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## No-Trans ENDA Passes

BY LISA KEEN

In what could be argued was the most important gay vote ever taken in Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 235 to 184 Nov. 7 to approve the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Passage came after openly gay Rep. Barney Frank made an emotional plea to his colleagues.

"There are people who are your fellow citizens who are being discriminated against," said Frank, his voice choking in a rare display of emotion. "...Please don't turn your back on them."

The House erupted into applause.

Frank's appeal came after Republicans made an eleventh-hour attempt to kill the bill through a motion to send it back to committee. The specific type of "motion to recommit" they sought—a motion to recommit promptly—would have held the bill in committee for nine calendar days. That, said Frank, would effectively kill the legislation for this session because Congress is scheduled to adjourn in five calendar days.

Frank, saying he was taking the vote "personally," pleaded with members of the House not to buy into what he called a political "sham."

His remarks also came just minutes after another emotional plea from the House's only other

openly gay member, Rep. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin. Baldwin had led efforts in recent weeks to have "gender identity" added to the legislation. Backed by more than 300 LGBT groups, Baldwin had sought the amendment as a way to provide protection for transgender people and as a way to strengthen the bill's protections for gay people. (Some believe that, without "gender identity" in the legislation, an employer can discriminate against a person for having the appearance or mannerisms of a gender other than their own.)

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## Telling: 'We Are Veterans'

Former Marine Staff Sergeant Eric Alva, a gay man who was the first injured in Iraq when he lost a leg to a land mine on the first day of the conflict, speaks at the American Veterans for Equal Rights 15th annual Veterans Day dinner. The public and media interest in him as the first injured has allowed to him argue publicly for overturning the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Photo by Tracy Baim. See page 6 and [www.windycitymedia-group.com](http://www.windycitymedia-group.com) for more photos.

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## Bishop's Ordination at Meeks' Church

BY ANDREW DAVIS AND AMY WOOTEN

Rev. Jeffrey Lee, the next Episcopal bishop of Chicago who said that he supports the full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the church, will be consecrated Feb. 2 at House of Hope, which is headed by Rev. (and State Sen.) James T. Meeks, who has taken anti-gay stances in the past, including voting against the gay-rights bill that passed the Illinois General Assembly in 2005.

On Nov. 10, Lee, rector of St. Thomas Church in Medina, Wash., was elected by a wide margin in a race that garnered global attention because one of the nominees was Rev. Tracey Lind, a lesbian priest who is dean of Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio. Lind came fourth in the voting.

Lind would have been the Episcopal Church's second openly gay bishop, after the 2003 con-

secration of New Hampshire Bishop Gene Robinson. His election created a rift, and some parishes chose to break away from the church as a result.

In addition to acts such as the aforementioned vote, Meeks has made anti-gay statements and has described homosexuality as "an evil sickness."

"As far as the site for the consecration goes," Lee e-mailed Windy City Times, "it has been chosen by leaders in the Diocese of Chicago for any number of reasons, leaders who are sensitive to the issues of inclusion and I trust their decision has been made with the good of all in mind."

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago appointed a transition committee, and one of its tasks was to find a proper venue for the event.

Turn to page 5

## Jamaican gay man wins U.S. asylum



Ven Messam.

Details, pg. 9



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# WINDY CITY TIMES

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Iraq War vet Eric Alva (left) and World War II vet Ed Zasadil were two of the many people who honored LGBT military veterans this past weekend. See page 6.

photo by Tracy Baim

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Richard Knight, Jr., chats with legendary entertainer Rita Moreno (above). See page 20.

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This week's online-only features include:  
-Media Watch and Deep Inside Hollywood  
-Personal PAC's Terry Cosgrove's opinion piece  
-Theater reviews of Five Women ... and A Park in Our House  
-A profile of gay Chicagoan Dustin Erikstrup, who was on Big Brother 8 (right)



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## ENDA from cover

On the floor of the House Tuesday, Baldwin said that while she believed there was "strong support" in the House for adding gender identity to the bill, she also expected it would "fall short of adoption."

"I have been asked why I pressed for and insisted on this amendment," said Baldwin. "I believe those who will be left behind by this bill deserve to hear on this House floor that you are not forgotten and our job will not be finished until you, too, share fully in the American dream."

Baldwin said she would withdraw the amendment, then, added that she was doing so "with a commitment to my colleagues and all Americans committed to equality of opportunity and ending discrimination that I will do everything within my power to make this measure whole again."

The House erupted in applause.

Although it was never formally debated, Baldwin's amendment had been the focus of much of the five hours of debate Wednesday, as Republicans cried foul over a Rules Committee stipulation that Baldwin could introduce her amendment and withdraw it without first getting unanimous consent to do so.

Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., said he was disappointed that the House was being denied the opportunity to have a "full and fair debate" on the Baldwin Amendment. But Frank, ENDA's chief sponsor, came to the floor and teased Hastings for his "eagerness" to discuss the plight of transgender people.

"I'm impressed by the sincerity of the gentleman from Washington on behalf of people who are transgender," said Frank. He then chided Hastings for seeking to use debate on the amendment "as a weapon with which to defeat the whole bill."

After about an hour of discussion about the rules surrounding the Baldwin Amendment, Hastings made a motion to adjourn—a tactical move to buy time or to stall movement on a bill. That motion failed on a roll call vote of 164 to 254. Ultimately, the vote on whether to accept the rules governing consideration of the bill and its amendments was the closest vote of the day, with the rules being accepted on a 218 to 205 vote.

It was during debate on the rules that Republicans laid out their objections to ENDA, saying it would impinge upon the free exercise of religion, endanger the institution of marriage, and lead to endless litigation over such terms as "perceived" sexual orientation.

ENDA prohibits discrimination in employment based on "actual or perceived" sexual orienta-

tion. Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite, R-Fla., said she believed many Republicans, including herself, would support ENDA "without the perception language in it."

But most Republicans who spoke against the legislation claimed it would lead to situations in which Christian employees would be forbidden to have Bibles sitting on their desks. Rep. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., minority whip, said that if an employee chose to keep a Bible at his work station and a co-worker could see it, the co-worker might "bring suit against you saying that the mere presence of religious symbols constitutes a hostile work place."

Those speaking for ENDA were mostly Democrats, although at least two Republicans spoke in favor of the legislation—Reps. Deborah Pryce of Ohio and Mark Steven Kirk of Illinois.

Among the more impassioned remarks in support of the legislation came from African-American members, who likened efforts to protect gays from discrimination to the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

James Clyburn of South Carolina invoked the memory of Blacks being refused service at lunch counters in the South, and John Lewis of Georgia recalled the signs that designated different entrances for "Whites" and "Coloreds."

"I, for one, fought too long and too hard to end discrimination based on race and color not to stand up against discrimination against our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters," said Lewis. "During the 1960s, we broke down those signs that said 'White' and 'Colored.' Call it what you may: to discriminate against someone because they're gay is wrong...."

"Today," he said, "we have an opportunity to bring down more signs. Now is the time to do what is right, what is fair, what is just. The time is always right to do right. Let us pass this bill."

In passing the bill, the House approved two amendments. One was a preemptive strike in anticipation of opponents' chief objections. It came from House Education and Labor Committee Chair George Miller, D-Calif., and Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Mich., and stipulated that the religious exemption allowed for in ENDA would be the same as the religious exemption allowed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It also stipulated that ENDA "does not alter the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in any way." It passed on a vote of 412 to 25.

The second amendment, from one of ENDA's chief detractors—Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind.—struck a paragraph which sought to prohibit employers from conditioning employment on a person being married or being eligible to be married." Chairman Miller said he would not oppose the amendment because he believed it did

not diminish an employee's ability to convince a jury an employer had violated the law by requiring marriage as a pretense for discriminating based on sexual orientation. That amendment passed on a vote of 325 to 101.

When the third amendment, Baldwin's, came up, Souder again raised objections by Republicans that Baldwin was being given an unprecedented privilege to withdraw her amendment without the unanimous consent of the House. Souder said the rule was being used as a political ploy to avoid having an embarrassing vote on the amendment about "people who dress up as the opposite sex." Souder attempted to undermine the rule by suddenly calling for a roll call vote on the amendment in the seconds before Baldwin was given the opportunity to say she was withdrawing it. Parliamentary procedure gives precedence to the call for a recorded vote. But Souder was overruled and the House moved on to give Republicans a chance to recommit the bill, as House rules also require.

Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., led the recommitment effort, saying it was necessary to "ensure this bill does not become the building block that some may want to use to destroy the institution of marriage." His motion sought to send the bill back to committee to add language saying nothing in the bill could be construed as redefining marriage for federal or state purposes beyond the definition of "one man and one woman."

That's when Frank stepped up to the podium and asked Forbes if he would allow the House to proceed to vote if Democrats accepted his language by unanimous consent. Forbes balked.

Frank said Forbes' refusal to accept the offer was a clear indication that Republicans were simply seeking to send the bill back to committee with the "unmistakable intent to put this off until we are due to adjourn."

"We say here that we don't take things personally and, usually, that's true," said Frank. "But the members, Mr. Speaker, will have to forgive me if I take it a little personally." Frank said that he had been working for passage of the legislation for 35 years and that, because he holds a position of power, he is no longer threatened by employment discrimination.

"But I feel an obligation," said Frank, his voice choking up, "to the 15-year-olds dreading to go to school because of the torments, or the person who loses their job at the gas station because of who they love... and so I ask my colleagues here on a personal basis: Don't fall for this sham."

"There are people who are your fellow citizens who are being discriminated against.... Please don't turn your back on them."

The House again erupted into sustained applause. And then it voted 198 to 222 to reject the motion to recommit.

The House then moved quickly to vote on the merits of the overall legislation. The final tally was handed to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who had herself spoke on behalf of the bill but had spent much of the session on the floor with her colleagues. With a big smile on her face, Pelosi announced the 235 to 184 tally, noting that the bill had passed. And the House again broke into sustained applause.

This is the first time the House had ever voted on the legislation to prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation—legislation that was first introduced more than 30 years ago and which went through many permutations before reaching the floor tonight. It is the first time it had ever passed either chamber of Congress, but it was also a bittersweet victory because of the omission of gender identity.

"It was an historic first step toward a fully inclusive piece of legislation," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign. "We're in a good place to build on this historic victory and move towards a more inclusive piece of legislation."

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, called passage of the bill without gender identity "one step backwards but a bunch of steps forward."

"We're disappointed," she said, "but we're very excited about the support that trans people had in the LGBT community and in Congress. We're just looking forward to passing the real ENDA in 2009."

Many political observers expect that, even if the Senate should pass ENDA during the 2007-08 session of Congress, the White House has already made clear that President Bush will likely veto it.

But Speaker Pelosi, in her remarks on the floor in support of the legislation, said that, while she shares the disappointment of those who want to include protections for transgender people, she was supporting the bill's passage now "to build momentum for it" in the near future.

## Statements about ENDA

COMPILED BY AMY WOOTEN

"WE ARE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED that House leadership decided to ignore the position of a vast majority of LGBT organizations, ignore the legal assessment that this bill may not even provide adequate protections for gays, lesbians and bisexuals, and ignore the fact that this vote might make it more difficult to persuade members of Congress to support a fully inclusive bill in the future."

— Matt Foreman, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director

"OUR VIEW IS THAT YOU CAN'T COMPROMISE EQUALITY. The carefully minced words heard on the House floor today regarding protections for gays, lesbians and bisexuals were notable for the exclusion of those left behind—the transgendered and gender variant."

"We are dismayed with ENDA as enacted and sincerely hope that House leadership and members will change their minds in the future—particularly given that it appears unlikely that the Senate or the current administration will support this Act—which would more appropriately be referred to as 'UNDA'—the 'Unequal Non-Discrimination Act.'"

— Illinois Gender Advocates

"OUR FIGHT FOR EQUALITY WILL NOT BE WON OVERNIGHT. It will be won one step at a time, and we will not give up until we reach the finish line. This is a critical piece of legislation and a major step toward the finish line for all Americans."

— Joe Solmonese, Human Rights Campaign president

For many more quotes, see [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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## Youth HIV/AIDS Forum Reveals Startling Stats

BY TULLY SATRE

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) released staggering statistics about the escalating numbers of HIV-infected youth in the state. The Children's Place Association, a Chicago-based provider of care to Illinois HIV/AIDS-infected children and families, held a forum to address the IDPH data.

Medical experts, policy makers and leading Illinois HIV/AIDS youth specialists convened on Nov. 9 at the Chicago InterContinental Hotel, 505 N. Michigan, to discuss solutions.

The data shows, among other things, a 60 percent increase in Illinois HIV infections among youths under the age of 24 since 2000.

