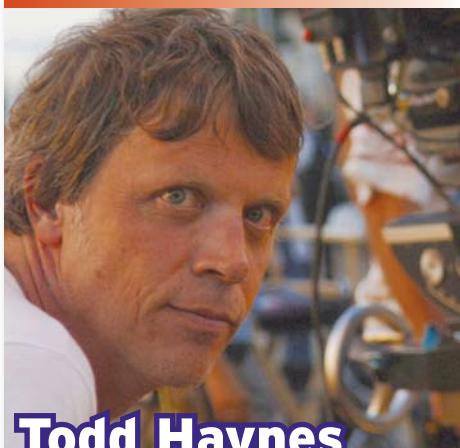


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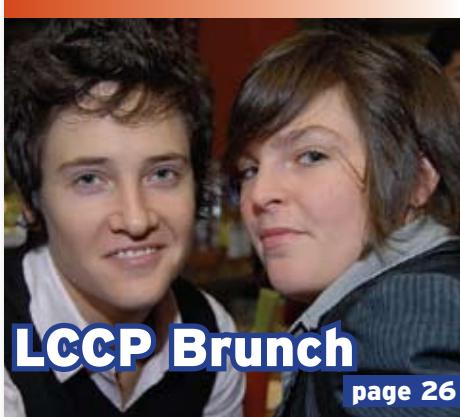


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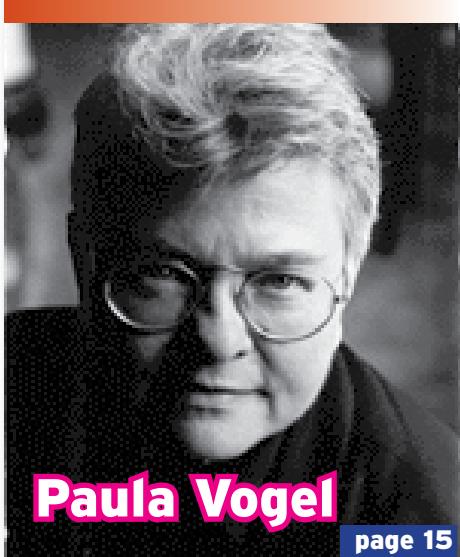
NOVEMBER 21, 2007 • VOL 23 NO 10



**Todd Haynes
Interview** page 20



LCCP Brunch page 26



Paula Vogel page 15



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WEEK OF 'T' RIGHTS

Last week there was a wide range of events calling attention to transgender issues, from a protest held at an HRC-Chicago event, to a vigil for victims of anti-trans violence, to a rousing trans celebration, and a forum following the screening of the film *The Gendercator* at the Reeling festival. See pages 6, 23, 24 and 27 for coverage. Images here of the vigil Sunday night. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More photos online at www.windycitymediagroup.com and www.mysticimagesphotography.com.



Locals Challenge Lutheran Celibacy Rule



Jen Rude fights for Lutheran acceptance.
Page 24.

BLACK PRIDE SCHISM *'08 Competing Events*

BY AMY WOOTEN

Due to controversy, conflict and a lack of unity, Chicago will most likely have two separate Black Pride celebrations put on by two different organizations July 2008.

Although this isn't the first time Black Pride has been riddled with controversy and conflict, the recent rift has caused many in the community to become concerned regarding the future of Black Pride celebrations.

There are now two separate organizations planning a Black Pride celebration: Windy City Black LGBT Pride (WCBP) and Chicago Windy City Black LGBT-SGL Pride (CWCBP), headed by former WCBP president Charles Nelson, who was voted out by the first organization.

Nelson cites conflicts over management style, the planning process and interests for the rift.

Some previous WCBP members resigned (including current WWCBP Vice President Lois Bates) before the group allegedly voted Nelson out this summer. Much of the conflict occurred in the midst of the 2007 Black Pride. The current WCBP board claims that alleged activities took place without the board's approval, which led to the removal of Nelson.

The first Black Pride celebration took place in 1999 after a series of yearly park parties held by the non-profit Chicago Friends. The Rails Entertainment Group (now The Rails Marketing Group) and Chicago Friends joined forces in 1998 to create Chicago Black Pride, which threw the 1999 event. In 2001, Chicago Black Pride became WCBP, which was incorporated as a non-profit April 2006, and attained its 501(c)(3) status in August 2007.

