Windy City Times: Hey, James.

James Duke Mason: Hi. I remember you interviewed my mother a while back.

WCT: Yes; I spoke to her before the book, *Lips Unsealed*, came out.

JDM: I am glad after two years we could reconnect.

WCT: How do you feel the book turned out?

JDM: I loved it. I read the preliminary copy before the book came out. My mother asked if there were things to take out and I thought it was perfect as it was. I knew about most of the stuff beforehand, anyways. There are a lot of amazing anecdotes in there and of course the more serious stuff. I think it all came together and was very well written.

WCT: I saw *The Go-Go's* perform at Ravinia last summer.

JDM: Oh, in Highland Park—I couldn't make it. I was, unfortunately, back in LA. I went to Chicago about 10 years ago but weirdly enough haven't been back since. I will have to make up for lost time.

WCT: What made you want to come out to your family in the first place?

JDM: It was an interesting experience because I had grown up around gay people for most of my childhood. Ninety percent of my mom's friends are gay and lesbian. So I never grew up with the feeling that I would be shunned or thrown out of the house for being gay. In the end, I knew my mother would be accepting. My father wasn't vehemently homophobic either but, at the same time, even if you grow up in a gay-friendly environment you are never quite sure how people will react. It was something that I did not want to do. I worried that if I came out I would not be able to pursue my dreams of politics. I planned to stay in the closet for the rest of my life because it would be the easier thing and I could pursue what I wanted to pursue.

I happen to be at my parent's house and was watching a gay independent movie called *The Trip* and within two hours my life had changed. I became proud and empowered. I was excited about the possibilities of coming out and being involved in the community. It was about AIDS and a relationship. It gave me the strength to make that jump to come

out to my parents.

WCT: Do you have advice for people coming out to their families?

JDM: This applies to not only coming out to your parents but friends and in general. What I think is important is that coming out happens again and again throughout your life to many people. You should never have to apologize for who you are. There is nothing wrong with being proud. Some people have an idea that you have to choose between being a member of society or the gay community. The fact is they are not mutually exclusive. You can be a proud gay person and still have straight friends. You don't have to choose.

Go to www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com to read the whole interview with Mason, and find out about his current relationship.



Belinda Carlisle and James Duke Mason.
Photo from Mason

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NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Sense of Rumer:

British singer on Adele, musicals



BY JERRY NUNN

British singer Rumer just released her album *Seasons of My Soul* in the United States after a very successful UK debut last year.

She has won the MOJO award for Best Breakthrough Act and Best Alternative Act on the UK Asian Music Awards.

Her sound has been compared as a mix between Karen Carpenter and Dusty Springfield. We got to the heart of the Rumer after her recent concert in Chicago.

Windy City Times: Hello, Rumer. It was great meeting you after the show in Chicago. Did you notice the row of gay boys in front of the stage fawning over you like schoolgirls?

Rumer: Yes.

WCT: I was one of them! One person at the concert thought you were Demi Moore's daughter. What inspired the name Rumer?

Rumer: My mother and Demi Moore both love the author Rumer Godden. The name comes from her.

WCT: I liked the Elton John story. You said, "He's a hugger?"

Rumer: Yes, very friendly—like a kind uncle.

WCT: Why did you choose to perform "Rocket Man" in particular out of his catalogue?

Rumer: I connected to the song because after my record became successful in the UK my life radically changed overnight. I feel "Rocket Man" expresses that sense of isolation, amazement, missing home, losing your reality, and generally gets across that feeling of extreme loneliness. I felt all of that.

WCT: I was waiting for your rendition of "Moon River." Are you an Audrey Hepburn fan?

Rumer: I love "Moon River." Henry Mancini and Johnny Mercer together are perfection! I like Audrey Hepburn a lot but I don't identify with her, like I do Judy Garland.

WCT: I just interviewed Lorna Luft, her daughter, the other day! What is your favorite musical?

Rumer: I love *Ziegfeld Girl*. I love Adrian Greenberg's costume design as well. At the end of the movie it just says, "Gowns By Adrian." Now he had to have been in a lavender marriage!

WCT: Would you ever want to do an entire covers album?

Rumer: I am currently mixing a concept covers album called *Boys Don't Cry*, which is a selection of material composed by men from the '70s period. I will be covering songs by Paul Williams, Stephen Bishop, Richie Havens, Leon Russell and Tim Hardin—the list goes on!

WCT: What is your opinion on being compared to big Grammy winner Adele?

Rumer: Adele is a tall beautiful goddess-like statuesque redhead and I'm a short half-Pakistani. I don't see the resemblance and certainly, musically, we are light years apart, although I'm desperate to hear her sing, "Cry Me a River." But we are from the same small neighborhood in south London, and over the years have bumped into each other on the street from time to time.

We are neighbors!

WCT: My favorite song on *Seasons of My Soul* is "Am I Forgiven?" It's about a fight, correct?

Rumer: It's like a prayer. Yeah, it's about a fight. It's about being the worst of yourself, when you know you are capable of being a better person.

WCT: Your song, "Aretha," speaks to people who don't fit in. Do you have a personal favorite Aretha Franklin song?

Rumer: I like anything she sings. I like "Daydreaming," which she wrote herself. She could sing the phone book and it would take me to church.

WCT: Do you have an expensive pair of shoes that you bought after writing that song?

Rumer: I love shoes, and I am just as satisfied owning shoes. I don't have to wear them. I am really fussy about shoes. I love Louboutins.

WCT: How was it working with Burt Bacharach?

Rumer: It was brief and very business-like, actually—and quite scary!



Rumer. PR photo

WCT: Tell me about performing for the [LGBT organization] Human Rights Campaign in New York.

Rumer: It was a great honor to perform for an organization that is campaigning for civil rights for all. It is quite shocking to come here from England and discover some of the policies of the USA. But when you think about what happened to African Americans in the States? That was recent history! It takes your breath away.

The prejudice that the gay community has to endure is prehistoric.

WCT: Come back to Chicago for Lollapalooza this summer!

Rumer: I will!

Follow Rumer and her music at www.rumer.co.uk.

NUNN ON ONE: TELEVISION

George Kotsiopoulos

is always in 'Fashion'

BY JERRY NUNN

George Kotsiopoulos is slapping the cuffs on crazy couture with the hit show *Fashion Police* for E! The openly gay fashion plate from Skokie rose from the ranks of fashion associate at *The New York Times Magazine* to become editor for *C Magazine*.

We talked about being the only man on a panel composed of Joan Rivers, Kelly Osbourne, and Giuliana Rancic on E!

Windy City Times: Hi, George. How are you?

George Kotsiopoulos: I'm so tired. We shot *Fashion Police* this morning and I was picked up at 6:15. I ain't a morning person. I don't mind it if my everyday life was early that would be fine, but it is one day a week. It just messes you up.

WCT: I bet it does.

GK: If I have a fashion shoot then I can focus creatively on visual things but with this I have to be on. No one cares if my personality sucks on a photo shoot but not on this show.

WCT: Melissa Rivers told me that I needed to talk to you because I had interviewed everyone else from the show. Then, I noticed you are from Skokie...

GK: Born and raised!

WCT: You went to school at a university in Illinois.

GK: The University of Illinois in Champagne. I went to Niles West High School. I left Illinois when I was 21. Only because of the weather, it sucks, come on!

WCT: I know. So you moved to L.A. but you learned everything from the *New York Times*, correct?

GK: Yes, It was an interesting situation because I worked for the *New York Times Magazine* but I always lived in L.A. I had an actual fashion job in New York but lived in Los Angeles. That doesn't exist anymore. There aren't real fashion jobs in L.A.—*Vogue* or *Women's Wear Daily*—but, for the most part, people have to live in New York City. I really lucked out.

WCT: How did you wind up on *Fashion Police*?

GK: I had some friends that worked at E! so they would ask me to come and do talking head stuff. People said I was good at it so I pursued it more. That became my focus. I was always looking for the next step after styling. I didn't want to be in my fifties schlepping gowns around to 25-year old girls. It is not becoming. [Laughs]

I was looking for the bigger picture and I always saw TV as that outlet. The more I did it the better I got. I said yes to anything on television and auditioned. I did shows like *Style Her Famous* on the Style Network and things like that. I was a correspondent on MSNBC for a show called *The Hot List*.

WCT: So one thing led to another.

GK: Yes, the *Fashion Police* happened about a year and a half ago. They remembered me and there was a short list of guys they wanted. I got it and it is one of those things of watch out for what you wish for! No, I realize how lucky I am. Sometimes I can't even believe it. I am on a weekly show that airs in over 100 countries all over the world. It kind of freaks me out.

WCT: Is it hard being the only guy on the show?

GK: You know what? No. I love them all. It is such a wonderful experience being on the show. I am the fashion expert on the show so that can be hard. My opinions differ from others because I see it from a fashion point of view not a general public point of view. Although I think those both should merge quite well. Kelly and I bicker but I think that is a cute brother and sister thing we do. Being the boy I got over very quickly. I worked in fashion for 15 years and it

is predominantly women. I am surrounded by women all the time!

WCT: What did you think of Meryl Streep's outfit at the SAG Awards?

GK: On camera, when she was moving, I thought it was really beautiful. It was cool and lightweight. It was by Vivienne Westwood, which is an edgy designer. The only thing I didn't like was the brown belt. It was very casual. I would have rather have seen black leather. Overall, it looked great but didn't photograph well. I love the fact that she is saying, "I'm here. Take me the way I am." It is very refreshing. Her confidence is her most attractive quality and that she came poke fun of herself at the same time.