"HIV/AIDS-infected youth are a severely overlooked group from a service and public policy perspective," said Cathy Krieger, president and CEO of The Children's Place Association. "The surging infections among [youth] is proof positive prevention efforts are failing."

During a panel at the forum, statistics showed that adolescents today are becoming more and more sexually active while being unaware of the risks of HIV infection.

"The solution is education and prevention," said Pam Briggs, director of the Heart of Illinois HIV/AIDS Center at the University of Illinois. Several experts at the forum expressed concerns that Illinois schools—most of which have abstinence-only health education programs—were not emphasizing HIV prevention and that this has added to the inflation of HIV among youth. However, lack of education about safe sex and HIV prevention only addresses part of the problem. Illinois is one of the few states with strict

policies regarding HIV infection among youth today. Section 2a of the Communicable Disease Prevention Act requires school principals to be notified if a student tests positive for HIV.

Read more about the forum at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## Ronen Responds to Criticism

BY AMY WOOTEN

State Sen. Carol Ronen, D-Chicago, does not understand the criticism that she did not provide enough time for people to file to run for her open 7th District seat.

"I could have allowed the committeemen to do it behind closed doors," Ronen said, adding that she handled it in such a way to allow people a chance to file to run in the progressive lakefront district. After all, the required number

of signatures (1,000), she said, is quite low, so she felt she provided enough time.

The criticism came after Ronen's Oct. 22 announcement of her impending January retirement for not providing what they call an adequate amount of time.

However, two women filed by the deadline, Democrats Heather Steans and Suzanne Elder. Steans is a Democratic fundraiser from a prominent philanthropic family who has contributed to Ronen. She was endorsed by the senator. Elder is an Edgewater school activist focused on state health issues.

According to Ronen, "There were at least three others who got enough signatures and decided not to file."

## BISHOP from cover

"The reason, the sole reason, I believe, House of Hope was chosen was because of the size and location and proximity to public transportation," said Mike Perillo, president of the committee.

The venue can seat approximately 10,000 people, and the church hopes to attract a large crowd.

"That's as far as it goes," Perillo said. "We've had no issues, problems or concerns [regarding the venue]. Quite the contrary."

So far, Lee has indicated that he is supportive of an ongoing discussion regarding lesbians and gays in the church. In his essay distributed to delegates, Lee addressed what he called the "polarizing" debates around sexuality in response to a question regarding the critical issues facing the church today. Lee said that as a leader, the main task is to listen. He wrote,

"For instance, in the parish I try hard to listen deeply to people who are concerned or troubled by developments in the church around sexuality and what I discover over and over again is that the issue is rarely the real issue.

"Someone may be deeply troubled by the liberalization of the church's practice around the full inclusion of gay and lesbian people in the church, but what lies at the root of their misgivings is some hurt or brokenness in their family. Once you uncover that pain in a safe way you can begin to move through it to a place of understanding."

Rev. Deborah Lake of Sankofa Way is disappointed that Lind was not chosen. "Rev. Lee talks the talk of Jesus when he says that he stands for the full inclusion of LGBT people," she stated via e-mail. "He talks the talk when he says that he has a duty to communicate his understanding of God's call to the church. ... At the same time, though, Lee walks the walk

of a heretic by supporting the decision of the Episcopal bishops to exercise restraint in approving another gay bishop. He walks the walk of a heretic when he supports the decision to refrain from authorizing prayers that would bless same-sex couples."

According to The Chicago Tribune, when Lee was questioned about his position regarding homosexuality, the 50-year-old bishop-elect responded, "I believe God is calling us to full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the ministry of this church. ... There is a place for everyone in the church, and the church has to catch up with God's vision."

Lee will be seated as head of St. James Cathedral Feb. 3. He will succeed Bishop William Persell.

Meeks did not respond to Windy City Times' request for comment prior to deadline.

## PASSAGES: Robb Thomas

Robb Thomas, a longtime fixture on Chicago's bartending scene, passed away peacefully after a brief illness on Nov. 4. He was 51.

Thomas was also a performer in the Ice Capades during 1975-1980 and was an avid creator of greeting cards as a medium to share his message of love.

He was the beloved father of Ian, Chelsea, Justin Thomas and Kayte Neal, and the very proud and loving grandfather of Ashley and Tristan Neal. Thomas was also the dear brother of Gayle Stone and Julie Thomas and dear friend of Jack Seymour and Carol Kovalevych.

Thomas was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Mary-Ann Thomas, and sister Donna Gates.

He will be remembered as a dreamer and an artist, a generous and free-spirited man who brought light everywhere he went.

A private family service has been arranged.

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# Panelists Discuss LGBT Black Sexuality

BY MAX SMITH

Sankofa Way Ministries presented the forum "Black Sexuality in the 21st Century: Change," Nov. 10 at Center on Halsted. With Chicago Sun-Times columnist Laura Washington moderating, six people on a panel gave an assessment of how oppressive cultural, political and economic forces can be transformed.

Counselor and author Dr. Terri Pease said, "Trauma happens in the space between aspiration and deflation of the spirit." She discussed how emotional trauma, sexual assault and domestic violence too often are neither acknowledged nor reported to agencies that could initiate interventions and healing processes.

Rev. Rowland Jide Macaulay, pastor of House of Rainbow Metropolitan Community Church in Lagos, Nigeria, made an impassioned appeal to Americans to be responsive to the severe limitations on basic human rights of the LGBT community in Nigeria and other nations recovering from colonialism.

In addition, Equality Illinois Director of Public Policy and longtime human-rights activist Rick Garcia reviewed how building coalitions led to the passage of Illinois' anti-discrimination law in 2005—a measure that includes transgender persons. All Hispanic and Black state lawmakers voted for the law, except State Sen. and Rev. James Meeks.

Rev. Deborah Lake, director of Sankofa Way,

said, "What gets in the way of our loving, sharing and talking with each other is race, culture and society's laws." She encouraged all people to move beyond those causes of prejudice and to consider Matthew 11:5—Jesus' language of love, caring and inclusion.

# Daley Increases AIDS Housing Funding

BY AMY WOOTEN

No individuals will lose their rental assistance in 2008 now that Mayor Richard M. Daley has proposed to increase the HIV/AIDS rental housing assistance funding for the 2008 budget by \$250,000.

Earlier this year, AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) warned that many low-income, HIV-positive individuals would face housing instability or homelessness without a funding increase.

"We're glad to get such good news," AFC's John Peller said. "It's a great step. However, the unmet need ... remains tremendous, even with this new funding."

The city also proposed setting aside 100 units funded by the Low Income Housing Trust Fund for people with HIV. According to AFC, this brings the city's increased commitment to AIDS housing to over \$750,000 for 2008.

Peller told Windy City Times that AFC is going to "keep the pressure on all levels" of government, adding, "[i]t's time for the federal government to step up."



1. Eric Alva and Rochelle Crump. 2. Alva and Ed Zasadi, a WWII veteran. 3. Travis, chapter treasurer, performs the national anthem. 4. Left to right: Jim Darby, AVER chapter president, with Alva; Ed Wosylus, chapter secretary; Dorothy Hajdys, mother of slain sailor Allan Schindler; and Randy Williamson at the gravesite.



# Honoring Gay Veterans

The Chicago Chapter the American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) laid flowers over the Veterans' Day weekend at the grave of Navy Seaman Allen R. Schindler in Steger, Ill. Schindler, a gay man, was brutally murdered by shipmates in a 1992 hate crime. The gay veterans were joined by Dorothy Hajdys, the mother of the slain sailor, and former Marine Staff Sergeant Eric Alva, the first servicemember to be injured in the current conflict in Iraq. Alva has appeared nationally sharing his story and working for repeal of the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy so that gays and lesbians may serve openly in the armed forces. Alva spoke of his experiences at the Chicago AVER Veterans Day dinner at the Center on Halsted on Sunday night. Also speaking about the duty of this nation to provide health care for veterans and to honor the service of LGBT veterans was Rochelle Crump. Crump helped create Chicago's annual municipal recognition ceremony for GLBT veterans as Director/Community Liaison for Veterans' Affairs under the Commission on Human Relations. She served in the United States Women's Army Corps from 1971 to 1973. Photos by Tracy Baim and Jean Albright; text by Jean Albright

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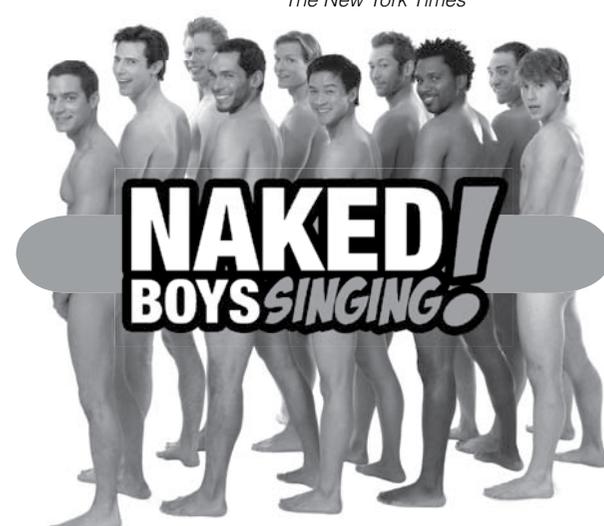
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# NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

The City of Philadelphia notified the Boy Scouts that its deadline to either pay fair market price to rent city-owned property or get out as Dec. 3. The City has been trying to reach an agreement with the Boy Scouts to change its anti-gay policy for several years, reported Philadelphia Gay news.

Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney's online campaign ads were accidentally placed on Gay.com, according to the New York Times. Romney opposes same-sex marriage.

Ferndale, Mich., recently elected its first openly gay mayor, Craig Covey, Detroit Free Press reported. Covey was a city councilman for many years, and is CEO of the Michigan AIDS Prevention Project. He received 54 percent of the vote.

Puerto Rico's Senate voted to approve a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, Queerty.com reported, but the President of the House, Jose Aponte, put the brakes on a vote until next year. The next legislative session starts Jan. 5, 2008.

Prevention Justice Mobilization (PJM), a national movement endorsed by over 100 organizations and initiated by Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), will hold a series of events around World AIDS Day. PJM will end in a Dec. 4 rally outside of Atlanta's National HIV Prevention Conference to demand increased prevention efforts, according to a press release.

Jon Buice, one of the 10 men convicted of beating a gay Texas man to death in 1991, was recently denied parole, the Houston Chronicle reported. Buice has served about one-third of his 45-year sentence, and will be up for parole again in two years.

Virginia recently let a man who owns "POOFER" vanity plates know that he must return the offensive plates that the commonwealth of Virginia gave him almost 11 years ago. The word is British slang for a gay man, and the plates' gay owner says he chose them because "it's just an amusing word that I self-identify with," according to the Washington Post.

The San Francisco-based Episcopal Diocese of California recently approved same-gender blessings, according to an Oasis California press release. Episcopal churches in the Bay Area can now offer same-sex blessings on a trial basis.

A city council race in Fort Worth, Texas, got ugly when a councilman said at a Republican Women's Club meeting that citizens should vote for fellow party member and City Council candidate Chris Turner because he is a straight Republican, as opposed to gay Democratic candidate Joel Burns, Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported.

The New York Post reports that a gay lawyer is accusing a Bronx Supreme Court Judge of being homophobic. Justice Richard Lee Price allegedly demanded attorney Robert Feldman stop "dancing" in his courtroom "in a flamboyant nature."

The Family Equality Council released a book of LGBT family poems titled Heartsongs, according to a press release from the organization. The book, which includes over 50 poems, can be downloaded for free at [www.familyequality.org/resources/poetry](http://www.familyequality.org/resources/poetry).

MyOutSpirit, a social networking Web site for spiritual LGBT's, announced that it will give away \$1 million in free advertising to LGBT-affirming body, mind and spirit nonprofits that don't charge for their services. See [www.MyOutSpirit.com](http://www.MyOutSpirit.com).

For full accounts of the passing of former presidential HIV/AIDS advisor R. Scott Hitt and Washington, D.C.'s observance of gay veterans, please read [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

# QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"SINCE THE DAWN OF THE NEW CENTURY, IT HAS BEEN THE RARELY questioned conventional wisdom, handed down by Karl Rove, that no Republican can rise to the top of the party or win the presidency without pandering as slavishly as George W. Bush has to the most bullying and gay-baiting power brokers of the religious right. [But] the political clout ritualistically ascribed to [Tony] Perkins [of the Family Research Council], James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Gary Bauer of American Values and their ilk is a sham. These self-promoting values hacks don't speak for the American mainstream. They don't speak for the Republican Party. They no longer speak for many evangelical ministers and their flocks. The emperors of morality have in fact had no clothes for some time. Should Rudy Giuliani end up doing a victory dance at the Republican convention, it will be on their graves."