Turn to page 4

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index

NEWS

Civil-unions push for Illinois	4
Suicide talks	4
Black Pride split	4
Local briefs	5
Entertainment briefs: Ellen	5
Trans protest at HRC	6
ABA forms gay group	6
Lisa Keen on politics	8
Police accused of abuse	9
HIV transmission from organs	9
Views: Mary Cardaras	10
Marie Kuda on Monica's dress	10
World roundup	11
Quotelines	11



Eddy Ocampo, dance profile, p. 13.
Photo by Ross Forman

ENTERTAINMENT

Pop Making Sense	12
Eddy Ocampo profile	13
RuPaul in town for film	13
Theater reviews	14
Paula Vogel interview	15
Stage Door Jonny	17
Todd Haynes interview	20
Frances Sternhagen	20
Knight at the Movies	21
Reeling: Itty Bitty pics	21



Beyond Media benefit pics, p. 26.
Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

OUTLINES

Real estate ads	22
Classifieds	23
Trans night pics	23
Calendar, Dykes	25
LCCP and Beyond Media pics	26

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This week's online-only features include:
 -Veto means no increase in federal AIDS funding
 -Task Force attacks Sen. Craig investigation
 -Theater review, A Prayer for My Daughter
 -'80s movie star Taylor Negron (right) about his new show Satellites
 -Media Watch
 -Todd Haynes interview
 -Deep Inside Hollywood

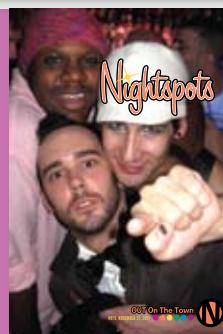


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Nightspots

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Berlin gets another year older and no less funky.
photo by DJ Greg Haus.



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Illinois civil-unions push

BY TULLY SATRE

Illinois is on its way to becoming the first state in the Midwest to grant federal protections to same-sex couples. An educational meeting sponsored by Equality Illinois, Chicago NOW, and Lambda Legal on The Religious Freedom and Civil Union Act (HB1826) was held Nov 13 at the Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Greg Harris in February, needs 60 votes in the House and 30 in the Senate in order to secure passage. "We are very close to having the votes we need," said Harris, who attended the meeting. "Every single [representative] said they understand what is at stake."

Unlike other civil union bills introduced around the country, HB 1826 makes very clear that religious institutions will not be required to solemnize or officially recognize civil unions for same-sex couples. The bill is specifically for legal purposes to ensure that couples may be granted some of the fundamental provisions of marriage such as: medical decision-making, hospital visitation for partners, the right to control and dispose of remains, inheritance rights and domestic-violence protections.

HB 1826 is unique in that it is not limited to same-sex couples. "This bill takes sex out of the picture and treats people equally," said Jim Madigan, a staff attorney from Lambda Legal. "It is about sameness."

PRIDES from cover

CWCBP, Nelson's current organization, was incorporated as a non-profit in July 2007, and its 501(c)(3) status is pending.

On Nov. 16, WCBP held a tense and emotional community forum called "Breaking the Silence" at the South Side's Anderson Park Fieldhouse. The forum was created with the intent of "dispelling misconceptions," answering community questions and discussing Pride 2008. The result was flared tempers, some clarification and a weak promise that the two organizations will eventually sit down and talk.

Many feel the conflict is harming the annual celebration, as well as the larger Black LGBT community. "Unfortunately these conflicts hurt the Pride organization, the planning process, and our community as a whole," wrote party promoters Bob Yeaworth and Danny Bekoe of Clubhouse-Afrik Productions in an open letter to the community prior to the forum. Both are angry Nelson was voted out as president of WCBP, and call the

Madigan described the importance of the bill's gender neutrality as a winning argument which would assist transgender individuals and senior citizens.

Transgender people who are currently married and wish to transition would be able to secure the same protections of marriage with their partner with a civil union. Senior citizens who are not married and wish to officiate a relationship could obtain a civil union with their partner and still receive the federal benefits of their senior status.

While not granting the more than 1,000 federal benefits of marriage, the Illinois Civil Union bill would recognize the rights and benefits of same-sex couples who have received legal protections from other states.

HB 1826 awaits a vote on the House floor before heading to the Senate.

Experts Discuss LGBT Suicides

BY AMY WOOTEN

Mainstream and LGBT healthcare experts gathered recently to discuss suicide risk in the LGBT community.