WCT: I remember her being insecure in past interviews.

GK: Maybe that is what happens when you get older. You know you are not the hot thing and



George Kotsiopoulos. Photo from E!

just accept that. We are all growing old. It is a matter of accepting it, especially an actress.

WCT: So what you were saying before is the accessories are really important like the belt and it all goes together.

GK: Oh, absolutely. Accessories are huge! They can ruin an outfit, like with Kristen Wiig and that ridiculous collar. I can't even explain it. Sometimes when you see someone make a mistake like a long earring I can get. With this I didn't even get it at all. It was a halter-neck dress by Balenciaga. It was gorgeous but she had a weird Victorian collar on. If she had not worn that, then she would have been one of my best-dressed choices. Things like that baffle me.

WCT: What did you think of Viola Davis?

GK: I love Viola. Her dress looked absolutely delicious. It was a Grecian look that we have seen a lot; yet, she made it look really fresh. She was a Best Dressed nominee for me. I have seen her speak at a couple of events and she just moves you.

WCT: Does the show take up tons of your time?

GK: It shoots once a week but I am a real stylist the rest of the time. I am styling magazine shoots and doing appearances. I went on the road with Swarovski this past fall.

I really do want my own show so that is something I want to pursue more and that will happen. Nothing has happened yet, but it will—not that I am overly confident or anything like that! [Laughs]

Catch the *Police* on E! For details, visit www.eonline.com/news/fashion.

Gay-owned tea company set to go national

BY ROSS FORMAN

Talbott Teas is set to explode worldwide, even more than when the specialty tea from gay Chicago partners Shane Talbott and Steven Nakisher landed on Oprah Winfrey's "Favorite Things" episode in 2010.

Talbott Teas was purchased by California-based Jamba Juice Company, it was announced in February. Terms of the deal were not announced.

"After Oprah, we were inundated with opportunities," Talbott said. "Oprah gave us a chance

mer—hopefully, within the next 60 or 90 days," he said.

Talbott, who will join Jamba Juice as vice president of innovation, will focus on creating new blends and remain based in Chicago. Nakisher will be on Talbott Teas' board of directors. Talbott Teas will remain a standalone brand.

"This is huge for us, personally," Nakisher said. "For us to have poured so much of our passion, our time, our money [into Talbott Teas], I think we feel so validated, so appreciated. We could not be more grateful. We are so happy."



Talbott Teas' Steven Nakisher (left) and Shane Talbott flank Shark Tank's Daymond John. Photo courtesy of Nakisher and Talbott

of a lifetime to put our business out to the world but, over time, we were realizing that we didn't have the capital to build the inventory and build the business the way we wanted to."

Jamba Juice has about 750 locations in 26 states, including 440 sites that now offer hot tea. The current Jamba tea brand will be replaced with Talbott Teas, said Janice Duis, senior director of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility for Jamba Juice Company.

"We're very excited about that and what the future holds in the tea category," Duis said. "We see [tea] as an area of opportunity that we haven't fully exploited, and with the Talbott Tea team joining us, we think we can take even greater advantage of that emerging trend."

Talbott came to Jamba through an appearance on the ABC show Shark Tank that aired Feb. 17, although it was filmed last July.

"We were invited to go on Shark Tank, which was our opportunity to tell our story and, potentially, go with some of these high-profile investors to help us bring our business to a different level," Talbott said. "After the show [was filmed,] one of the sharks, Daymond John, actually brought us to Jamba Juice, thinking that there was a real opportunity and a real synergy between Talbott Teas and Jamba Juice."

"Yes, it certainly did seem like an amazing synergy, an amazing opportunity."

"The first time we met Jamba Juice [executives], we kind of fell in love. We felt like it was an amazing company with such strong leaders, a fantastic vision. We thought that we shared so much in common around the idea of leading a healthy lifestyle and healthy lifestyle products."

Nakisher added, "We now will be able to get our brand message out there a lot easier. We're really excited to reach a bigger audience."

The exact date when Talbott Teas will be offered at Jamba Juice is still to be determined, but it will be soon. "Our hope is that it rolls out and is available in the stores before this sum-

Talbott, who launched the business in 2003, added, "This is a dream come true for us. We started this business in the worst economy in U.S. history. So, to be able to create a business, grow it, and then have it acquired by such an amazing company like Jamba Juice, it really is a dream come true. We couldn't ask for anything better."

"This is a true testament to truly following your passion. It's been a tough rough, a tough economy, but, if you follow your passion, it's going to pay off."

Both said it's still "very hard to believe" that Talbott Teas soon will become a global brand. There are Jamba locations in Canada, Korea and the Philippines.

"Since we've been a small boutique brand, it's been hard to reach the customer, tough to get customers to come to our website to buy from us directly. Now, customers can easily buy Talbott Teas," Talbott said.

Jamba Juice was founded in April 1990 by Kirk Perron, who is also gay.

However, Jamba's strong support of diversity did not completely play into Talbott's decision to align with the company. "What impacted our decision was [that] Jamba is a very progressive company and they are committed to diversity and they are committed to individuality, of living your best life and a healthy lifestyle. That was an important fit for us," Talbott said.

James D. White, chairman, president and CEO of Jamba Juice Company, said in a statement: "Talbott Teas is part of our strategy for growth through the acquisition of lifestyle specialty brands that fit well with the Jamba brand and our positioning as a leading health and wellness company. Jamba shares Shane's commitment to using the finest quality ingredients to create premium tea blends that are flavorful and healthful, but designed with a flair that only a visionary trendsetter could achieve. I welcome his creativity on our team."



SHE ART item. Photo from Candy Johnson

SHE ART re-opening in A'ville March 1

SHE ART Chicago, formerly in Oak Park, will reopen at 1519 W. Foster Ave., on Thursday, March 1.

The hours of operation are Wednesdays-Saturdays 12-7 p.m. and Sundays 12-5 p.m.

SHE ART Chicago is an eclectic store that carries art, antiques and collectibles that depict women from all eras and genres, including local emerging artists.

Eighteen local artists are exhibiting work from paintings, photography, Glicee, reverse painting on glass, handmade dolls, handcrafted jewelry and more.

During the month of March, patrons can receive a free fairy charm. There is also a raffle for a SHE ART T-shirt. See www.sheartchicago.com, call 773-266-6265 or email sheartchicago@gmail.com.

LGBT events part of AWP this year

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) annual conference will take place Feb. 29-March 3 in Chicago, and there are several LGBT-themed events taking place in connection with it:

—Joy Ladin will be at Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., on Saturday, March 3, at 4:30 p.m. to discuss *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders*.

—Kathie Bergquist will discuss her book, *Windy City Queer: LGBTQ Dispatches from the Third Coast*, on Friday, March 2, at 6 p.m. at Film Row Cinema at Columbia College, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

—There will be a Univ. of Wisconsin Press & Zone 3 Publishing event Thursday, March 1, at 7 p.m. at The Fine Arts Building, 40 E. Oak St. Among those slated to attend are Jazzy Danziger (Darkroom) and Ladette Randolph (*This Is Not the Tropics*).

—Michael Montlack (*My Diva: 65 Gay Men on the Women Who Inspire Them*) will be at Rehab Cocktail Lounge, 3641 N. Halsted St., on Thursday, March 1, at 6 p.m. He will help launch *Divining Divas: 10 Gay Men on Their Divas*. Bergquist will be a special guest.

There will also be on-site events for those who have registered. (The event is sold out.):

—The "Queer for You: Building an Enduring Readership for LGBT Authors" workshop (March 1 at 3 p.m.) features David Groff and Samiya Bashir, among others.

—"The Place at the Heart of Story" (March

2 at 12 p.m.) will feature, among others, Lori Ostlund and Raphael Kadushin.

—Ladin and Samuel Ace are among those participating in "Gender Interrupted: Poetry of the Alternatively Gendered" (March 2 at 3 p.m.).

March 1 reading with queer writers of color

A reading featuring queer writers of color will take place Thursday, March 1, 7-10 p.m., at the third floor of Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

Among the many writers slated to appear are Lorenzo Herrera y Lozano, David Keali'i, Jennifer Lisa Vest, D. Antwan Stewart, Janet McAdams and Ching-In Chen.

The Lambda Literary Foundation is sponsoring the event, which is part of the 2012 Association of Writers & Writing Programs conference, taking place Feb. 29-March 3.

Visit "Ancestors: A Queer Writers of Color Reading" on Facebook.

Antique American glass sale March 10-11

The Antique American Glass sale will be held Saturday-Sunday, March 10-11, at the Concord Plaza Midwest Conference Center, 401 W. Lake St., Northlake.

There will be more than 25 dealers from around the country.

The event will take place at 10 a.m.-5 p.m. March 10, and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. March 11. Admission is \$8; call 630-851-4504 or email JSANTIQUES@aol.com.

The 20 30 40 Glass Society of Illinois is sponsoring the event.



Depression-era glass by Heisey Glass Co. Photo from the 20-30-40 Glass Society



Chicago Drag ball. Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum.



Tony Jackson at Piano, The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, 92-48-LMSS 508, F. 53, New Orleans, LA. Courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center.

Queer Bronzeville:

A History of African American LGBTs on Chicago's South Side, 1900-1985

The Emergence of African-American Queer Cultures on Chicago's South Side, 1920-1940

BY TRISTAN CABELLO

This is the first of a multi-part series.