— New York Times columnist Frank Rich, Oct. 28.

"IF GROUPS SUCH AS THE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE SPENT HALF as much time criticizing Islam for its abuses against gay rights as they do Catholicism, then perhaps their attempts at activism might be seen as truly groundbreaking. As it is, their juvenile behavior is redolent of a son desperately rebelling against his father, a teenage girl telling her mother she hates her because she can't stay out as late as she'd like, and other similarly adolescent expressions of fury. When we start seeing sex toys with Muhammad's likeness on them being sold at the Folsom Street Fair or sisters infiltrating mosques in burqas, then perhaps we can call these activists and their supporters brave. Until then, perhaps it's time for the sisters to grow up." — Cinnamon Stillwell writing in the San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 24.

"I AM INDEED [GAY]. NO SECRET AND NO BIG DEAL TO ME. ... I'm not running to make some social statement. I'm running to lead in the Senate for the voters in NC—something Senator Dole has not done. When people meet me, they'll see beyond the labels and into my character." — North Carolina U.S. Senate Democratic candidate Jim Neal, answering readers' questions on BlueNC.com, Oct. 20.

"DALLAS (Reuters)—DOUG WARNER SEEMS LIKE A STEREOTYPICAL REPUBLICAN: Southern, white, male, he served in the military, drives an SUV and likes hunting and fishing. He is also openly gay." — Reuters discovers gay Republicans, Nov. 2. Story at [tinyurl.com/ytghxa](http://tinyurl.com/ytghxa).

"NOW I CAN PRETTY MUCH WRITE ABOUT GAY ISSUES and not hear from anyone. Certainly popular culture has a role to play in destigmatizing." — Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau, 59, speaking to students at the Center for Cartoon Studies in White River Junction, Vt., Oct. 23.

"SOME PEOPLE I DATE THAT ARE A LITTLE RECOGNIZABLE, it kind of gets out there and all of a sudden you have a boyfriend you never labeled as a boyfriend. And that ruins your chances of anyone else asking you out! So I try to keep things very quiet. I've been dat-

ing someone in particular I'm getting to know a lot better and having a lot of fun." — Out actor and former NSYNC member Lance Bass to the Chicago gay newspaper Windy City Times, Oct. 24.

"I HAVE TO SAY THAT I DON'T THINK GAY IS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE WORD; if I were art-directing the creation of a word that would describe homosexuals, I think I might have tried to find another one. Gay makes us sound silly and frivolous, which is probably where it came from originally—it was first used in a Cole Porter song in the '30s—and I think it was probably a bit derogatory, and so it's not a word I necessarily like, but it's what I am, whatever." — Fashion designer Tom Ford to Out magazine, November issue.

I try to keep things very quiet.

—Out actor and former NSYNC member Lance Bass (right)



GLAAD photo

"IF I LIVED IN A ONE-ROOM HUT, every piece of grass that made the roof would be lined up in the right way, and the hut would have an aesthetic, and there would be two pots. I'm obsessed with perfection to the point that it's nearly an illness, and I work really hard to control it because I'm trying to learn to see the perfection in imperfection." — Gay fashion designer Tom Ford to Out magazine, November issue.

"I LOVE BEING AN AMERICAN, BUT IT'S SICK THAT IF I DIED TOMORROW, 50% of my property would go to the government and the leftovers would go to Richard, whereas if we were a heterosexual couple, that wouldn't happen." — Fashion designer Tom Ford to Out magazine, November issue.

"I WENT TO MEXICO WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL WITH MY SHOW CHOIR, Power and Life. I was 17. It was the first time I saw really poor people and it freaked me out. I grew up in Kansas and was very sheltered. I wasn't wealthy or anything, we were upper-middle class, but [in Mexico] there are kids poor and begging with no shoes and it was a real eye-opener when you begin to realize there's a whole other world out there." — Out singer Melissa Etheridge to the gay travel magazine Passport, November issue.

"IN A STRANGE WAY I'VE SPENT THE LAST 15 TO 20 YEARS TRYING to derail my own career, but it never seems to suffer. I suffer like crazy. I've suffered bereavements and public humiliations, but my career always seems to right itself like a plastic duck in the bath. In some ways I resent that." — Out singer George Michael to the BBC, Sept. 29.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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# WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

## Jamaican gay man wins U.S. asylum

A Jamaican gay man, Ven Messam, won asylum in the United States Nov. 8 because he had been threatened by anti-gay mobs that run rampant on the island.

With the assistance of Columbia University Law School's new Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic, Messam convinced the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that he faced persecution or death if forced to return to Jamaica.

"Within just the last month, gay Jamaicans have been murdered and the government has not intervened," the clinic said in a statement. "Rampant rumors that hostile groups are plotting the social cleansing of hundreds of gay people by year's end have forced countless GLBT people into hiding. Far from a tropical paradise, this Caribbean nation continues to imprison and kill its gay citizens with relative impunity."

"I am grateful to the United States government for saving my life," Messam said. "My life in Jamaica was constantly in danger, with angry mobs carrying machetes, stones, knives and guns threatening to kill me because I am gay. When I tried to contact the police for help, the police instead threatened to arrest me and told me to leave the country if I wanted to stay safe."

## Amnesty takes on Lithuania

Amnesty International says Lithuania is failing to respect GLBT people's rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

On Oct. 24, the City Council in the capital, Vilnius, refused to permit the display of a 30-meter rainbow flag in Town Hall Square.

The event was planned as a focal point for the International Lesbian and Gay Association European Region's annual convention that was taking place in the city.

The city banned the display on claims that construction activity in the square could endanger participants.

However, the square remained open to the public, and officials offered ILGA-Europe no alternative venue.

Vilnius banned an identical flag display in May during the city's first gay-pride activities. It also banned the European Union's traveling "anti-discrimination truck" from visiting the city at the same time.

On the national level, Parliament is considering legislation to ban "propagation of homosexuality" to children.

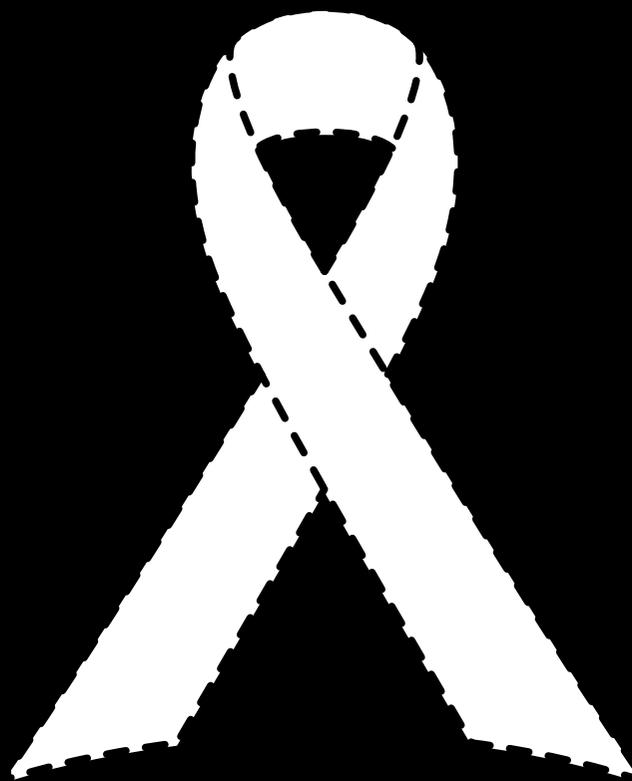
The proposal amends the Law on Protection of Minors Against Detrimental Effects of Public Information, which currently bans portrayals of physical or psychological violence or vandalism; displays of dead or cruelly mutilated human bodies; and information that arouses fear or horror, or encourages self-mutilation or suicide.

The bill's authors have written that "the propagation of a non-traditional sexual orientation and exposure to information containing positive coverage of homosexual relations may ... cause negative consequences for the physical, mental and, first and foremost, moral development of minors."

Amnesty urged "the Lithuanian authorities to respect the right to peaceful freedom of assembly for all [and] the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity."

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Read more world news—and find out about the high-ranking official who was disowned his lesbian daughter—at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



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## ...VIEWPOINTS...



## Coming Together

BY BARACK OBAMA

*Windy City Times and other regional gay newspapers have requested interviews with the presidential candidates, including Sen. Barack Obama. His campaign, thus far, has refused any one-on-one interviews, only responding with this guest editorial. He did grant a recent request with The Advocate.*

Over the last several weeks, the question of LGBT equality was placed on center stage by the appearance of Donnie McClurkin at one of my campaign events. McClurkin is a talented performer and a beloved figure among many African Americans and Christians around the country. At the same time, he espouses beliefs about homosexuality that I completely reject.

The events of the last several weeks are not the occasion that I would have chosen to discuss America's divisions on gay rights and my own deep commitment to LGBT equality. Now that the issue is before us, however, I do not intend to run away from it. These events have provided an important opportunity for us to confront a difficult fact: There are good, decent, moral people in this country who do not yet embrace their gay brothers and sisters as full members of our shared

community.

We will not secure full equality for all LGBT Americans until we learn how to address that deep disagreement and move beyond it. To achieve that goal, we must state our beliefs boldly, bring the message of equality to audiences that have not yet accepted it, and listen to what those audiences have to say in return.

For my entire career in public life, I have brought the message of LGBT equality to skeptical audiences as well as friendly ones. No other leading candidate in the race for the Presidency has demonstrated the same commitment to the principle of full equality. I support the full and unqualified repeal of the federal Defense of Marriage Act. While some say we should repeal only part of the law, I believe we should get rid of that statute altogether. Federal law should not discriminate in any way against gay and lesbian couples. I will also fight to repeal the U.S. military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, a law that should never have been passed, and my Defense Department will work with top military leaders to implement that repeal.

As President, I will use the bully pulpit to urge states to treat same-sex couples with full equality in their family and adoption laws. I personally believe that civil unions represent the best way to secure that equal treatment. But I also believe that the federal government should not stand in the way of states that want to decide on their own how best to pursue equality for gay and lesbian couples—whether that means a domestic partnership, a civil union, or a civil marriage. I will also place the weight of my administration behind the enactment of the Matthew Shepard Act to outlaw hate crimes and a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act to outlaw workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. I have supported fully inclusive protections since my days in the Illinois legislature, when I sponsored a bill to outlaw workplace discrimination that expressly included both sexual

orientation and gender identity.

That is where I stand on the major issues of the day. But having the right positions on the issues is only half the battle. The other half is to win broad support for those positions. And winning broad support will require stepping outside our comfort zone. If we want to repeal DOMA, repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and implement fully inclusive laws outlawing hate crimes and discrimination in the workplace, we need to bring the message of LGBT equality to people who are not yet convinced.

That's why I brought this message of inclusiveness to all of America in my keynote address at the 2004 Democratic convention. I reiterated that message in the speech announcing my candidacy for President. Since beginning my campaign, I have been talking about LGBT equality on the stump, from rural farmers to Southern preachers. Just as important, I have been listening to what all Americans have to say in return. I will never compromise on my commitment to equal rights for all LGBT Americans. But neither will I close my ears to the voices of those who still need to be convinced. That is the work that we need to do if we are going to move forward together. It is difficult. It is challenging. And it is necessary.

The American people have been poorly served by two terms of an administration that seeks to manipulate us through fear: fear over national security, fear over immigrants and fear over gay and lesbian couples in loving relationships. Americans are yearning for leadership that will put an end to the fear mongering and instead begin empowering us once again to reach for the America we know is possible. I believe that we can achieve the goal of full equality for the millions of LGBT people in this country. To do that, we need leadership that appeals to the best parts of the human spirit, rather than the worst. Join with me, and I will provide that leadership. Together, we will achieve real equality for all Americans, gay and straight alike.

## GUEST VIEWPOINT

### GUEST VIEWPOINT: It's STILL Elementary

BY DEBRA CHASNOFF

When we released our film, *It's Elementary—Talking About Gay Issues in Schools*, a decade ago, the teachers featured in the documentary were breaking new ground by finding ways to talk to their elementary and middle school students about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The educators we found were rarities. Most teachers had never considered having such conversations, and those that did lacked the necessary support and skills. Today, educators across the country are increasingly aware that such omissions are professionally irresponsible. That's progress. But for this progress to continue, it will take the support and advocacy of not only LGBT parents who have children who are directly affected by what happens in the classroom, but the entire LGBT community and all of our allies.

During the 1990s, schools typically limited discussions of homosexuality to health class lessons and focused on preventing the spread of HIV or suicide. Today, as more and more elementary schoolteachers include LGBT people within their curricula, the context of such discussions is changing from disease and depression to culture and history. Youth are now receiving information about LGBT people through discussions about families, media personalities and historical leaders, rather than only through frightening statistics about disease and death.

This evolution is directly related to a positive shift in attitudes toward LGBT people, the rapid

growth of families headed by same-sex parents, and the expansion of a stronger and vibrant high school age LGBT population and their friends. In many states, legislative and school board policies now mandate teaching about diversity and addressing bullying, with a specific focus on preventing anti-LGBT harassment. Curriculum guides now exist to help teachers of all grade levels have conversations about LGBT people and issues in age-appropriate ways.

Nevertheless, motivated educators need the encouragement and backing of local citizens supportive of LGBT-inclusive education in order to be able act on their commitment. Because, despite the steady growth of the safe schools movement, small but highly vocal minorities of homophobic activists continue to pressure educators in numerous areas across the country to backtrack on their progress and to abandon their LGBT-inclusive curricula. In April, for example, a journalism teacher in Indiana was fired after allowing one of her students to write an article asking her peers to stop anti-LGBT harassment. In August, members of a conservative church in New Jersey hijacked school-board meetings and successfully pressured a local school district into removing its LGBT-inclusive family diversity lessons. That same month the Philadelphia School District was forced to omit "Gay and Lesbian History Month" from this year's school calendar, following outrage from conservative parents.

In all of these situations, the vocal minority of the religious right flooded school offices with letters and phone calls. As importantly, their relentless attacks went largely unanswered by local LGBT community members and allies. Lacking necessary visible support from constituents in their own school districts, school administrators' good intentions were dwarfed by the pressure to cave

into homophobic activists. These incidents reflect more than coincidence. They are part of a concerted effort on the part of the religious right to turn back the crucial progress we have made. Today, as we re-issue *It's Elementary* for a new generation of educators, we call upon the LGBT community to help us realize our vision of schools as caring communities for all youth and families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In the face of increased right-wing resistance, LGBT people, parents, and allies must be vocal about their support for LGBT-inclusive curricula. LGBT parents can write their school boards, attend PTA meetings, and influence their school district by advocating for their own children's best interests. The wider LGBT community and its leaders must also recognize the efforts of LGBT-headed families in the school system, and be vigilant in providing support for the resistance they face. Whether or not you have children, you can lobby for inclusive curricula and support school districts that proactively address anti-LGBT bias. Because reaching youth with anti-bias education that includes our communities is not optional for cultural change. It's elementary.

**Debra Chasnoff is the director of *It's Elementary—Talking about Gay Issues in School*, which will be re-released on DVD in December along with the companion documentary, *It's STILL Elementary*. She is the executive director of GroundSpark, [www.groundspark.org](http://www.groundspark.org).**

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# GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Naked Boys Singing (with its cast, above) will begin its commercial run Friday. Pic by Michael Higgins

## PROFILE

Raising 'Cane.'  
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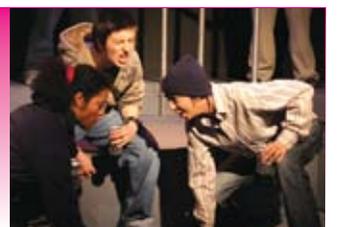
## DANCE

Tao-wow!  
Page 12.



## THEATER

Are they not men?  
Page 14.



## Bruce Vilanch: Nude Awakening

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Gay icon Bruce Vilanch—the man who, for decades, has given Bette Midler, Robin Williams, Whoopi Goldberg, Billy Crystal and others their zingers—was expected in town Nov. 13 to promote a screening of *Naked Boys Singing!* (which he co-wrote) as part of Reeling 2007, the gay and lesbian film fest. (The film begins a commercial run this Friday at the Music Box.) The hysterically funny, multi-talented Vilanch, who put down the pen (and shaved his beard) to star on Broadway and tour in *Hairspray* and, for several seasons, quipped on the new *Hollywood Squares*, recently spoke with *Windy City Times*.

**Windy City Times:** How did you get involved with *Naked Boys ... Singing*?

Bruce Vilanch: (*laughs*) Singing ... in a professional way. There's a theatre out here in Hollywood called the Celebration and I was on the board for a while. Nobody was coming to see anything except when we had naked boys onstage. So Bob Schrock, the artistic director, said, "Let's just do a show called *Naked Boys Singing!* and then everybody will show up." We put together this very innocent type of musical revue with a bunch of really great songs and I was basically supplying the interstitial material and as we mounted it—if you'll pardon the expression—we discovered that when people are onstage naked, no one listens to what they say. It became an all-singing, all-dancing musical revue with a couple of lines thrown in to keep it going. It was a huge hit and it spawned, like, 45 productions around the world and now a movie. Next, maybe a space shuttle.

**WCT:** Now the last time I remember you being in Chicago was on tour with *Hairspray* and emceeding that benefit for Marc Shaiman at the Gentry, which was fabulous.

BV: We were at the Oriental for, like, 10 weeks



Bruce Vilanch.

and it was great. The audiences were great and the theatre was fabulous. Then I was back for the *Grabbys* this year. I went to the *Grabbys* and the year before I did the *IML* at the Chicago Theatre.

**WCT:** So when you come back to Chicago, what do you look forward to?

BV: Everything that I liked is gone. I lived at Wells and North; I lived at Piper's Alley—and there was a real alley then. I lived in a big Victorian above a delicatessen and an art gallery. And there was a little cinema where they showed *I Am Curious Yellow* and scandalous movies of the day, and it's now a six-plex.

**WCT:** I think maybe that's where I saw *Hairspray*.

BV: I heard of that one.

**WCT:** Any chance that you and Harvey Fierstein and John Travolta are going to get together and watch the DVD?

BV: (*laughs*) Slim to none—which is the only time you can say that about the three of us.

**WCT:** You wrote a great piece recently about the changes that we've seen about gays on the screen, but there hasn't been anything since *Brokeback Mountain* with gay charac-

ters. Are we ever going to see acceptance in mainstream movies?

BV: I would take exception to that. I mean there was a picture called *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry* [that] was a huge box office success this summer, and it was all about straight people pretending to be gay people.

**WCT:** But the attitudes in the picture seemed so old-fashioned to me.

BV: It may be old-fashioned if you're gay but I think, for straight people, it's a fairly new concept—the idea that, "Oh, we get better points if we're gay; we get better benefits." I mean that's kind of revolutionary. Now I haven't seen the movie but I'd like to point out that this is all part of gay culture.

**WCT:** You shot a new movie last summer from the creator of *Coffee Date* that we're going to see eventually. It's called *Tru Loved* and in it you co-star with another former *Chicagoan*, Jane Lynch.

BV: We're in it together but it's not really fair to say we co-star. It's actually a love story about two teenagers and we play the older generation. I am the gay single dad of one of them and Jane is a teacher in the high school. It's basically about how organizations in schools [that] combat bullying got underway. It's about how these groups started that address the idea that there were gay students in the schools that needed to be dialogued about. But that sounds so clinically serious; really, it's a funny comedy about mistaken sexual identity that tells that story at the same time. It's really cute and sweet.

**WCT:** This past Halloween saw the release of the Paul Lynde special from 1976 [that] you co-wrote. Then, you became the center square on *Hollywood Squares*, following in his footsteps. What are your memories of him?

BV: I worked with him; I knew him very well. We were shooting *Donny & Marie* and he was a regular on the show; when we finished rehearsing on *Donny & Marie* we'd get in the car and go over to *Hollywood Squares*, which was nearing the end of its 14-year run—the first time. By

then, he was the center square and he would say to me (imitating Lynde's voice), "Come with me to *Squares*; I haven't got shit!" We'd ride over in the car and we'd do jokes and then he would do them on the show. So it was like I was writing for him for *Hollywood Squares* on the sly.

**WCT:** That's great trivia.

BV: Yes, and then I worked on his nightclub act, which he used to tour in the summer and then we did that Halloween special.

**WCT:** Are you working with Bette Midler on her Vegas show?

BV: I am; I am. We open at Caesar's Palace Feb. 20.

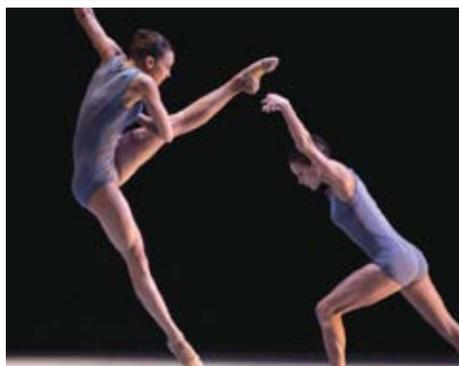
**WCT:** Any little "tid-bettes" you can tell us?

BV: It's going to be huge. You know, it's a gigantic space—we're taking it over from *Cirque du Celine*.

**WCT:** You're going to see groups of gay men arriving at the airport weekly as you know.

BV: Between Bette and Elton, I think they're going to rename it *Caesar's Bathhouse*.

Read and see more about Reeling on page 13 and online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com)



Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

## Dancin' Feats

BY ERIC EATHERLY

Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) almost never produces local dance companies. But it looks like that trend might be changing. This weekend the MCA will present Lucky Plush Productions' newest evening-length piece called Cinderbox 18, a witty dance-theatre work that merges athletic choreography with improvisation and social commentary.

Led by artistic director Julia Rhoads, Lucky Plush is best known for their abstract dances

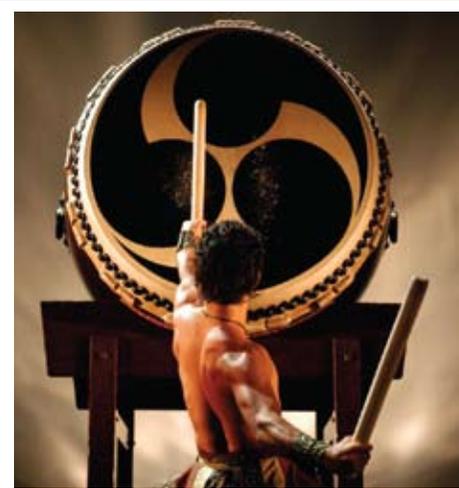
with graceful, seamless movement and surreal stage pictures. Rhoads' new work certainly contains moments of sweeping movement patterns that show off the dancers' effortless technique, but that's far from the extent of the work. With Cinderbox 18 the company ventures into the more "theatre" aspects of "dance-theatre." The company has played with the threads between dance and theatre before, as fans may recall Endplay or Lulu Sleeps. But their new endeavor takes the ensemble deeper into uncharted territory, further blurring the conventional boundaries of dance performance.

The piece is intentionally structured to evoke questions from the viewer about when an experience truly begins. As the audience fills the theatre and takes its seat, the dancers are already on the stage, engaged in quiet, casual conversations in little groups. One by one they "enter" the space and begin a sequence of tiny gesture patterns that look, at first, like unconscious adjustments. In this manner they transition from spectator to performer, but it's hardly a permanent shift. Throughout the performance the dancers explore the dichotomy of spectator/performer.

Rhoads says that when the piece was a seedling in her mind she was inspired by the onslaught of reality TV. "Initially I found myself watching

a lot of late-night television. I was really interested in how everything on TV is 'reality TV.' That was loosely my jumping-off point... In 'reality' programming there seems to be a manufacturing of personal stories and anecdotes. There's a gray area between 'reality' and 'fabrication,'" Rhoads says. "The piece looks a lot at that changing reference point, at who is the audience." Rhoads is clear to emphasize that the piece is not "about" reality TV, but that the work addresses many of the same questions that come up in contemplating the media phenomenon, including ideas of spectatorship, competition, anxiety and vulnerability.

Rhoads goes on to explain that she also took inspiration from the rise of the "amateur expert," ranging from MySpace mania to the fame of internet bloggers. "Anybody can be an expert on the internet. There's this duality of people turning to that as sources of fact but also being distrustful," Rhoads says. "[Our piece] is a comment on commenting on things." Within Cinderbox 18 are moments highlighting that commentary trend, especially when a pair of dancers sit, watch, and verbally comment with a mixture of animation and disdain as another dancer performs. Such moments in the piece are as humorous as they are absurd, heightened by the fact that much of the dialogue is improvised.



TAO.

For Rhoads the freedom of improvisation is key to maintaining the realness of the dancers' reactions. That's not to say that their improvisation is purely free-form, it's a structured improvisation with landmarks within the dialogue to guide the commentary. Nonetheless, the quality of freshness lends much hilarity to the work.