In the early 1920s, African American LGBTs were integrated to Bronzeville's mainstream culture and accommodated by its inhabitants, religious figures and political leaders, much unlike their white counterparts who had already created their own "gay" enclave of "Towertown" on the North Side.

From State Street to Cottage Grove Avenue, along 43rd and 47th Street, Bronzeville's commercialized and jazz-influenced urban culture offered African American gays and lesbians several venues where homosexuals and heterosexuals interacted across the color line (the Plantation Café, the Pleasure Inn, the Cabin Inn, Club DeLisa and Joe's Deluxe), yearly popular Halloween "Drag Balls" popularized by Black gay hustler Alfred Finnie, semi-safe locations (the Wabash YMCA, Washington Park, Jackson Park), and a "vice district" which facilitated prostitution.

Bronzeville's most powerful inhabitants (Reverend Clarence Cobbs) and its most famous musicians (Tony Jackson, Rudy Richardson, Sippie Wallace, Frankie "Half-Pint" Jaxon, and George Hannah) were homosexuals. Joe Hughes, owner of a popular gay-friendly bar, was elected honorary mayor of Bronzeville in 1940. Journalist Theodore Jones regularly hired drag queen Valda Gray's troupe of female impersonators for parties given for Bronzeville's upper class. On the streets, working-class African American queers were also accepted. Lorenzo Banyard, a drag entertainer, remembers riding streetcars to the West Side, dressed in drag, without incident.

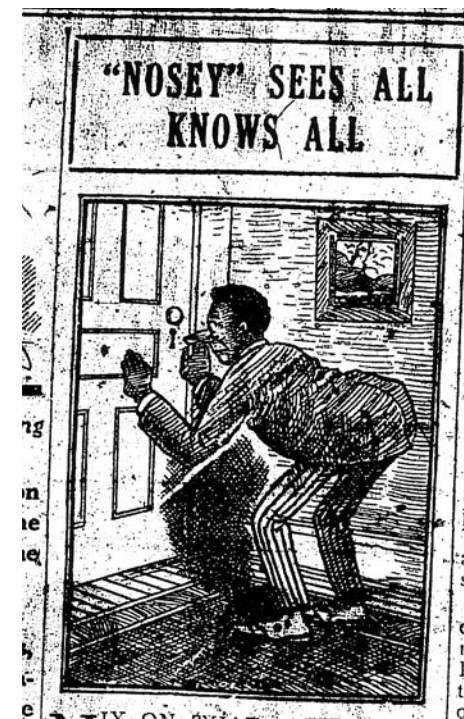
Bronzeville's queer population grew rapidly during the Great Migration. Like the millions of African Americans who left the poverty and racism in the South, Black queers traveled to urban centers to find better-paying jobs, but also to take advantage of the opportunities for same-sex encounters.

Blues pianist Antony (Tony) Jackson was one of the many queer migrants who decided to leave their native South to take advantage of Chicago's freedom. Born in New Orleans in 1876, Jackson spent his youth in the saloons, gambling halls, and brothels of the Black neighborhood of Storyville.

In search of a place more receptive to his music and sexual orientation, the musician migrated to Chicago in 1908. Blues singer Jelly Roll Morton, a friend of the pianist, claimed that Jackson had migrated to Chicago because "he happened to be one of those gentlemen that a lot of people call [...] lady or sissy." According to Morton, Jackson "liked his freedom in Chicago," a freedom that included the ability to work full time in Bronzeville's most renowned cabarets, theaters, and cafés, as well as the possibility of encounters with men of similar sexual orientation.

But Jackson participated in an already rich queer culture. Visible queer individuals—female impersonators, effeminate men, and masculine women—were also amongst the neighborhood's most popular artists and entertainers. Female impersonators, for example, enjoyed great popularity due to the drag balls organized every Halloween and New Year's Eve.

The nation's first drag balls took place during the last decades of the nineteenth century and from their inception their appeal transcended



The Chicago Whip often commented on homosexuals' presence in the Stroll, the main street of Bronzeville. The column "Nosey Sees All Knows All," written under the pen name "Nosey," often discussed the lives of Bronzeville's homosexuals. Images provided by Tristan Cabello

racial lines. The first Chicago balls were also racially integrated, a fact frequently remarked upon by those who attended or wrote about them. University of Chicago sociology student Myles Vollmer observed: "Physically, all types are there. Homosexuals thin and wasted, others slender and with womanish curves, others overfed and lustfully fat. Most of the younger homosexuals have pallid complexions with rather thin hair, due, perhaps, to overindulgence. There is a preponderance of Jews and the Latin nationalities, although homosexuality is no respecter of races. Many of the men are of Polish blood and Negroes mingle freely with whites. There seemingly is no race distinction between them."

Chicago's Black newspapers often commented on queers' presence on the Stroll, the main commercial artery of Bronzeville.

The Chicago Whip was a specialist on the topic. The column "Nosey Sees All Knows All," written under the pen name "Nosey," often discussed the lives of Bronzeville's queers. In November 1919, Nosey, who was "out on Halloween Eve," had seen "the mother of six children," who "had on a pair of men's trousers, face covered with powder, with hair cut just like a man."

In a November 1920 article, The Chicago Whip asked, "Have We Had a Sex Problem Here?" The article told the story of Sherman Robinson, resident of 3521 S. Wabash Avenue, the "plaintiff in one of Chicago's most unusual divorce cases." According to the reporter, the couple had "been living happily until September 1916, when Ida [Robinson's wife] had left [him] for a woman she had previously met in Paducah, Kentucky."

Black queers took advantage of the freedom of expression they found in South Side's cabarets, epicenters of non-normative sexual practices such as interracial relations, prostitution and queer relations. The music played in these

Turn to page 27



Sign for Finnie's Halloween Ball.



Left to right: Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey, Gladys Bentley, Blues Singer Bessie Smith.



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Ad for the Cabin Inn in the Chicago Defender, 1936.

BRONZEVILLE from cover

cabarets reveals the open-mindedness that characterized the South Side during this era. Blues audiences heard the terms "sissy" or "bulldagger," in the Blues singers' lyrics, which spoke of the mutability of sexual desire. Gladys Bentley sang, "If you can't bring a woman, bring me a sissy man." Gertrude "Ma" Rainey explained in a song she wrote entitled "Prove it on me Blues" that she could "wear a shirt and tie," and that she could "talk to the ladies like a man." The "sissies" and lesbians mentioned in Blues songs were never ridiculed for their behavior.

Gay dances and masquerades were regular events of Chicago's Black queer culture. Drag balls, popular on the South Side, were held in the neighborhood every Halloween and New Year's Eve, which enabled them to pass for conventional costume parties.

The most famous of these drag balls were the Finnie's ball, the first of which occurred in 1935 and was organized by an African American queer street hustler and gambler named Alfred Finnie, in the basement of a tavern on the corner of 38th Street and Michigan Avenue. Guests of the ball paid 25 cents to attend. The balls later became staples of the South Side Black queer culture and attracted hundreds of Chicagoans who came to applaud drag entertainers. Professional drag queens were respected because of their well-paying jobs, which often enabled them to provide for their families' needs.

At the end of the 1930s, the South Side's most popular queer cabarets were the Club De

Lisa and the Cabin Inn. Club DeLisa, the high point of Bronzeville's nightlife, was a favorite haunt of the 1930s most famous jazz musicians. The club could welcome up to 500 people, who came to see jazz and blues musicians such as Chippie Hill, Tommy Powell and the De-Ho Boy, and Albert Ammons and his Rhythm Kings. Rudy Richardson, a queer pianist and singer, brought a sizeable queer audience.

Nat "Big" Ivy had opened the Cabin Inn to attract working-class Blacks. Female impersonator Valda Gray, the show's producer, familiarized Bronzeville's clubs with drag performances, leading a troupe of drag queens; "Joanne Crawford," "Jean LeRue," "Nina McKinney," "Nancy Kelly," and "Dixie Lee" presented a show every night.

At the time, the practice of having sex with an effeminate man and the identity of being homosexual were not linked. As a result, some men shifted rather freely between sexual relations with women and with men. Others viewed sexual relations between people of the same gender as an acceptable alternative to heterosexual relations. If they had the active role in the sexual relation and acted masculine in other contexts, these men reinforced their status as men with these relations.

Black newspapers and blues recordings appear to have emphasized these concepts, suggesting that sex with female impersonators and effeminate men did not pose a threat to masculinity. For example, when a man stated in the Inner State Tattle Newspaper that women had disappointed him, the reporter commented that this

man could "be popular at the next Faggot's Ball."

Another example is the lyrics of Thomas Dorsey's "Sissy Blues" in which the singer claims, "Now all the people ask me why I'm all alone/A sissy shook that thing and took my man from home," which suggested that leaving one's wife for a female impersonator was as acceptable as leaving for another woman.

Bronzeville's sexual discourses were rooted in the neighborhood's cultural, social, and economic realities, which were often isolated from the rest of the city. Because of the expanding bar culture, Bronzeville's queers became an essential part of the neighborhood's development, which explained their integration and acceptance.

These queers were however not regulated by a specific "gay" identity. Cabarets, newspapers, drag queens, and prostitutes participated in the creation of diverse and plural identity discourses. South Side queer identities were divided, divisive and multiple. Rather than queer or sexual identities, racial, cultural, gender, and class identities played a much greater role in guiding Bronzeville's sexual discourse.

Tristan Cabello is the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in African-American Studies at Bowdoin College and is currently completing his first book "Queer Bronzeville: Race, Sexuality and Urban Boundaries in Black Chicago, 1900-1985." His exhibit "Queer Bronzeville" is available on the website www.outhistory.org.

More from Lambda Legal's Freedom to Marry reception

Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)





WEEKLY DINING GUIDE IN WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Jane's Restaurant

As you might expect for any business that's been around for almost two decades, the west Bucktown restaurant Jane's has undergone some changes. However, there are two items that have been consistent: comfort and good food.

The reason for that first facet of the restaurant is another mainstay: owner Julie Greenwalt.

"In 1994, a couple started the restaurant," Greenwalt said. "Two years into it, she left; three and a half years later, he left. There were silent partners who had bought them out. At the time, [chef] Tony [Recillas] and I had been running it. Slowly, we started buying shares. We've been running [the restaurant] for about 15 or 16 years; it's the longest relationship of my life."

Regarding the food, Greenwalt revels in its consistency. "The food's consistently good, and I've had famous chefs come in here and tell me that," she said. Greenwalt credits said consistency to Recillas and the "family atmosphere" the staff has.



Clockwise from above: Jane's cheese plate, vegetarian burrito, Julie Greenwalt and chef Tony Recillas, exterior of the restaurant.



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the DISH DINING LISTINGS

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beefbrandy.net
A Chicago tradition since 1967. Serving pizza, burgers, meat loaf, homemade Focaccia bread and more.

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3356 N. Halsted St., Chicago
773-281-3355
roscoes.com
Visit our popular outdoor cafe. Salads, burgers, wraps, sandwiches, drink specials, and Sunday Brunch.

Jane's Restaurant

1653-55 W. Cortland Ave.
773-862-5263
janesrestaurant.com
An everyday, upscale eatery

located in neighborhoody Bucktown. Stunning Special Events Room. Brunch, Lunch & Dinner.

Hamburger Mary's

5400 N. Clark St., Chicago
773-784-6969
hamburgermarys.com/chicago
Burgers, salads and sass served up in a kitschy atmosphere with an on-site brew pub.

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Miss Asia
434 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago
773-248-3999
missasiacuisine.com
At Miss Asia we provide fine traditional Thai cuisine and an elegant dining atmosphere.

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Swedish Bakery
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swedishbakery.com
European-style cookies, pastries, breads, and tortes. We'll create a cake for any celebration.

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Geja's Cafe
340 W. Armitage Ave., Chicago
773-281-9101
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Mundial Cocina Mestiza
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312-491-9908
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Serving up traditional German specialties, beer, wine, music and dancing 6 days a week.

One of the changes that has occurred is the expansion of the restaurant—which involves a gorgeous reception room that seats 55, according to Greenwalt. The mostly white room, which has been around for about seven years, "looks like a French bistro, a little bit," she said. My dining partner said it reminded him of an ice-cream parlor from another time, and I was inclined to agree. [Note: The out Greenwalt added that is the perfect place for a civil-union reception, fundraiser or even a baby shower. I could see all of those taking place there—although, obviously, not simultaneously.]

Another change involves the contemporary American menu, Greenwalt said: "When we started off, it was mostly vegetarian, chicken and fish. We added steaks and burgers—we now have one of the better burgers in the city."

She said the neighborhood has also changed. "We have a real nice mixed crowd [of all ages]," she said. "There are now more single-family homes in the neighborhood, which is good and bad for us. There used to be more rental properties and people with more disposable income."

Purchases made at Jane's would be income well spent. We tried several dishes, including the aforementioned sirloin burger with hickory-smoked bacon, cheddar cheese and grilled onions (a fantastic sandwich); however, this carnivore's favorite dish is the vegetarian burrito, complete with goat cheese, vegetable and tofu. The grouper is another can't-miss item, and be sure to order the mashed potatoes.

Other items include everything from a hummus-plate appetizer to entrees such as grilled bone-in pork chop and salmon salad.

Greenwalt said that a cookbook with recipes of some of the restaurant's items is in the works, and it should be out in six months.

Asked to describe Jane's in three words, Greenwalt said "healthful," "charming" and "romantic." I couldn't agree more. (By the way, a fourth word would be "affordable.")

Jane's is at 1653-55 W. Cortland St. See www.janesrestaurant.com or call 773-862-5263.

Note: The Trapdoor Theatre is in the back of the restaurant, allowing patrons to grab a quick drink before a show.

To get your business listed in The Dish, contact advertising@windycitymediagroup.com

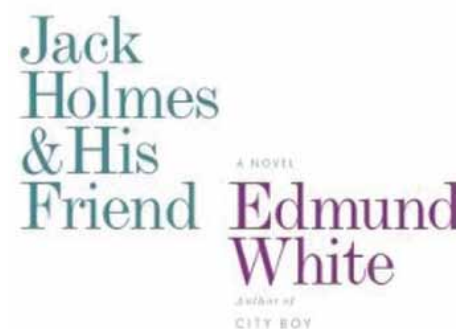
BOOKS

Between the covers

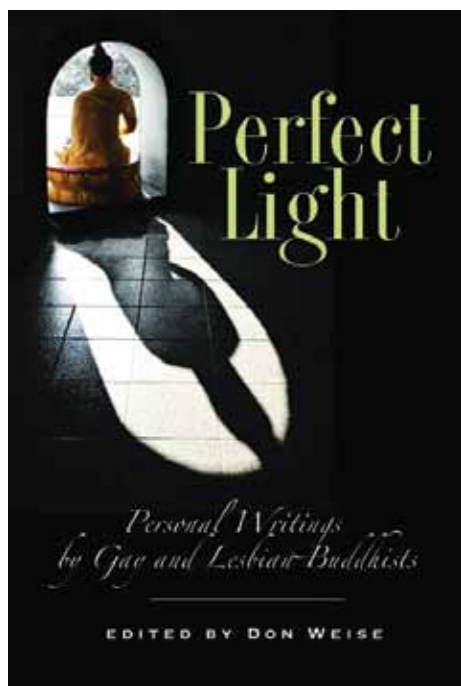
BY AMOS LASSEN

It is not always easy to narrow my monthly book list down to just 10, because there is so much being published. What I have tried to do is a give a list that includes all genres and enough variety that everyone can find something here to read. The books are listed in no particular order although I cannot recommend Edmund White's new book enough. It is no wonder he is regarded so highly in literary circles.

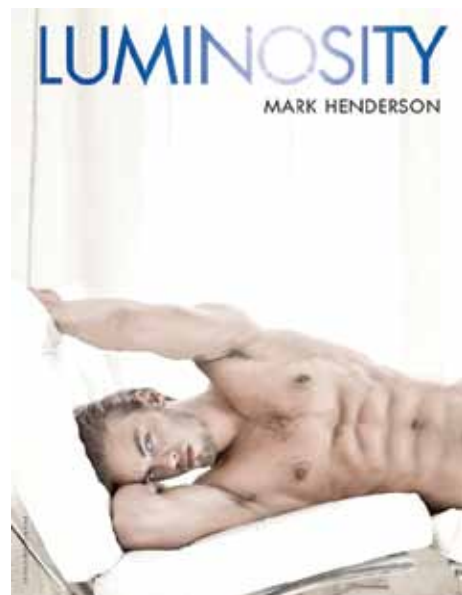
White's **Jack Holmes and His Friend** (Bloomsbury Publishers) is a wonderfully crafted story of a relationship between a straight man and a gay man during the sexual revolution in America. Jack Holmes is in love with Will Wright, but Will cannot return the feeling. This is a story about different classes and differing sexualities that is so beautifully written that I found myself wanting to dwell on every page. White lets us see how he perceives America through wonderfully drawn characters, and if you have read White you know that he is a master. His narrative is amazing as he explores both sensibility and sexuality. Even though this appeared on my December list, I have included it again simply because it is so wonderful. It is now one of my all-time favorite books.



Don Weise, founder of Magnus Books, gives us an anthology about gay Buddhists. **Perfect Light** consists of 22 essays that cover the range of gay life and especially deals with gay Buddhists. We learn about spirituality and sex and how these work in the Buddhist framework and learn a great deal about the nature of spirituality.

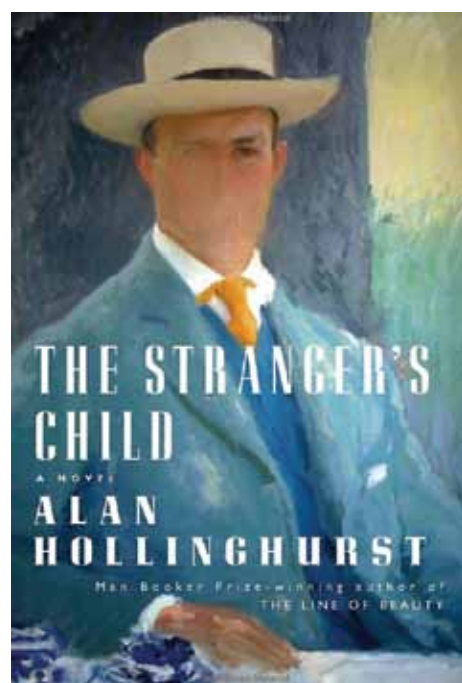


Luminosity, by Mark Henderson, is a look at the male body through the photographs of Henderson. Each and every page is beautiful and sensual and this is just a wonderful book.