Cinderbox 18 holds as many moments of comical conversation as it does moments of mesmerizing movement. At times the dancing is fluid and expansive, while other sequences are punctuated, constrained and self-conscious. A stunning ensemble section has the dancers engaged in ever-shifting lifts that are violent, daring and unpredictable, but also beautiful and poignant.

Rhoads, who is currently over six months pregnant but was not pregnant when the creative process started, gave the dancers a lot of creative input in the vocabulary for the piece. "Every process is a little different in terms of how much movement I bring to the work," Rhoads explains. "I'm only the director of the choreography but [the dancers] are all players in the movement invention."

Cinderbox 18, a play on the "show within a show," blends comedy, luscious dancing and many thought-provoking questions about perspective and perception. The show runs Nov. 15-17 at the MCA, 220 E. Chicago; 312-397-4010; \$16-\$24.

Rachel Damon of Synapse Arts Collective, along with Sarah Haas in partnership with Around the Coyote, present SLIT: an evening of performance + poetry, Nov. 16 and 18 (no Saturday show). The performers present conceptual pieces dealing with love, loss, sexism and gender from a woman's perspective. Around the Coyote Gallery, 1935½ W. North Ave.; 312-301-0714; \$10.

For one performance only, the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet makes their Chicago debut at the Harris Theatre, 205 E. Randolph, on Nov. 17. This contemporary ballet company showcases their talents with a program that includes work by Jorma Elo, Moses Pendelton and Twyla Tharp. 312-344-7777; \$35-\$55.

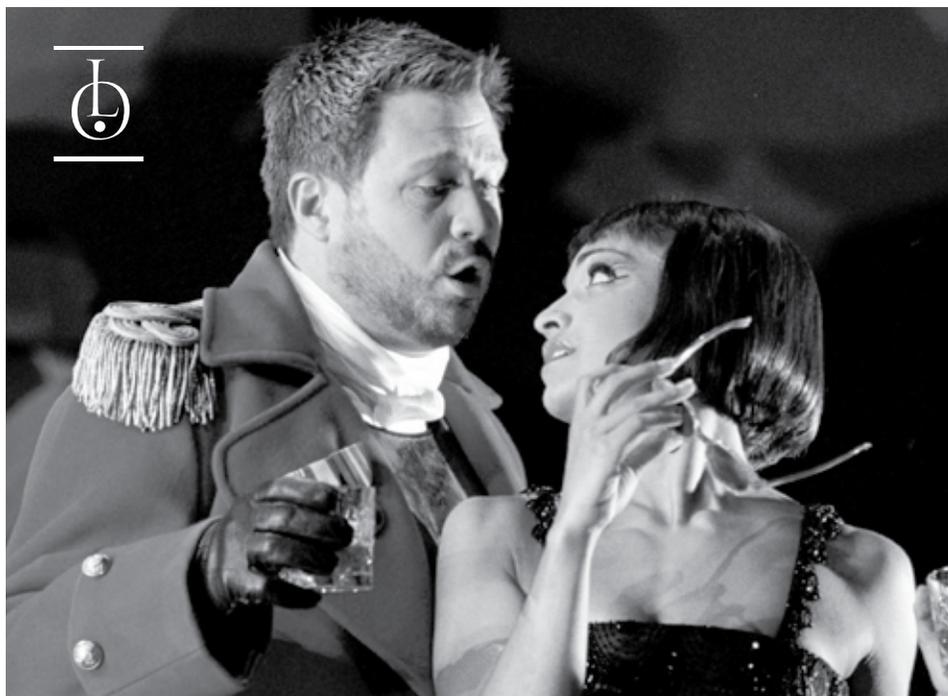
The Chicago Human Rhythm Project (CHRP), a presenter of tap dance and percussive rhythmic arts, concludes its 2007 season with Global Rhythms 3 and Thanks 4 Giving, Nov. 23-25 at the Harris Theatre. Global Rhythms 3 features the North American premiere of TAO, Japan's response to Riverdance. TAO is a spectacle of rhythm, movement and music with a cast of wadaiko drummers and dancers. The Thanks 4 Giving program allows CHRP to share 50 percent of ticket revenue from the show with a selection of Chicago-area nonprofit organizations. 312-344-7777; \$15-\$57.

Lastly, Jump Rhythm Jazz Project (JRJP) presents their Winter Performance, Dec. 6-8, at the Josephine Louis Theatre of Northwestern University, 20 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. The program offers selections of JRJP's newest works, choreographed by artistic director Billy Siegenfeld, including god of dirt (sic) and The News From Poems, as well as some of the ensemble's perennial favorites. The JRJP fundraising event, "Swingtime in Winter," will be held after the performance on Dec. 7. 847-491-7282; \$10-\$25.

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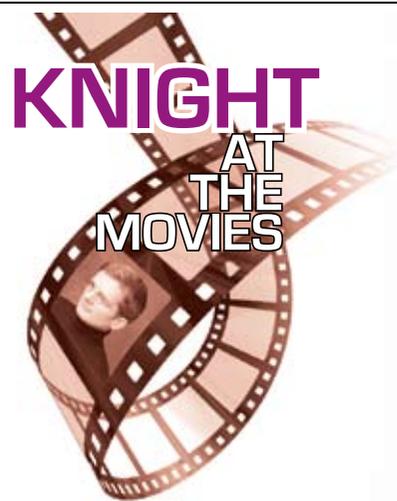
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# Naked Boys Singing!

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

I want to tell you about my latest movie star crush. The object of my fantasies (this time) isn't perhaps as well known to my readership as Brad, George, Jake, Jude or the entire cast of 300. Nevertheless, there's something about my darling, doe-eyed Joe Souza that has made him stand out from all these other movie-star wannabes. There's a certain something that Joe has on screen that has set him apart from the film-star herd—and that has placed him high, high, high in my personal firmament, where I plan to keep him for a long time. First, he's devastatingly handsome with large green eyes and dark hair. Second, he has one of those sensual movie-star mouths and the requisite chiseled cheek bones to go with it—not to mention, of course, quite the physique. And, is my Joe talented! He sings, he dances, he's funny and, boy, does he hold focus whenever he's on camera. You see, what really sets my Joe apart from the pack is that in his debut movie he's entirely naked—every beautiful inch of him. It's in a little frivolous endeavor called **Naked Boys Singing!** that you can see my Joe and the rest of his cast mates strut all the junk they got in their trunks. It's a movie that should be seen by every red-blooded American gay male and male physique objectifier in the world.

For reasons I can't quite put my finger on, I never made the trek to see the long-running stage production (which ran not just here in Chicago but around the entire free world it seems). Perhaps because the immediacy of the nakedness to the audience just wasn't for me but safely up there on the screen, every base instinct in my mind is allowed free range. The movie is a filmed production of the show and isn't particularly well-made—the sound level, in particular, is distorted and the post-dubbing is distracting—but the material itself is winning and presented exuberantly. Songs about clean-

ing house in the nude, the anxiety of trying to prevent a boner in the locker room and more are charm deluxe. There's even a love ballad—a song about an unrequited lust between a voyeur and his hunky neighbor. And, of course, there's my Joe, who expertly performs a number about having a bris.

There are 14 songs in all, and the peppy material was honed by none other than gay icon Bruce Vilanch. (See my separate interview with him.) I understand that the movie version alters the physicality of the stage productions—where men of all sizes, shapes and colors were featured. NBS! the movie veers from that formula. We get mostly white guys of many sizes, but all are rather fetching. No complaints from this department for that smart decision—the producers and director apparently understanding that the essence of film is composed of objectification and transference. That's a fancy way of saying that our subconscious responds enthusiastically to the culture's current standard of beauty.

Naked Boys Singing! clocks in at around 90 minutes—the perfect length for this sweet little, über-sexy pastiche and plenty of time for you to fall madly in lust with My Joe.

### Reeling 2007: Upcoming Highlights

NBS! premiered as part of Reeling 2007, the International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and opens this Friday at the Music Box Theatre. Reeling continues through Nov. 18. Other highlights of the remaining week include:

—**The Gendercator** (screens Nov. 14 at Center on Halsted) is a short gender-bending tale that uses Rip Van Winkle as its inspiration. A panel discussion follows this and its companion short, *One in 2000*.

—**Starrbooty** (screens Nov. 14 at Lakeshore Theatre) is the long-awaited full-length version of RuPaul's superagent parody (Pam Grier meets Russ Meyer). An after-party featuring karaoke will take place at Goose Island Brewery.

—**Outing Riley** (screens Nov. 15 at Film Row Cinema) is the Chicago-made sophomore effort from the first Project Greenlight winner, writer-director Pete Jones.

—**The Walker** (screens Nov. 15 at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema) stars Woody Harrelson as Carter Page III, the impeccably dressed, well-mannered and highly sought society escort of the wives of Washington powerbrokers.

—**Queerborn & Perversion: An Early History of Lesbian & Gay Chicago** (screens Nov. 16 at the Chicago History Museum) from documentary filmmaker Ron Pajak wasn't available for screening but promises a fascinating look at local queer history over the years 1924-1974.

For more information, call 773-293-1447 or see [www.reelingfilmfestival.org](http://www.reelingfilmfestival.org).

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com). Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site, where there is also ordering information on my new book of collected film reviews, *Knight at the Movies 2004-2006*.



### Gimme 'Shelter'

Eager moviegoers, lots of swag and models sporting wetsuits (above) were all part of the scene at Reeling Film Fest's opening-night gala for the gay surfing romance-drama *Shelter*, held Nov. 8 at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald; see more at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com) and [www.MysticImagesPhotography.com](http://www.MysticImagesPhotography.com).

For more on the gala—and *Shelter* star Brad Rowe—read Steve Starr's piece at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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## THEATER REVIEW

# Machos

Playwright: Coya Paz and ensemble  
At: Teatro Luna at Chicago Dramatists,  
1105 W. Chicago  
Phone: 773-878-5862; \$15  
Runs through: Dec. 16

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

If Teatro Luna wanted a subtitle for its world premiere of *Machos*, it could be "The Cajones Monologues."

Except for the fact that *Machos* isn't just a se-

ries of monologues on what it means to be a Latino male. Nor is *Machos* by men for men the way Eve Ensler wrote *The Vagina Monologues* to rally women for women's causes.

*Machos* is very much a way for Teatro Luna, Chicago's first all-Latina theater ensemble, to extend an olive branch of understanding to Latino men by finding out their pressures and insecurities in what it means to be a man. But what's even more fun is that Teatro Luna goes about embodying those manly traits themselves—in male drag.

*Machos* grew out of interviews with more than 100 Latino men nationwide, which were then adapted and repackaged by developer/direc-



*Machos*. Photo by Johnny Knight

tor Coya Paz and a super-talented Teatro Luna ensemble of eight. Teatro Luna then took that clichéd proverb of "walking a mile in another man's shoes" to gender-bending heights.

With fake facial hair, bound breasts and extremely convincing male mannerisms, Teatro Luna takes all sorts of joy in playing men riffing on the subjects of penis size, mama's boys, domestic violence, adultery, homophobia, alcohol and exactly what it means to macho.

The ensemble also takes great joy in exploring uniquely male activities—particularly an extended scene where an elder lays down the law for a kid on "the rules" for peeing at a urinal. And in a nod to *Altar Boyz*, there is a hilarious parody of boy bands with their ambiguously questionable sexuality sung in song. (Tamara Roberts is listed in the program as the composer, so if she wrote the song, she's a genius.)

This revue's humor and pathos blend together in Paz's great staging, which flows seamlessly from one topic to the next. Pointing out that much of how we learn to fit society's gender roles is shaped by others, Paz strategically places actors in the scenes watching close by or from a distance.

Since the ensemble constantly switches roles in skilled and affecting performances, you can't just pinpoint one performance over the others. So excuse the laundry list of names since each one of these actors deserves high praise: Desiree Castro, Belinda Cervantes, Maritza Cervantes, Yadirra Correa, Gina Cornejo, Ilana Faust, Stephanie Gentry-Fernandez and Wendy Vargas.

Having Latina women so convincingly portraying Latino men in *Machos* helps break down stereotypes on "male behavior" and helps you to reexamine exactly why society places those pressures on men. So the next time you catch

yourself telling someone to "be a man," remember that there isn't just a single way to be one.