We will finally get to see Tony Kushner's five one-act plays in print. **Tony Kushner: Five One-Act Plays** (Theater Communications Group) are the latest output from one of the most important writers for the American theater and for our community. Kushner's *Angels in America* wowed us and brought him the Pulitzer Prize and several Tony Awards. Now in shorter works, Kushner is just as relevant. The plays included are *Flip Flop Fly!*; *Terminating or Sonnet LXXV* or *Lass Meine Schmerzen Nicht Verloren Sein* or *Ambivalence*; *East Coast Ode to Howard Jarvis*: a little teleplay in tiny monologues; *Dr. Arnold A. Hutschnecker in Paradise*; and *Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall Be Unhappy*.

Alan Hollinghurst's new novel, **The Stranger's Child** (Knopf), has been highly awaited and it was, indeed, worth the wait. Set in 1913, Cecil Valance, a young aristocratic poet goes to stay with George Sawle, a friend from his college days at Cambridge. What follows is a plot that will have you turning pages as fast as you can to find out about what happened during that weekend visit.

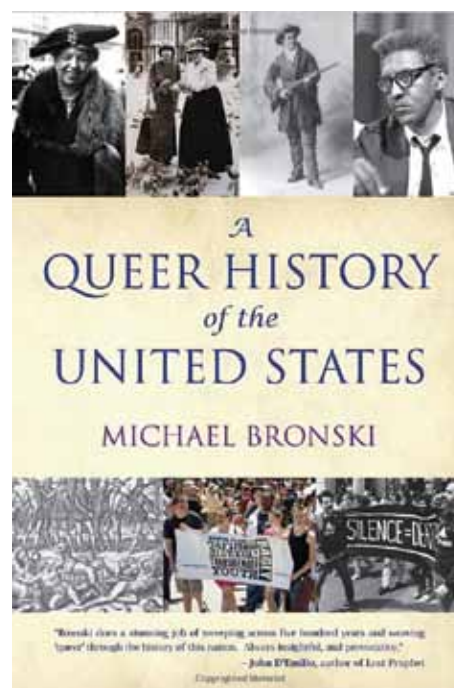


One of the most beautiful books now available is **Treasures of Gay Art from the Leslie/Lohman Gay Art Foundation** edited by Peter Weirmair (All Saints Press). It is erotic and filled with masterpieces—and it provides a basic collection of erotic gay art. The collection was first shown in 1968 and became a foundation dedicated to the preserving of art in 1990. The book

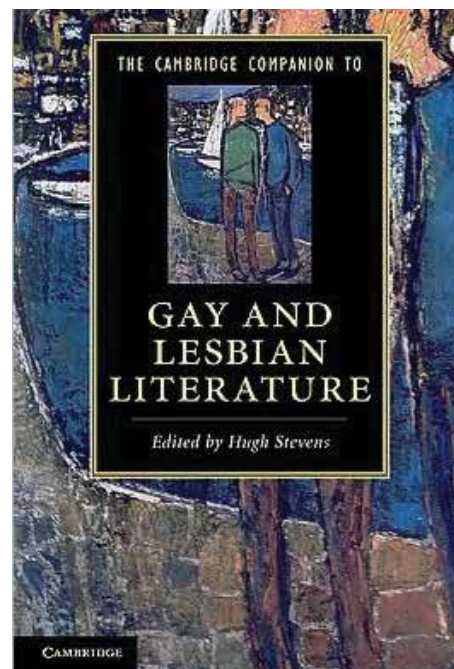
is divided into paintings, drawings and sculpture and one of the highlights is a look at some very erotic Warhol.



The first book to cover all of LGBT history from 1492 through the present is Michael Bronski's **A Queer History of the United States** (Beacon Press). It is wonderfully readable and looks at the way we understand the history of the United States. The LGBT population moves from the margins to the mainstream and we see that the history of this country also is our history.

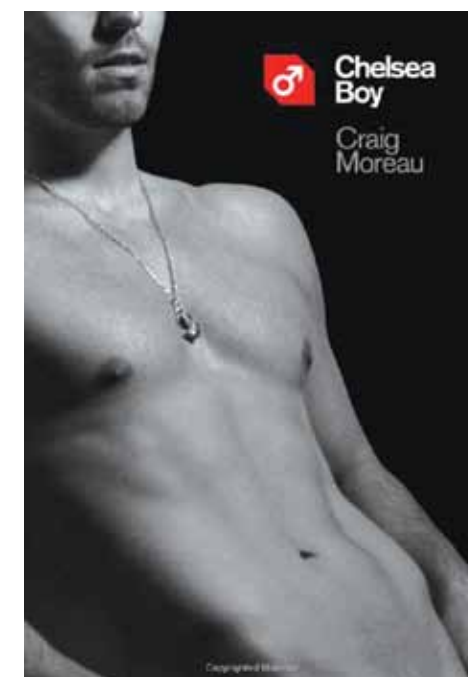


The Cambridge Companion to Gay and Lesbian Writing (Cambridge University Press) edited by Hugh Stevens concentrates on the last 20 years and shows how our literature has influenced the overall literary scene. Each chapter shows key concepts by using literary texts and we get a broad overview of the literature of our community. All main authors can be found here and the book has a wonderful chronology and an introduction about the diversity of what we read and write.

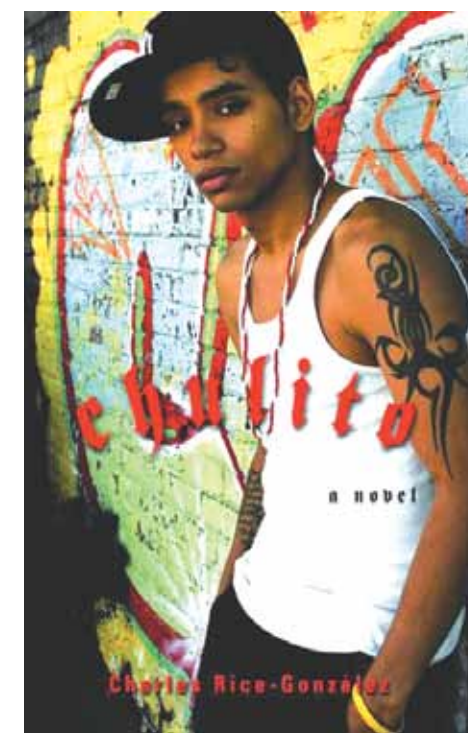


Garrett Graham's **The Gay State: The Quest for an Independent Gay Nation-State and What it Means to Conservatives and the World's Religions** (iUniverse) gives us an outline of 3,000 years of the abuse heaped onto homosexuals—usually because of organized religion. He proposes the idea of a gay state and feels that the people of the world are now ready to receive such an entity. If this were to happen we would have our rightful place in the world and be equal to all. While the idea may sound radical, there is something to be learned from this book and it is guaranteed to make you think.

Craig Moreau is a new poet and his first book, **Chelsea Boy**, Chelsea Station Editions looks at how he was transformed when he moved from Iowa to New York City. He became a "Chelsea Boy" and he shares with us what he has gained and what he has lost and exactly what the stereotype type means. The poetry moves beyond Chelsea to Fire Island and Midtown, Miami Beach and even San Francisco and we see that you can take the boy out of Chelsea but The poems are playful and erotic and tell us about the way we live—and to me that is what counts.



Finally we have **Chulito** (Magnus Books) by Charles Rice-Gonzalez, the story of a young man in Manhattan as he comes of age and comes out. I know what you are thinking, "not another one," but this is not just another one. Chulito is one of the boys that the neighborhood watched grow and he had many friends. When he realizes who he is, he deals with it in a way that causes him the loss of nothing. There is no collision between two different worlds and Chulito shows us how to do that. This is the first book from Gonzalez-Rice. Keep your eyes on him; I think he is going to be very big.



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ARTISTS

CALL FOR ARTISTS: SKOKIE ART GUILD'S 51st ANNUAL ART FAIR. July 14th & 15th, 2012. Fine art. Prizes and awards. Held on the Village Green, 5211 W. Oakton St., downtown Skokie, IL. apply now. **For applications or information: skokieart@aol.com or 847-677-8163. www.skokieartguild.org (6/27/12)**

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LIVE/WORK/PLAY OPPORTUNITY IN DOWNTOWN LAKE GENEVA, WI. Turnkey B&B ready for new owner/s. Est. 12 years ago, this wonderful brick Federal Victorian, fully updated and furnished can be yours for the upcoming season. Act now/limited financing possible. Call 262-249-0632. www.mariasbandb.com (3/7/12-4)

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CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We're a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn't been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Depressed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and insured. **Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575. www.ChestnutCleaning.com (11/21/12-52)**

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Counseling and Clinical Hypnotherapy: Providing help to individuals and couples in our community since 1987. I specialize in relationship issues, spiritual issues, childhood trauma, and recurrent patterns that inhibit potential. **Starla R. Sholl, LCSW, PC, 773.878.5809, www.starlasholl.com (3/7/12-26)**

THE JUNIPER CENTER/CENTER FOR RELATIONSHIP HEALTH. Life gets complicated. You have tried all that you know to solve a problem or repair a relationship. When you are not sure what's next, we are here to help. LGBTQ individuals, couples & families. juipercenterchicago.com 847-759-9110 (4/25/12-13)

SOLUTION FOCUSED COUNSELING Counseling for individual & couples in warm, safe atmosphere by licensed psychotherapist. Depression, anxiety, body image issues & relationship problems. **Lakeview location. Sliding scale. John D. Moore, PhD, www.johndmoore.net (773) 704-5300 (5/9/12-13)**

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INTERIOR DESIGN/SALES Closets by Design, the nationwide leader in home organization, seeks a ft/pt work from home designer for its Addison, IL location. Do like to help others get organized? Have you ever designed a space? Do you have basic sales experience? If so, we would like to talk with you. We provide you with the leads and the training; you provide the great attitude and a willingness to learn. Typical designers make 2k to 4k per month plus benefits. **Email brianb@closetsbydesign.net or fax a resume to: 630-501-0190. Take a look at our website: www.closetsbydesign.com. (3/7/12-2)**

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LEGAL SERVICES

NEED LEGAL HELP? Pride Law, Andersonville's legal aid clinic for the LGBT community can help. Clinic hours every Wednesday, 5-8:00 p.m. by appointment only. Call 1-866-703-5509 or send us an email at prideslaw@tsamislaw.com.

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FIRST-CLASS ASIAN MALE MASSEUR. London-trained and qualified. Over 25 years of worldwide experience and 100% attuned to your needs. Satisfaction assured. Please call Dennis at 773-248-9407 (4/18/12-15)

PIANO & VOICE LESSONS

PIANO OR VOICE LESSONS - in my Boystown area studio or your home offered by young gay professional with Master's in music. Take lessons with a neighborhood teacher! **Jonathan at 646 418 4043. (2/22/12-4)**

SPIRITUALITY

Weekly Teachings and Meditations with Buddhist Monk, Gen Kelsang Dorje in Lakeview, Andersonville, Oak Park

The Brave Heart

Healing Relationships with Ourselves and Others



More Info

Vajrayana Kadampa Buddhist Center
meditateinchicago.org
708-763-0132



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WWW.GAYREALSTATE.COM Free Instant Access to Chicago's Top Gay REALTORS® on-line at www.GayRealEstate.com or Toll Free 1.888.420.MOVE (6683) (4/25/12-52)

FOR SALE - TWO FLAT

EVANSTON, 19th CENTURY VICTORIAN TWO FLAT. Each unit has two bedrooms. Finished basement. Perfect for someone who works from home. Walking distance to shopping, restaurants, and Lake Michigan as well as Metra and CTA. \$450,000.00. **Baird and Warner. 847.905.5222 (2/22/12-2)**

FOR SALE - LOCAL BEACH PROPERTY

BEVERLY SHORES BEACH. 3 bedrooms/3 full bathrooms; open concept - upgraded kitchen, living-room w/fireplace, dining room, and wonderful enclosed screened-in porch. Relax outdoors on one of two balconies, or back deck, ready to entertain with a hot tub and sound system. Easy access to major shopping and travel into Chicago by way of Beverly Shores' South Shore station. **View listing here: <http://mccolly.com/mgilbertsen-MyListings-1WMarne.mgilbertsen@mccolly.com> (2/22/12-2)**

TWO BEDROOMS FOR RENT

EDGEWATER COMMUTER ADVANTAGE. You'd be happy to come home to. Walk to beach, bus, redline or shops. Joyously sunny and secure first floor. Big bedrooms with walk-in closets. Large kitchen with diningroom. \$1200 with heat plus laundry, patio and yard, new sink and intercom. **It's your move...773-706-6065 (2/22/12-3)**

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Wed., Feb. 29

Grand Opening of new GL Chamber Headquarters Open House: 9am to 5pm. Reception: 6 pm to 8:30pm. Info and registration online. 9am-8:30pm, GL Chamber Headquarters, 3179 N. Clark St., www.glchamber.org

Leap Day Party: Brad Trowbridge For Judge Hosts: Art Johnston, Jon Erickson, David Bartrick, Anthony Miceli, Aaron Brost, Sue Moehn, Michelle Arocha and Sam Slade. Donation Amounts: Leap of Faith, \$ 150; Giant Leap \$ 100; Big Leap \$ 50; 5:30pm-7:30pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St., www.bradforjudge.com

AWP Women's Caucus Poetry Reading Featuring Martha Collins, Cynthia Hogue, Kathryn Kysar, Lois Roma-Deeley, Patricia Smith, and Keli Stewart; 7pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Benefit for Bryan Shades All proceeds raised will be donated towards Bryan's medical bills. Your \$10 donation to Bryan's medical fund included a hosted bar from 9-10:30pm; 9pm-10:30pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St., www.hydratechicago.com

Martinis, Beaus & Beauties: A Leap Year Celebration & Martini Social \$5 Martinis & 1/2 appetizers all night. Afterwork mingle and model mixer 6-10 pm with music by DJ Fr3sh 83. Meet & greet w/The Ladies of the HardCandy 2012 calendar 8-10 pm. Plush Ultra Lounge, 1104 W. Madison; 6pm, Plush Ultra Lounge, 1104 W. Madison

Thursday, March 1

SHE ART Chicago re-opens SHE ART carries the "Female" depicted in all mediums from

WIN OR BLUES Saturday, March 3

Blues singer Shemekia Copeland will be at **SPACE**, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston.

Photo by Larry Busacca



all eras including local emerging artists. Hours Wed-Sat 12-7 Sun 12-5 Closed Mon & Tues. 12pm, SHE ART Chicago, 1519 W. Foster Ave., www.sheartchicago.com

Queer for You: Building an Enduring Readership for LGBT Authors Raphael, Kadushin, David Groff, Nickole Brown, Tony Valenzuela, Don Weise, Samiya Bashir. Private Dining Room 2, Hilton Chicago, 3rd Floor; 3pm, Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave., uwpress.wisc.edu

Divining Divas: 10 Gay Men on Their Divas launch Join Michael Montlack, editor of My Diva: 65 Gay Men on the Women Who Inspire Them, for the launch of Divining Divas. Special Guest: Kathie Bergquist; 6pm, Rehab Lounge, 3641 N Halsted St., uwpress.wisc.edu/books/4584.htm

Cyberbullying seminar Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez's Office in conjunction with the Chicago Police Department will offer topics, including prevention and action. Light refreshments will be served. Lerner Auditorium. R.S.V.P. at gina.ceh@cookcountyil.gov or by phone. 6:30pm-

7:30pm, 773-334-4066, Sulzer Regional Chicago Public Library, 4455 N Lincoln Ave.

American Veterans for Equal Rights (GLBT veterans) Monthly meeting first Thursday of each month. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, Chicago, www.averchicago.org

Newtown Writers Chicago's veteran GLBT writing group. For more info contact Barry, frauman8@yahoo.com; 7:30pm, 773-528-3637., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave.

Friday, March 2

Gender Interrupted: Poetry of the Alternately Gendered Book event with Stacey Waite, Joy Ladin, Ely Shipley, Samuel Ace. Lake Ontario, Hilton Chicago, 8th Floor; 3pm-4:15pm, Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave., uwpress.wisc.edu/staff.html

Women's "Friend Finder" 50+ Opening event of new SAGE Speed Dating series with a casual, fun environment that's open to everyone. Registration 6-6:30pm, Speed Dating 6:30-8:30, Mingling 8:30-9:30 This event is for women 50 years of age or over. \$10 at door \$8 with RSVP Light refreshments provided. More speed dating events to come. 6pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Windy City Queer: LGBTQ Dispatches from the Third Coast Kathie Bergquist, editor of Windy City Queer for a group reading with authors Sharon Bridgforth, Deb R. Lewis, J. Adams Oaks, Achy Obejas, David Trinidad, and E. Patrick Johnson. 6pm, Film Row Cinema of Columbia College Chicago, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., 8th Floor, www.colum.edu/events/events/film-and-video-department.php

Kenny Fries, Poetry Readings from Beauty is a Verb Authors: Jennifer Bartlett, Sheila Black, Jim Ferris, Kenny Fries, Laurie Lambeth, Anne Kaier, Stephen Kuusisto, Rusty Morrison, Danielle Pafunda, Jillian Weise. Free and accessible. Sign Language Interpreters and Personal Assistants will be provided; 6:30pm, Access Living, 115 W. Chicago Ave., www.cincopuntos.com

Being Flynn Starring Robert DeNiro and Julianne Moore, based on a true story by Nick Flynn, detailing his own father's struggle with homelessness. \$20 benefits the AFC 100K Homes Campaign Housing Program. 7pm, ShowPlace ICON, 150 W Roosevelt Rd., www.flynnbenefitchicago.com

Spin Shower Contest Join super cute Victor at Midnight for Spin's outrageous and infamous contest! Get there by 11:30pm to enter, and you could win First Prize of

\$150 or Second Prize of \$50. 9pm, Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave, Chicago, spin-nightclub.com

Saturday, March 3

This Will Have Been: Art, Love, & Politics in the 1980s The years shaped by two phenomena that frame the 1980s: feminism and the AIDS crisis. Within these larger outlines, the exhibition finds desire—rather than cynicism or irony—to be the real tenor of the decade. Through June 3. 12pm, Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., www.mcachicago.org

TJY & The Actionettes Sponsored by literary magazines Action Yes! and Red Lightbulbs, an afternoon of queer, feminist, gurlisque & grotesque literary performance featuring kitschy, campy, glamorous and otherwise unruly bodies & texts. Suggested donation \$5. 1pm-4pm, 773-425-3709, Multikulti, 1000 N. Milwaukee Ave., www.brownpapertickets.com/event/219588

Chicago Takes Off: Game On! Chicago Takes Off: Game On! is a burlesque "style" show that features professional dancers in energetic, choreographed performances engaging audiences in a celebration of life—all in support of Test Positive Aware Network's HIV/AIDS programs and services which benefit more than 25,000 individuals through our prevention, outreach, and direct care services and programs. 7:30pm and 10:30 p.m. shows, Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave, www.chicagotakesoff.org

Stephen Leonard Kickstarter Party for his upcoming CD, His Fire. www.kickstarter.com/projects/stephenleonard/stephenleonard-gathering-wood-for-his-fire; 7:30pm-10pm, The Sofo Tap, 4923 N. Clark St.