## CRITICS' PICKS

**Chalk**, Right Brain Project at Chicago Cultural Center; through Nov. 25. This homage to *film noir* detective mysteries is gripping and cleverly staged. So what if it's derivative? It's fun checking off all of the genre's stereotypical plotting and colorful characters. SCM

**The Cook**, Goodman Theatre, through Nov. 18. Karen Aldridge is luminous as a cook whose fierce loyalties define her life through 40 years of Castro's Cuba. As her husband, Edward F. Torres is at his best in Eduardo Machado's warmly compelling drama. CS

**The Island Of Dr. Moreau**, Lifeline Theatre, through Dec. 2. This science-fiction fable of imperialist technology taken to inhumane extremes is as timely and terrifying today as when H.G. Wells wrote it in 1896. Horror isn't just for Halloween, you know. MSB

**Seven Brides for Seven Brothers**, Circle Theatre, through Dec. 23. The movie original—glorified by Technicolor and Cinemascope—beats the stage version, but Circle has a habit of extracting the best from old musicals, and the lyrics by Jonny Mercer stand tall. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

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The Radio City Rockettes.

## THEATER REVIEW

# The Radio City Christmas Spectacular,

Starring the Rockettes

At: The Rosemont Theatre, 5400 N. River, Rosemont

Phone: 312-559-1212; \$24.50 - \$56.50

Runs through: Dec. 2

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Massive, sparkly and literally streaming Christmas cheer over the audience at one point, more is more at the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. Why have just one Santa Claus doing a knock-'em-dead tap number when you can fit two dozen Kris Kringles on stage? Starring the iconic, blindingly high-kicking gams of the Rockettes, the show also comes with two camels, four sheep, a donkey named Lincoln and enough hydraulic-powered sets to keep every light in Bethlehem blazing for all 12 days of Christmas. And I do mean Christmas—no “Happy holidays” equivocation here—Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus himself show up in the show’s gloriously over-the-top Living Nativity.

And here’s the thing: It works. Every blasting decibel of A Partridge in a Pear Tree, every neon-lit, Rockefeller Center-sized Christmas tree and every glittery flake of sequin-infused fake snow. It all adds up to a dazzling, gleeful romp as deliriously wonderful as the height of a sugar plum-induced sugar buzz on Christmas Eve. Pinter the Radio City Spectacular ain’t. And if you’re the serious-minded sort that equates costume budgets of more than \$100 with artistic bankruptcy and the inherent evil of capitalism, steer clear of the Rosemont Theatre this month. The aptly named Spectacular is enough to set storefront purists to ripping the hair from their heads in bloody clumps out while proselytizing that the end is nigh.

The production opens with a whiz-bang eye-popper, as a seemingly endless line of Rockettes dressed in skin-tight reindeer suits prance through a perky montage of secular carols *a la* “Haul out the Holly.” At one point, most of the lights go out, and the antler headdresses the Rockettes have perched atop their lacquered hairdos light up like casino marquees. It’s a laugh-out-loud twinkle-fest.

With the help of a little person who can pop-lock and drop it like it’s hot with the bravado of Soulja Boy, Santa busts a move in Santa’s Gonna Rock (“Let’s crank the beat up! To heat these old feet up!”). It’s one of several numbers that feature a comely octet of singer/dancers whose show-tunes and sunshine interludes give the Rockettes time to change from one fabulous costume to another. The kick line returns behind a breathtakingly beautiful, ice-blue scrim (and

the mists of a well-oiled fog machine) during the shimmering Christmas Dreams sequence as snowstorms take on the beauty of sapphires.

For gateway Tchaikovsky, the all-bear version of The Nutcracker works as an introduction to classical music that’ll have six-year-olds humming the works of the great, gay composer. As for the signature synchronicity of the Rockettes choreography, that gets a tap-happy showcase in The 12 Days of Christmas. And just as they have for the past 75 years, the Rockettes topple amazing precision in The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers.

## THEATER REVIEW

# Wedding Play

Playwright: Eric Rosen, adapted from the novel by Naguib Mahfouz  
At: About Face Theatre at the Steppenwolf Garage, 1624 N. Halsted  
Phone: 312-335-1650; \$20-\$35  
Runs through: Dec. 2

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Peeling the onion: the outer layer is a 1981 novel by Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz, entitled *Wedding Song*, about a theater company

putting on a noiresque melodrama set in 1938 Cairo. The second layer is *Wedding Play*, Chicago playwright-director Eric Rosen’s adaptation of the aforementioned novel, presented as a Rashoman-styled existential puzzle incorporating several versions of events recounted by witnesses, all of whom have palpable reasons to lie. And at the center is the theater company rehearsing the story of an African husband driven to kill his unfaithful European wife and the child sired by her callous lover, as adapted by Adam Mace, a young playwright with a reputation for basing his plays on his own experiences.

Unwary playgoers experiencing vertigo in the course of attempting to follow the action as it leaps from one level of consciousness to the other and back again should not be surprised: the episodes are performed in non-chronological order, for one, and the same actors who play the characters in Rosen’s drama also play the actors playing the characters in Mace’s thriller based on—you get the idea. After this house-of-mirrors mode of narration has reduced us to walleed giddiness, we are then asked to decide whose account of the murder-suicide that has occurred—or has it?—is to be believed. Oh, the culprit who dunit—maybe—gets the last word, citing proof of his veracity. And the characters drop us several hints suggesting their stratagem,

the better to mock us for being taken in by the narrative sleight of hand, nonetheless.

This brand of existential legerdemain could easily render actors—the actors in Rosen’s play, that is—as dizzy as the audience. Fortunately, the cast assembled by Rosen in his capacity as director exhibits the traction of rock-climbers, retaining their knife-edged precision throughout the multiple repetitions of identical—on the surface, anyway—scenes mandated by Mahfouz/Rosen’s text and fearlessly charging over the fourth wall to blur the distinction between the spectators in the Steppenwolf Garage and those in the play-within-the-play. And they do it all with such high-artifice aplomb that it’s a pleasure to watch them even as we founder in the midst of our confusion.

Whether press coverage of this About Face production will ultimately reveal its secrets (don’t expect *me* to do it), curious theatergoers are warned not to heed the synopsis in the publicity releases. The play itself will explain why.



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### THEATER REVIEW

## What Dreams May Come

Playwright: Joyce Piven and Stephen Fedo  
At: Piven Theatre, 927 Noyes, Evanston  
Phone: 847-866-8049; \$25  
Runs through: Dec. 16

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Certain fiction writers blur the line between this world and some other world. They plant a story firmly within modern urban society and then seamlessly move into a dream world, a fantasy

life, a spiritual universe. Such writers don't have to be Jewish, but it helps. What Dreams May Come offers stage adaptations of short stories by Bernard Malamud and Isaac Bashevis Singer, great masters of mood and the mystical, plus a third story by Delmore Schwartz that's literally dream-like yet not as other-worldly as its companions. With attention to period costuming (by Nikki Delhomme), richly chiaroscuro lighting (Pete Dully) and choreographed movement (Marla Lampert), this loving staging at Piven Theatre firmly establishes a redolent atmosphere of the half-seen, the unknown, the dream-state.

Without question, this 80-minute show weaves a spell, and yet it isn't really "American Visions Through Jewish Eyes," as it proclaims itself. Yes, the authors and characters are Jews and the stories are set in the United States (well, in New York City). But none of the three really explores what it means to be a Jew and an American, or what you do if Jewish and American values conflict. There are notable authors who address this issue—Philip Roth and Joseph Heller come to mind—but that's not the case here.

The opening tale, Schwartz's In Dreams Begin Responsibilities, is, in fact, a dream given highly effective staging utilizing slow motion, rapid movements and sound to take us back to the silent movies and Coney Island of 1909. In a dream, a young woman witnesses the courtship of her parents. She sees a mismatch leading to a disastrous marriage and the dreamer's perception of herself as a monster. But what may be true and what may be the young woman's own fears is left unspoken.

Malamud's The Silver Crown is the tale most about the conflict between modern urban cynicism and faith. It's a brief psychological study of a man willing to try anything, even faith healing, to aid his dying father. Is the old Bronx rabbi he consults a scam artist? Or can he really channel the healing powers of the Almighty? And what are the son's real motives? A darkly comic tale, it ends with a punch line of sorts.

Singer's story, A Wedding in Brownsville, is the

most Jewish in detail but possibly the least Jewish in theme; a simple tale of a man meeting the ghosts of his past, chief among them the great, lost love of his life.

Taking the principal roles are the B's in Piven's bonnet: Brent T. Barnes, Ravi Batista and Ber-

nard Beck, all of whom deliver varied, effective and understated performances with lots of subtext under Joyce Piven's caring direction.

## SPOTLIGHT

Brassy, Sassy & Classy



Just imagine: Ethel Merman will be 100 years old in 2008—or would be if she were alive. As Queen of Broadway, La Merman was rivaled only by Mary Martin, and both stars are celebrated by cabaret diva Joan Curto (left) in **Brassy, Sassy & Classy: The Songs of Ethel Merman and Mary Martin**. And what songs they are: tunes by Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Jule Styne, The Gershwins and Rodgers & Hammerstein. Curto, with musical director Beckie Menzie, appears Nov. 14-17 at Davenport's, 1383 N. Milwaukee; 773-278-1830; \$20 cover and two-drink minimum. Reservations recommended. Famously asked what she thought of her alleged rival, Merman replied, "Mary Martin is all right, if you happen to like talent."

### Rosen to Leave

## About Face

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL,  
THEATER EDITOR

Eric Rosen, co-founder and artistic director of About Face Theatre, will leave Chicago before the close of the 2007-2008 season to become artistic director of the 44-year-old Kansas City Repertory Theatre in Missouri. The Nov. 6 announcement took the theater and LGBT communities by surprise.

Rosen, 37, co-founded About Face with Kyle Hall in 1995 as a troupe to focus on themes of gender and sexual identity. Under Rosen, About Face has achieved a national profile through its own work, much of it original and self-developed, and through its co-ventures with other theater companies that resulted in such national successes as Clay; Winesburg, Ohio; and I Am My Own Wife, winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award.

About Face will conduct a national search for Rosen's successor, although Rosen will return to Chicago to develop new work and direct on

a regular basis at About Face. Chicago-Kansas City co-productions also are a possibility.

The appointment is a dramatic change for Rosen. The Kansas City Rep (KC Rep) is much older, larger and more middle-of-the-road than About Face. Known for most of its life as the Missouri Repertory Theatre, the KC Rep has a multi-million dollar annual budget and operates two playhouses yet, arguably, lacks the national profile of About Face. The company does not have a reputation either for new work or alternative fare. Perhaps that's the challenge drawing Rosen to the job. As a guest director, Rosen has staged Horton Foote's The Trip to Bountiful and Mary Zimmerman's Metamorphoses at the KC Rep.

In other theater news, Victory Gardens Theater Company has announced the addition of gay authors Nilo Cruz and Joel Drake Johnson to its distinguished Playwrights Ensemble. Cruz, a Pulitzer Prize winner for Anna in the Tropics, authored the current show at Victory Gardens, A Park in Our House. Chicagoan Johnson's plays have been produced at Steppenwolf as well as Victory Gardens, which will stage his new play, Four Places, next spring.

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### Bailiwick Trailblazer Awards Dec. 3

Bailiwick Repertory, 1229 W. Belmont, will hold its annual Trailblazer Awards Dec. 3—and plenty of local stars will be on tap.

The Trailblazer Awards, presented annually in memory of past Bailiwick Board President Larry Osburn, honor members and friends of the LGBT community who have impacted culture, arts, journalism, community activism and sports.

Chicagoan Dale Levitski, a runner-up on Bravo's critically acclaimed and Emmy-nominated reality show Top Chef, will receive a Trailblazer Award. Other awardees include Amy Bloom (executive director of Equality Illinois), Arthur L. Johnston and Jose (Pepe) Pena (co-owners of Sidetrack), Marcia Lipetz (president and CEO of Executive Service Corps), Patrick Sinozich (artistic director of Chicago Gay Men's Chorus), Neil Steinberg (columnist, Chicago Sun-Times) and entertainer Honey West.