Shemekia Copeland Grammy-nominated and Harlem-bred blues superstar; 8pm, 847-492-8860, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave. Evanston, www.evanstonospace.com

9 to 12 No Tap Bowling League Longest-running GLBT Bowling League in suburban Chicago 191 South River Road (just north of Rand Road) in Des Plaines; 9pm, 630-567-7196, River Rand Bowl, Des Plaines
CD Release Show "Scotch" by Ripley Caine & The Full Moon Smoky-eyed alterna-rock-pop maverick together with her band The Full Moon, melody, rhythm and swirling vocals, plus Fataally Cool and Jeffrey Altergott \$5. 9pm, Red Line Tap, 7700 N Glenwood Ave., www.ripleycaine.com

Sunday, March 4

Urban Village Church: Andersonville service Andersonville is a neighborhood full of passion, art, diversity, and eclectic energy, all which makes Urban Village Church thrilled to be joining the community! 10:30am-11:45am, 1602 W. Ainslie (at Ashland), www.newchicagochurch.com

Urban Village Church Spiritual worship is about coming together as community to make space for God to move in us. 10:15am-11:30am, Urban Village Church, Spertus Institute, 610 S. Michigan Ave., www.urbanvillagechurch.org

Rainbow Brunch North Shore LGBT men and women who meet the first Sunday of every month to socialize and make new friends. There is no membership fee. Brunch is under \$8.00, pay at the door; 10am-12pm, Old Country Buffet, 8780 W. Dempster, Niles

Heat It UP! Chili Cook-Off Chef entry fee \$15. Tasters \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners, Raffles and prizes. 12pm-3pm, The Glenwood, 6962 N Glenwood Ave., www.theglenwoodbar.com

The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later Redtwist Theatre announces the Chicago premiere production of; 3pm-5:30pm, 773-278-7529, Redtwist Theatre 1044 W. Bryn Mawr Chicago, www.redtwist.org

Lenten Program Dignity/Chicago and Wisdom & Word Works Foundation, grounded in the Catholic tradition, will present a program for Lent focused on "What



LESSON PLANS

Thursday, March 1

Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez will help spearhead a cyberbullying seminar at Sulzer Regional Public Library, 4455 N. Lincoln Ave.

Covenant means to us today ... after 40 years." Rev. Barbara Zeman and Reverend Mary Ramsden will lead reflections during Dignity's weekly Sunday Mass followed by group discussions during customary soup supper after each of the five Sundays of Lent. All are welcome. 5pm, 312-458-9438, Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N Broadway, www.dignity-chicago.org

@mosphere's 10-Year Anniversary Party 8:30pm-10:30pm, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St., www.facebook.com/events/248226751923478/

Madonnarama/Single Release Party Win copies of Madonna's new single, "Give Me All Your Lovin," featuring Nicki Minaj and M.I.A. All Madonna all night with DJ Riley York. 10pm, Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave., www.berlinchicago.com

Monday, March 5

"God, I Hope I Get It!" A one-night only concert to benefit The Sarah Siddons Society featuring Hollis Resnik, E. Faye Butler, Heidi Kettnering, Geoff Packard and a star-studded roster of Chicago's leading music theatre talents performing their favorite audition songs. 8pm, 800-838-3006, event222858, Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire, www.brownpapertickets.com/event/222858

Live Band Karaoke with Amy Armstrong Every Monday night at 10PM in the Front Bar, hosted by the one and only Amy Armstrong; 10pm, Roscoe's, 3356 N Halsted St, Chicago, www.roscoes.com

Tuesday, March 6

Reclaiming Pornography One Orgasm at a Time and screening Madison Young will offer a sneak preview of the new sex positive film, Sex & Coffee. After the screening the award-winning feminist pornographer, performer, educator and writer will facilitate a discussion about sex-positive pornography and the concept of radical pornography as a form of activism. 7:30pm, Early to Bed, 5232 N Sheridan Rd., www.early2bed.com.

Wed., March 7

Benefit for Ida B. Wells monument To benefit the development of a monument to honor the life and accomplishments of the historic Ida B. Wells – journalist, teacher, anti-lynching crusader, women's rights activist and civil rights pioneer. World-renowned artist Richard Hunt, who is Chicago-based and commissioned to create the monument, will give an overview of his vision for the historic monument which will be located in the Bronzeville neighborhood where Ida B. Wells lived. 5:30pm, 773-382-6115, Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., www.idabwellsmonument.org



SKIN IS IN

Saturday, March 3

Chicago Takes Off will dazzle once again with two shows at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave.

Photo from 2010 by Kat Fitzgerald

BILLY MASTERS

"We have safe sex. We have a foolproof system. We don't use birth control. Actually, I pull out. One of the best things about being in a monogamous relationship is that you don't need to use a condom. To me, that's the beauty of being in a relationship."—Adam Levine tells Howard Stern his preferred method of birth control. It sounds risky to me.

My favorite story of the week is more than just a story; it ties into a video. It involves little Zac Efron at the premiere of *The Lorax*, a lovely family film. It's a low-key event, taking place during the day in Hollywood, with lots of kids about. Zac is walking the red carpet, ready to talk to the press and asks one of his minions (yes, he's got minions) to hold something ... you know, like his cell phone or car keys. No problem. He reaches into his pocket to hand off whatever, and in the process what drops to the ground? A condom!!! Not just any condom, but a condom in a gold foil wrapper—which really picks up the



Zac Efron had an embarrassing moment on the red carpet, according to Billy.

midday sun so nicely. He discreetly mouthed, "Oh, my God!" to the underling as he snatched the prophylactic packet from the ground with all the grace of a gazelle. He put back on his sunglasses to partially cover his beet-red face, and poses for the paparazzi. Oh, it's a little bit of heaven. And thanks to the surreptitious video we obtained, you can watch it, too, on BillyMasters.com.

Wondering why there's no rush to replace Regis? I've been made privy to a sinister plot being hatched deep in the bowels of ABC: They want the show to fail! Ratings have dropped with Kelly Ripa left to helm the show with a slew of guest co-hosts. If this free fall continues, the show could be yanked ... and that would be music to the ears of certain network execs. Why would they want one of their own shows to fail? Simple—for the time slot. When Katie Couric was wooed away from CBS, she was promised her own talk show. Problem is, ABC doesn't have any space for it. It's been widely presumed that *General Hospital*, the network's sole daytime drama, would be the victim. But someone came up with an alternative. If "Live!" is cancelled, there's an hour available. There are two scenarios being discussed: Katie would air at 3 p.m. with *General Hospital* relegated to 9

a.m., or—even better—Katie at 9 a.m., where she could woo her loyal Today Show fans. It's a win/win for everyone—except Kelly Ripa!

This next story may or may not be related; you be the judge. Rumors continue to swirl that Ryan Seacrest will be leaving E! News when his contract is up. While some people say it's because of his heavy work schedule, others say he's eyeing a move to the East Coast. And isn't it funny that he's on the top of Ripa's personal list of possible co-hosts. Could he be her last hope? Stay tuned.

I am perplexed. I'm also stymied. The reason I'm sounding like Tim Gunn is because I was just perusing *Out* magazine's list of the top 100 eligible gay bachelors. First I was thrown by the word "top" when I perused the list. Be that as it may, did anyone vet these candidates? Yes, Tim's there. I approve. But many others are not single—in fact, some of them are in long-term relationships with each other! And a few of 'em aren't even ... well, "out."

This segues beautifully into a story recently related by Cuba Gooding Jr. When he was filming Jerry McGuire, he invited his father to visit the set. When he introduced dad to Tom Cruise, the elder Gooding said, "I love you man. Now, seriously, are you gay or not?" Tom laughed (nervously, I reckon) and said, "No." Cuba Gooding Sr. was never seen again. OK, I made that last part up. But Junior did ban his dad from any future set visits. A smart move. Something like that could get you blacklisted in Hollywood.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Daniel on AOL (yes, some people are still on AOL): "Have you seen the new Planet Fitness commercial with the big German-sounding muscle guy who keeps saying, 'I pick things up and put them down'? He looks a lot like porn star Chris Wide, albeit after hitting steroids. Is it him?"

First, it's not really a "recent" commercial—it's been out for about a year. That said, it is indeed former Colt porn star Wide, credited under his real name, Silvio Kersten. He's left his porn life behind and is competing as a professional weightlifter. He's won a number of competitions and has graced the covers of several bodybuilding magazines. I'll run some photos from this new chapter of his life as well as his porn work on BillyMasters.com.