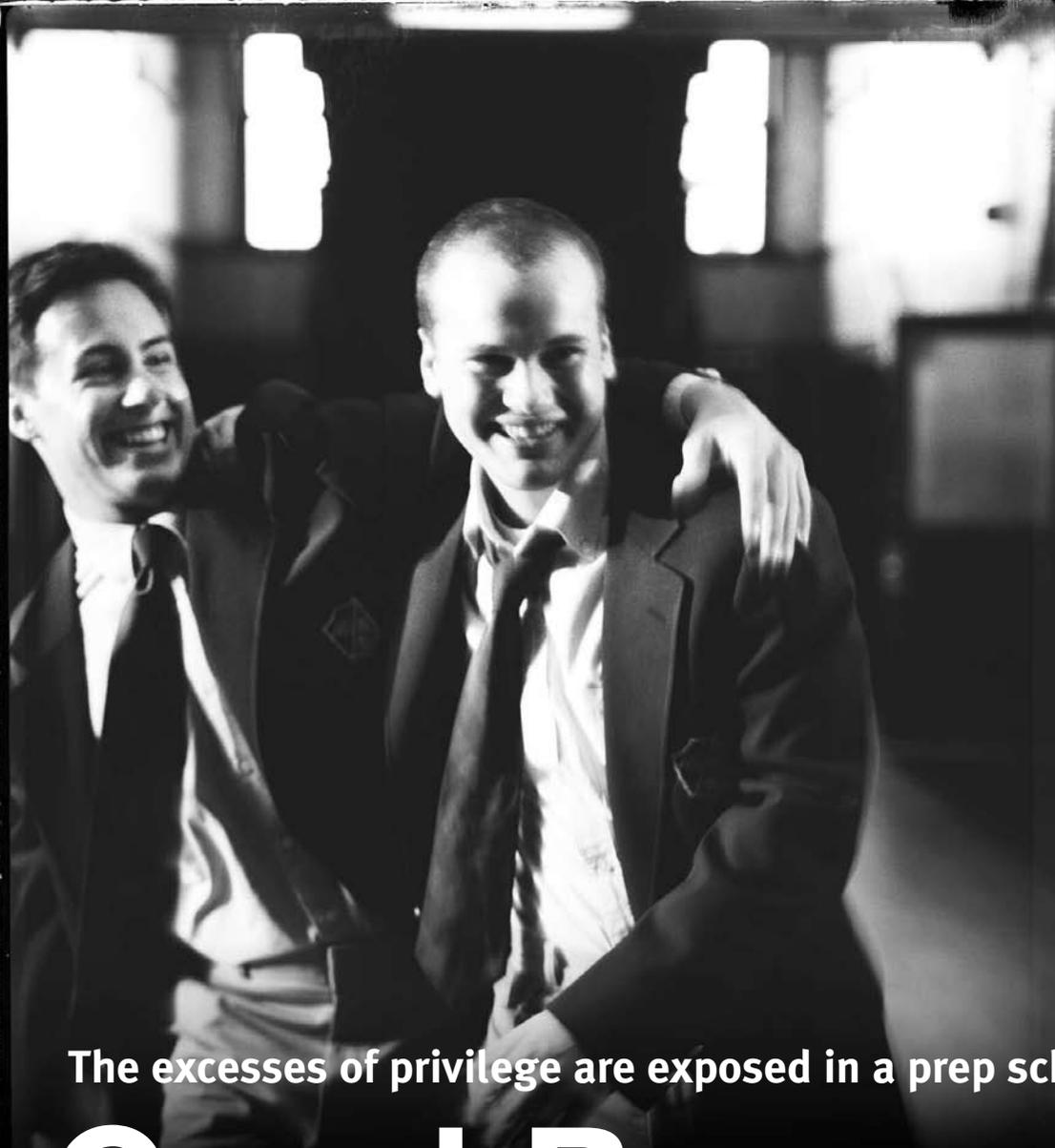
The evening will begin with a reception at Joey's Brickhouse, 1258 W. Belmont, at 5:30 p.m. The award show will then take place at

Bailiwick at 7 p.m. The show will also include entertainment, with performances from the casts of the Bailiwick productions of Zanna, Don't!, Bare and Hunchback of Notre Dame, among others. There will also be a silent auction at the event, with high-profile items being sold in correlation with 2007-2008 Bailiwick productions and Second Sex Series.

Past Trailblazer Award winners include actor/writer Anthony Rapp, activist Michael Bauer, playwright Charles Busch, actress Alexandra Billings, journalist Achy Obejas and Olympic champion Greg Louganis.

Tickets for the Trailblazer Awards are \$75 for VIP admission (including preferred seating, gift bag and program recognition) and \$50 for general admission.

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# Rita Moreno: Telling Her 'Story'

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.



Rita Moreno.

"This is Rita More-n-o," the unmistakable Rita Moreno says as she quickly corrects the properly chastised interviewer who has called, asking to speak to "Rita More-eeen-o." That embarrassing gaffe out of the way, the sensational multi-talented Moreno is ready to talk about some of the highlights of her incredible life. They range from her Oscar-winning performance as Anita in 1961's *West Side Story* to her current role as the matriarch of a wealthy dynasty in the CBS drama *Cane*. Moreno will be in town for a one-night-only concert on Sat., Nov. 17 at Centre East in Skokie at 8 p.m.

**Windy City Times:** Can you tell me about your show?

Rita Moreno: It has a lot of Broadway in it. It has jazz, blues, standards and several wonderful numbers in Spanish. I think what makes it special, also, are the anecdotes that I relate. Several of them have to do with the person who wrote the music or the lyrics or the person who originally sang it. I do a tribute to Peggy Lee in a couple of songs.

**WCT:** And I assume you're going to do something from *West Side Story*.

RM: No.

**WCT:** No?

RM: Well, how do you do that by yourself? You can't sing America by yourself and if I sing Maria they'll think I'm weird. Actually, I would love to sing Maria one day and I probably will. I think it's perfectly legitimate for a woman to sing about another woman.

**WCT:** Sure. I'm all ears and I'd guess an au-

dience would be, too.

RM: (laughs) Okay.

**WCT:** Well, speaking of *West Side Story*, it's been 46 years since that fabulous movie. When you look back now, what do you remember about the filming?

RM: I remember laughing a lot and never working so hard in my entire life. I remember coming home after rehearsals and coming in the front door of my house and just leaning against the door and not being able to move another inch for, oh, 20 minutes; I was just so tired. Rehearsals with [director] Jerry Robbins are quite an amazing feat and worth every ounce and every calorie because he was really just brilliant and I feel so honored to have been a part of that endeavor.

**WCT:** What do you remember about working with Natalie Wood?

RM: I remember that she was aloof and I think she was uncomfortable with all of us. I think that at some point—and it said so in her biography, too—that she thought that she was way out of her league and, indeed, she was. I think she regretted taking the role.

**WCT:** Then you did another movie which so many gay men love, love, love.

RM: The Ritz!

**WCT:** Yes, yes. *Googie Gomez* is in the house.

RM: It's on Broadway now, with Rosie Perez in my part.

**WCT:** You won a Tony for that and got a Golden Globe nomination. Have you seen the new production? Do you plan to?

RM: No, but only because I'm too busy doing my series here [in California].

**WCT:** Oh yes, *Cane*—which I haven't seen but sounds terrifically entertaining.

RM: Oh God, it's a marvelous show. I've never been able to say that about anything I've done on TV. It's really good and, now, what's scary is that the strike just may kill it. I hope not. It's got the most gorgeous cast you've ever seen in your life, all of whom are fabulous actors. It's really a good show. It's a combination of something like *Dynasty* and *Dallas*. So, there you go.

**WCT:** Can you talk about *Googie Gomez* for a moment, which is one of your signature characters?

RM: Well, *Googie* was born sometime during rehearsals for *West Side Story*. During breaks as a joke I said, "Here's this Puerto Rican girl auditioning for the bus and truck of *Gypsy*. Anyway, from then on I started to do her here and there. Jimmy Coco just adored this character and we were at a party that he gave at his apartment in New York, and Terrence McNally, who was a friend of his, attended. Jimmy said, "Do that crazy Puerto Rican." Anyway, Terrence thought that was one of the funniest things he'd ever seen. See, most people don't know that she's my invention.

**WCT:** I didn't know that. That's lovely.

RM: He obviously doesn't feel too free to say that either (laughs). So, as I was leaving he came to me and said, "I am going to write a part for that character" and about a year the script arrived and it was called *The Tubs* then and her name then was Rita "Googie" Gomez.

**WCT:** Do you do any *Googie* in your show?

RM: I stuck her in my act about two years ago and took it out again, but she's fun to do. It's hard to do without those two horrible boy dancers and, by the way, that was my own choreog-

raphy! I think it takes a real dancer to destroy dancing (laughs).

**WCT:** My best friend loves *Googie* more than anything and, years ago, on Halloween he got dressed up as ... guess who?

RM: That's not unusual and—you know what?—I hope you will encourage the gay community to come and see the show.

**WCT:** Has the support of the gay community been important to your career? Does it continue to be important?

RM: Well, let's say that I've been important to them as well. I did one of the original, first-time AIDS benefits at the Hollywood Bowl. It was such an unusual thing at the time. Can you imagine this now that all the press showed up to ask me, "Why are you doing this?" (laughs) and, of course, my answer was, "Why wouldn't I do this?" So, I think we've been mutually beneficial to each other over the years.

**WCT:** I'll second that. You're one of the nine folks to win the quartet—Tony, Emmy, Grammy and Oscar. How does it feel to be in such elite company?

RM: I think it's pretty fabulous but I think it's especially fabulous that I'm also a member of a minority, a Latina. That is what makes it really, really special. I'm very, very proud of that. I am not casual about it.

**WCT:** Is there any chance you'll write your memoirs?

RM: Yes. I've been putting it off and putting it off. It's just so daunting. Just the thought of it makes me weary but somebody convinced me recently that I really owe it to my community. Because in my community, the Spanish community I'm known as "*La puenerea, La lande*"—the legend and the pioneer. I was there way before people like Jennifer Lopez. She doesn't have a clue how hard it was to be Latina when I came into films and television.

**WCT:** I can't wait to read them. It's been a delight talking today. Thank you for all the entertainment you've given the world.

RM: It's my pleasure and thank you for your interest.

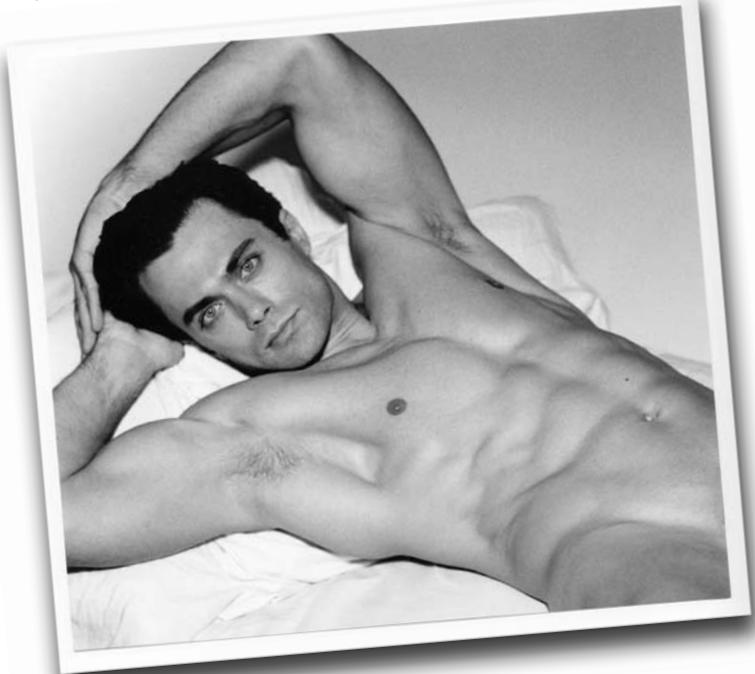
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Ira Glass (from *This American Life*) gives feedback on a story. Photo by Stuart Mullenberg

## Third Coast Festival: The Sound It Makes

BY WENDY JO CARLTON

The Third Coast International Audio Festival, (TCIAF), held Nov. 1-3 in Chicago, was a warm host to 400 radio producers, podcasters and audio enthusiasts from around the world who immersed themselves in the art and craft of creating stories for radio and the Internet. Whether participating in one of the workshops or mingling during a coffee break, the vibrant community energy of the festival was palpable.

Shiow-Jiau Yung, marketing staff of TCIAF, described it another way: "This is the Sundance of radio and audio producing. Media is converging in these new beautiful ways, and Chicago Public Radio is excited to be in the center of it."

Noah Miller, director of the San Francisco's LGBT youth series *OutLoud Radio*, has been to the festival four times. "Sometimes indie

media work can feel pretty isolating," he said. "I come away from here feeling refreshed for another year." Miller recently developed the Intergenerational Storytelling Project, which connects queer youth with LGBT elders for weekly interview exchanges.

Conference workshops included *The Emancipation of Sound, Story and Music* and *Crafting a Personal Documentary*. One particularly engaging session was *Documenter and Documentee*, where Michele Norris, from the NPR program *All Things Considered*, shared the stage with interview subject and Hurricane Katrina survivor Sharon White. They spoke about their relationship and how it changed over the course of telling White's story.

There was ample opportunity to meet and learn from other veterans. Producers from *This American Life*, *Weekend America*, *Studio 360* and *Canada's Outfront* were all in attendance, with a special presentation by European radio guru Peter Leonhard Braun.