Sure, we're giving you a nude with Chris Wide. But there's nothing really special about that, no offense. So let's move on to our own Gareth Thomas (who is also on the *Out* eligible gay bachelor list). The gorgeous rugby-playing Aussie—who will be played by Mickey Rourke in an upcoming film—was accidentally shown completely nude ... on LIVE TV! A reporter was doing one of those wrap-ups after the game in the locker room (and, btw, where do I apply for that job?). In the background, the guys are getting dressed and, obviously, know there's a camera on them. That didn't stop Gareth from standing there completely naked, showing us his back, his front and even bending over. That's my kinda guy. Check him out on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm answering sports questions, it's definitely time to end yet another column. By the time you read this, the Oscars will be over and I'll already be off on another adventure. My next stop is south Florida, where I'm attending the Winter Party in South Beach. Somehow, I'm double-booked so I'll simultaneously be in Las Vegas for the opening of Share nightclub. How do I do it? Check out www.BillyMasters.com to find out. If you have any questions, feel free to drop a note to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Zac and Adam shoot a Magnum commercial. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Wed, March 7 • 8pm

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Figure skater Sasha Cohen: On college, Olympics

BY ALEX LUBISCHER

At the age of 15, Sasha Cohen burst onto the U.S. figure skating scene with a silver medal win in the 2000 National Championship. She's been a brilliant presence in the skating world ever since, taking home the silver medal at the 2006 Winter Olympics, and most recently starring alongside other skating greats in the 2012 national tour of "Stars on Ice," in Chicago March 11.

Windy City Times broke the ice with this elegant athlete and got the inside scoop on her life in the spotlight.

Windy City Times: Do you have any special talents that your fans might not be familiar with?

Sasha Cohen: I design my costumes, which I love to do. I am a big fan of financials and Wall Street, which is something I'm studying now in school. I love to travel. I love to taste wine. I don't cook anymore because I live in a studio in New York. [Laughs]

WCT: Where are you going to school?

SC: Columbia. I'm just starting, but it looks like I'm probably going to major in financial econ.

WCT: You must have a lot on your plate right now, touring nationally with Stars on Ice while going to school at the same time.

SC: Yeah, it actually worked out that I can do shows on the weekends and go to school during the week and, you know, sleep a little on the plane. [Laughs] And, yeah, it's been great. I've been studying up in New York. I have a wonderful social life. I've made a lot of friends. It's so easy to network and it's just been good to me.

So I'm really enjoying this transitional part of my life.

WCT: How many cities have you toured so far with "Stars On Ice?"

SC: You know, in previous years we had bigger markets. We were playing 50, 60 shows a year. But this year we're just doing 10 shows [in the United States]. I just did five shows in Japan for Stars on Ice.

WCT: In "Stars on Ice," you're performing with a cast of renowned figure skaters the likes of Kurt Browning, Joannie Rochette and Ilia Kulik. What happens when great figure skaters band together to put on a show, rather than competing with each other?

SC: You see a really incredible collaboration come to life in the big numbers. We're skating to really interesting pop songs. This year, we're doing Florence and the Machine and Adele with super-innovative choreography.

WCT: What song are you doing by Adele?

SC: "Rolling In The Deep." The show is really great. People who aren't usually skating fans or have only seen it on TV [are] blown away by the athleticism and the sheer speed and height on the ice right in front of [them].

WCT: Figure skating has garnered a reputation as a gay-friendly sport. What's your relationship like with your gay fans?

SC: I love all my fans equally. I think that skating has fashion, grace, beauty, and so many things about it that would attract people that are in the fashion world. It's great to have all different kinds of fans—which skating does—because people appreciate it for the courage and the athleticism it requires, as well as the grace and beauty. So I love that the fans are diverse



Sasha Cohen. Photo by Mike Okoniewski

and you get appreciation from all angles.

WCT: You do a lot of charity work. What are some causes you've championed and some that you're looking to get involved with?

SC: I work with Figure Skating in Harlem, which helps to mentor and tutor girls who are involved in skating and have a certain grade point average. It's a structural, supportive program that really integrates a feeling of community. I've worked with Make A Wish Foundation. It's very hard for me to pick one cause, too. I just feel truly blessed to be able to help out in many areas.

WCT: Will you be competing for the trials for the 2014 Winter Olympics?

SC: I will not. I have had a really lengthy and a great competitive career. At this point in my life, I really enjoy doing shows and going to school, and I have other ambitions and interests that I'm currently pursuing.

WCT: You're known as one of the best figure skating artists the United States has ever produced. Where do you see yourself in five years?

SC: You know, I ask myself this every day. Hopefully, I will have graduated with a degree from Columbia by then. I am working with a fashion company now. I would love to produce a line of clothing. I would also like to dabble and see where I belong in finance. It's something I really love and I have an affinity for the market. Just this year and last year is when I feel like I came into my own. I got to live by myself, make new friends outside of skating, and embrace all the other opportunities that life, and particularly New York, has to offer. So I think the next few years are about growth and experimenting, for me.

WCT: And do you see yourself moving away from the world of figure skating in the next few years?

SC: I think skating will always be a part of me and I'll always skate; there's no workout like skating. And in a lot of the charity events I work with, skating is an integral component. But, yes, I would like to see what else is out there. There are so many amazing things going on in this world that I had to have my blinders on to before, because of training and touring. So I want to see what else is out there and explore different possibilities.

Sasha Cohen can be seen in "Stars on Ice" on Sunday, March 11, at Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim Rd., Rosemont, at 5 p.m. See www.starsonice.com for tickets and additional information.

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PLANNING FOR DISASTER

Q. My partner and I are concerned about the possibility of one of us being injured or unable to work due to illness or unexpected accident. As an LGBT couple how can we put our affairs in order and create a contingency plan for that possible rainy day?

A. First, plan for your incapacity. Carry with you a wallet card with contact information for emergency caretakers. If you have a pet at home, carry a pet card to inform emergency care providers that there is a pet in your house that needs care.

I also recommend having an ICE (In Case of Emergency) entry in the address book of your cell phone. That listing can help the paramedics call your LGBT partner or friend that you choose, if needed, while you are riding to the hospital in the ambulance. Also, make sure your apartment building has updated contact information for you and info on who can enter your apartment and have access to the important documents to assist you. You may not want your niece that you have not seen in over 20 years gaining entry to your apartment because she is your closest blood relative.

Next, each member of the couple should make a will, power of attorney for property and power of attorney for health care and share the details of their financial affairs with each other. This should include the location of all assets and vital documents such as insurance policies, passbooks, deeds, etc. Each person should list the names, addresses and account numbers of every bank, mutual fund and brokerage account; policy numbers for health disability and life insurance policies; car registration and title numbers; credit card numbers; and employer pension account numbers. Make sure the other person has a copy of your list.

The lists should also include IRA accounts with beneficiaries, pension funds and profit sharing plans, annuities, safe deposit boxes, location of valuable antiques, jewelry, etc. Include the names, addresses and phone numbers of your attorney, insurance agent, broker, accountant and other financial advisers. Keep one copy of the list at home, a second in your safe deposit box and a third at your attorney's office.

Review all life insurance policies to make sure the primary and contingent beneficiaries reflect current intentions. Exercise any rights to purchase additional life insurance on existing policies.

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CRU participates in rowing tournament

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Rowing Union (CRU) participated in the annual Chicago Indoor Rowing Championships (CIRC) on Feb. 25 at Chicago State University. The event featured more than 20 club, high school and collegiate teams.

Nine CRU members participated: Bill Moudry, Matthew Honaberger, Dino Iaconetti, Travis Paul, Justin DiGiambardino, Joshua Thurbee, Adam Boltz, Lucie-Ann Chen and Craig Wu. CRU entered into several events, including the 2,000-meter men's veterans, the 2,000-meter men's masters, the 2,000-meter men's open, the 2,000-meter women's open, the 1,000-meter coxswain open and the 500-meter men's open sprint.

"Overall, CRU did very well," Wu said. "Several rowers competed for the first time, while others beat personal best records and some beat their times from last year."

"Like many competitions, there were a lot

of nerves, but once the race started, all went away and [the team] did great. This event is good for individual reasons because it gives one a baseline mark for the 'industry standard' for the 2K test—the fastest that one can row 2,000 meters at full race pressure."

Finishing in fewer than 7 minutes in the 2K test is the "gold standard" in the rowing world, said Wu, who finished in 7:02.4.

"For the 500 meter sprint, the idea is to just row as fast and hard as you can until you finish," Wu said. "If, at the end of the races, you feel like you are going to collapse, you did what you were supposed to."

CRU members have spent the off-season training for this event and the upcoming season. The season begins on the water in mid April. The first regatta of the 2012 season is in late-May in Washington D.C., the Stonewall regatta.

"Overall, CRU did very well [in the CIRC]; I am proud of everyone who competed," Wu said. "Considering how we performed [in the CIRC], it promises to be a very successful season for CRU."



Chicago Rowing Union members at the tournament. Photo courtesy of CRU

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Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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An Angel Among Us An Evening with Pulitzer Prize Winning Playwright Tony Kushner

Kushner forever changed the discourse of HIV/AIDS with his stunning play, *Angels in America*, winning the Pulitzer Prize for his efforts. Set in 1985, the play features characters struggling with and dying of AIDS amid the callous social politics of the Reagan administration. *Angels'* themes of politics, grassroots community mobilization and love endure today, despite changes in the epidemic over the past 27 years.

That is but a glimpse of Kushner's work, which has also garnered an Emmy Award, two Tony Awards, three Obie Awards and an Oscar nomination. AIDS Foundation of Chicago is immensely proud and grateful to welcome Tony Kushner for the 2012 Dinner.

For Tickets and information
visit us at aidschicago.org/angels
or call (312) 334-0935.

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