To read Wendy Jo Carlton's entire account of the Third Coast International Audio Festival, please visit [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

# WHAT TO DO?

## Wednesday, Nov. 14

### Chicago Crystal Meth Initiative

Together ...to Make a Difference, a live and silent auction and party. Also welcoming Terry Oldes, author of *Dancing with Tina—A Memoir of Crystal Meth*. 7-9 p.m., \$10 donation, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St., www.sidetrackchicago.com

**Equality Illinois** 2008 Justice for All Gala Table Captain event, fundraiser. 6-9 p.m., Mini Bar, 3341 N. Halsted St., RSVP at [RSVP@eqil.org](mailto:RSVP@eqil.org) or call 773-477-7173, www.eqil.org

**Howard Brown** Legal presentation: Adoption and Custody. 6:30 p.m., 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., RSVP at [rsvp@howardbrown.org](mailto:rsvp@howardbrown.org) or call Hope at 773-388-8906, www.howardbrown.org

**Reeling 2007** 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival The Genderator Controversy: Screening and Panel Discussion. 6 p.m., free, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.reelingfestival.org

**Reeling 2007** 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival Starrbooty + Karaoke After-Party. 8 p.m., screening at Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway St., after-party at Goose Island Wrigleyville, 3535 N. Clark St., www.reelingfestival.org for info, tickets

### Women & Children First Bookstore

Alysa Dawn Johnson: *Racing the Dark*. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Thursday, Nov. 15

**Gerber/Hart Library** Opening of exhibition honoring long-time librarian Joseph P. Gregg on the 20th anniversary of his death. 1127 W. Granville Ave., call 773-381-8030, www.gerberhart.org

**Martyrs** Sarah Bettens (alt rock star; formerly of K's Choice). Opening band: Dylan Rice Band. 9 p.m., \$12 cover, 3855 N. Lincoln Ave., www.martyrslive.com

**Reeling 2007** 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival Bears + Furry After-Party. 6:30 p.m. screening of Bears at Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., after-party at house 5836, 5836 N. Glenwood, www.reelingfestival.org for info, tickets

**University of Chicago** Lee Edelman (queer theory author) lecture, "Learning Nothing: Bad Education." 4:30 p.m., Social Science Building, Room 122, 1126 E. 59th St.

## Friday, Nov. 16

**Affinity** Music-N-Discussion featuring Nikki Patin & others. Every third Friday. Doors 7 p.m., show 8-10 p.m., 5650 South Woodlawn Avenue, Garden Level, www.affinity95.org

**Center on Halsted** Alix Olsen and Other Word Warriors perform words from Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution. Reception 6:30 p.m., performance 7 p.m., signing 8:30 p.m., \$10, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

**Facet's Night** at the Factory gala and kick off for a week-long Andy Warhol film celebration. \$150, Museum of Contemporary Art Warehouse, 1747 W. Hubbard, 773-281-9075 or www.facets.org/warholfactorynight for info

**Reeling 2007** 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival Showtime's Official L Word Party. See Itty Bitty Titty Committee. See Sean Wiggins live. 7 p.m. screening at Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., after-party at Dragonfly Mandarin, 832

W. Randolph St., www.reelingfestival.org for info, tickets

**Rep. Danny Davis** Reception celebrating the introduction of the Quality of Life Instant Scratch Off Lottery game. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Garfield Park Conservatory, RSVP at 773-533-7520

## Saturday, Nov. 17

**Brotherhood of the Phoenix** This Chicago neo-pagan order for GBT men who love men holds a religious celebration, Shadow Dance: A Celebration of the Dark Tide. Workshop 4-7 p.m., ritual 7:30-10 p.m., 1900 W. Fulton St., www.brotherhoodofthephoenix.org, 773-572-6600

**Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries** The new group ordains its first pastor as a challenge to the "Refrain or Restraint" policy regarding gay and lesbian pastors. 2 p.m., open to public, Resurrection Lutheran Church, 3309 N. Seminary Ave., www.elm.org

**International Deaf Leather** "31 Flavors of Sex" workshop and tour of Leather Archives & Museum. 7 p.m., \$20 donation, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., RSVP at www.wcrad.org

**Lesbian Community Care Project** Fall Brunch and live auction. 11 a.m. VIP reception, 12-3 p.m. fall brunch, Feast Restaurant, 1616 N. Damen Ave., see www.lccp.org

**Reeling 2007** 26th Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film 2 Minutes Later screening and after-party. 9 p.m., Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., after-party at River East Art Center, 435 E. Illinois St., www.reelingfestival.org for info, tickets

**Women & Children First Bookstore** Queer performance poet Alix Olsen reads from Word Warriors: 25 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Friday, Nov. 16



### GAME ON

Advocate **Michael O'Connor** (above) will be present at the Quality of Life Instant Scratch-Off Lottery law reception at Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park.

photo by Andrew Davis

## Monday, Nov. 19



### A VIEW TO A THRILL

A viewing party for Melissa Etheridge's (above) new DVD, *The Awakening*, will take place at Hard Rock Cafe, 63 W. Ontario. (NOTE: Etheridge will not be present at this event.)

## Sunday, Nov. 18

**Broadway Youth Center** 3rd Annual Night of Fallen Stars, an evening celebrating the transgender community. 7 p.m. after the Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, www.howardbrown.org

**Illinois Gender Advocates** Day of Remembrance Vigil, in memory of trans victims of hate crimes. 5 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.

**Test Positive Aware Network** Red Party kickoff. The Red Party is a new campaign to benefit TPAN's programs. 5 p.m., Pepitone's Restaurant, 5437 N. Broadway, www.theredparty.org

## Monday, Nov. 19

**Center on Halsted** Documentary: Pursuit of Equality. 7-9 p.m., \$10, Hoover-Leppen Theater, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

**Hard Rock Cafe Chicago** Exclusive party of Melissa's new DVD *The Awakening* Live; raffle. 7:30 p.m. doors open, 8 p.m. premiere, 10 p.m. raffle, 63 W. Ontario, 312-943-2252, free, all ages, www.hardrock.com

## Tuesday, Nov. 20

**Sevices and Advocacy for GLBT Elders** Gathering of Friends Thanksgiving celebration with SAGE and Horizon's Youth Program participants. 4:30-7 p.m., free, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., bring side dish to share, RSVP requested, call 773-472-6469, ext. 160



## Doggy Fashion

Chicago Fashion Week showcased amazing designers not only for people but for canines as well! On Oct. 10, the W Hotel City Center hosted a dog fashion show to reveal the latest trends in doggy fashion. Dog etiquette expert Charlotte Reed launched her new book, *The Miss Fido Manners Complete Book of Dog Etiquette*. The event also raised funds for The Delta Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving human health through animal service and therapy.

Philip Emigh (with peekapoo Genevieve) and Tales In The City employees, Bruce Haas and Janet Lee, at the fashion show. Photo courtesy of Bridget L. Campbell



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Kristen Worley. Photo courtesy of Globe & Mail

SPORTS

# Kristen Worley: Reaching for the Olympics—and More

BY JACOB ANDERSON-MINSHALL

Kristen Worley is on a mission. The Canadian cyclist is determined to make it to the 2008 Olympics, but even more the transitioned athlete—the term she prefers over transsexual—hopes to prevent a repeat of what happened to Shanti Soundarajan.

A runner from India who won a silver medal for women's 800 meters at the 2006 Asian Games, Soundarajan drew international scrutiny when she "failed" a gender test and was stripped of her medal. Three weeks ago, the 26-year-old slipped into a coma after attempting suicide.

The Indian Olympic Association reported that the athlete "does not possess the sexual characteristics of a woman" and implied she had intentionally deceived them. But Soundarajan and her family insisted she'd done nothing wrong. It's speculated that Soundarajan was born with androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS), which results in the external physical characteristics typically associated with women despite having XY chromosomes.

Although the International Olympic Committee (IOC) discontinued gender testing female athletes in 1999, the Olympic Council of Asia continues the controversial practice.

Worley, a world-class cyclist and water skier, mounted a campaign to get Soundarajan's medal returned. She calls the situation an example of "a gender policy gone terribly wrong," and lays the blame on IOC's misguided gender policies.

"The IOC lied to the world," Worley argues. "Which compromised so many athletes—and

people's understanding of gender variance and intersexed issues...The IOC's gender practices have created undo invasiveness and disrespect and violations of women's bodies."

She's also critical of IOC's 2004 Stockholm Consensus, which set forth regulations transsexual athletes must meet in order to compete at the Olympics. Although the IOC ruling seemed to welcome transitioned athletes, Worley insists that was never the case.

"The policy is totally exclusionary. In fact, it was designed that way on purpose. There was never an effort to make it inclusive."

Instead, Worley says, "It was a step to protect sports, from what was perceived as a threat. Yet, when the science is on the table, there is no threat and [transitioned] athletes are incredibly disadvantaged, with over a dozen or more well know contraindications."

A year ago Worley says, an IOC representative disclosed that the policy wasn't based on scientific research. IOC medical director, Dr. Patrick Schamasch—on a conference call—admitted that the agency hadn't done its homework, and offered to re-consider the ruling if someone would "get them the science."

"Wasn't that your job?" Worley purportedly responded, "To do that prior to releasing such a policy to the global public?"

In addition to working with the IOC, Worley, golfer Mianne Bagger and trans activist Jamison Green have met with sports organizations, coaches and athletes to educate them on the issues facing transitioned athletes. They've been particularly successful in Canada, even gaining financial support from the Canadian government.

Earlier this year, Worley gave a presentation at the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine's annual symposium and Green and Worley penned an influential paper for the World Anti-Doping Agency, addressing the anti-doping code's therapeutic exemptions and the use of therapeutic testosterone. Unlike other female athletes, transitioned women have no testosterone and must receive testosterone therapy to bring their levels up to those of other women their age.

Worley won't learn if she's made it to the 2008 Olympics until the World Track Cycling Championships next March. When she's not training or changing the world, Worley is a design engineer for a water ski boat manufacturer. Sharing her love for the water sport, this summer Worley hosted a ski day for gender variant teens.

"This beautiful young boy ... looked like Harry Potter. [He] said, 'Until today I felt like a broken toy.' This is why what I'm doing is so important. It has little to do with me personally or my own efforts as an athlete, [but] it's important to me, to see others succeed."

Trans writer Jacob Anderson-Minshall co-authored *Blind Leap*, the second book in the *Blind Eye Mystery* series, available in October. Contact [jake@trans-nation.org](mailto:jake@trans-nation.org) or visit [anderson-minshall.com](http://anderson-minshall.com) for more information.

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## Federation of Gay Games Holds Annual Meeting

The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) held its annual meeting Oct. 24-29 in San Francisco in conjunction with the 25th anniversary celebration of the first Gay Games.

The general assembly elected a new female co-president and seven new board members Oct. 27, capping a year of record growth in organizations associated with the Federation. Emy Ritt was elected the federation's new female co-president after Kathleen Webster announced her retirement. Among the Chicagoans elected were Elizabeth Valenti (vice president of operations), Paul Oostenbrug (vice president of membership) and Ann Simonson (officer of culture).

This year's annual meeting was the first for the new general assembly following the federation's November 2006 restructuring in Lyon, France.

Among the highlights was a memorial that honored deceased FGG supporters. Peg Grey, the Chicagoan who was the first female co-chair of the FGG, was among those saluted.

The 2007 meeting concluded just days before the 1,000-day countdown to Gay Games VIII in Cologne, Germany, which will run during the summer of 2010.

Photographs of the Peg Grey memorial (top) with Valenti in the foreground and other FGG supporters) and the FGG annual meeting attendees (bottom) by Tracy Baim

### Badminton Clinics

Second City BADminton and the United States Badminton Association will be holding badminton clinics every other Monday at the Broadway Armory, 5917 N. Broadway.

The next two will be held Nov. 26 and Dec. 10. Both will be 7-8:30 p.m. Topics covered during the coaching clinics will depend on the skill level and interest of participants each night. The \$7 open gym fee will cover the clinics as well.

Also, the doubles league will commence in January. For more info, see [secondcitybad.blogspot.com](http://secondcitybad.blogspot.com).

### Gay Basketball Tourney in L.A.

The National Gay Basketball Association has announced that the West Coast Classic III will be held Jan. 19-20, 2008, in Los Angeles, according to GayWired.com.

Twenty teams from across the United States and Europe will compete in three men's divisions; there will also be a women's division.

The tourney will single out the leading contenders for the Coady Classic NGBA Championships, to be held in Chicago in April 2008.

For individual or team registration, see [www.ngba.us](http://www.ngba.us).

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North End	37.5	39.5	Castaways	49	28	Juana Bees	33	44
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