Co-sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, a first-ever conference took place in Chicago Nov. 8-9 to assess what experts know about the issue, identify the many gaps in knowledge and create a consensus for future initiatives to identify what is needed in terms of prevention and policy.

current WCBP board "illegitimate."

Previous Black Pride celebrations have had the backing of the International Federation of Black Prides (IFBP), a coalition of Black Pride organizers.

IFBP backs Nelson's CWCBP. Nelson currently serves on IFBP's board of directors.

"We are fully supportive of Charles," IFBP President Earl Folkes, Jr., told Windy City Times.

Folkes feels the rift in the Chicago community is due to personality conflicts and different management styles. He dubs the current WCBP board a "renegade Pride" organization.

"The Federation does not recognize them," Folkes said. IFBP is not a governing body. Members pay yearly dues.

"It really saddens me this kind of thing is going on in our community," Folkes said.

Nelson's organization is also endorsed by a number of party promoters. Yeaworth and Bekoe have stated their support, as well as John Fleming (Madman Productions/Lipstick & Lace), Karl

"Mainstream ... has not been attentive," said AFSP research director Dr. Ann Haas. "It's kind of like an invisible issue."

Currently, there is very little data regarding suicide risk in the LGBT community, and very little understanding of specific risk factors among LGBT people. Haas told Windy City Times that the issue simply isn't in the consciousnesses of researchers. However, there is increasing evidence that sexual orientation is a risk factor.

"We don't have really good data," Haas said. She added that among the statistics out there, "we don't have a solid foundation."

When suicide risk in the LGBT community is discussed, a report from the '80s is often cited that claims that 30 percent of LGBT youth attempt suicide, a statistic Haas said is "not based on really anything."

This lack of attention leads to gaps, which cause misconceptions and misunderstandings of the LGBT community.

Howard Brown and Northwestern University School of Medicine's Dr. Robert Garofalo believes there is a great need for a deeper understanding of the complexity of data out there. He added that the continual citing of the 30 percent statistic over the past 25 years shows a lack of perception of gay youth. "It really damages the way people see this population," he said. "It says something about the need of youth, but the numbers aren't very helpful."

All in all, there has been a lot of talk, but no real, concrete statistics to back it up, Haas said. "Sexual orientation has not really made that mark in research in any field," Haas said, adding that there is, however, a lot of conversation among a

number of gay and lesbian researchers. She wonders if there is perhaps a remaining stigma.

Garofalo added that suicide itself is a very "complex" issue to study because it is also a "devastating and private" issue that is also stigmatized and marginalized. Garofalo is a past president of GLMA, and his focus is adolescent medicine.

One of the major problems is that official statistics on suicide deaths don't include information on sexual orientation, making it really difficult to gather clear data.

In addition, research that looks into what might have occurred (called a psychological autopsy) is difficult when it comes to youth who might not have disclosed their sexual orientation to anybody yet.

Despite the lack of clear data, there is increasing evidence that sexual orientation is a risk factor, including some data on suicide attempts, which one study shows rates of suicide attempts among LGBT youth that are two to three times higher.

There is also some fairly reliable data on adults, but not older LGBT adults. Such a widespread lack of data and understanding makes it difficult to assess what is needed in terms of prevention and intervention.

Haas was excited to bring AFSP, a mainstream organization, to the conference. "It's time we bring everyone in the mix here," she said. Haas plans for the coalition to publish a paper on its recommendations in a mainstream medical journal to help get information out there and take discussions to the next level.

"Research is fine and dandy," Garofalo said, "but we need an agenda."

"As a Black gay man, I'm completely embarrassed."

Tarrina Dikes, who served on the Chicago Gay Games board of directors, also announced her embarrassment during the forum. Dikes had collected corporate sponsorship information in preparation for the forum, and said that she does not know who to share the information with now. "I need to see some unity first," she said.

There were several emotional outbursts during the meeting, some from the WCBP board itself in frustration with being bombarded with questions about past conflicts, when members like McCoy expressed that they simply wanted to focus on the future and move forward.

But to many audience members, the future could not be discussed without talking about the past and achieving some sort of common ground.

When asked if the two separate organizations would sit down and talk, Nelson, who was present for the forum, immediately agreed. The WCBP board reluctantly agreed after first saying it was merely a "possibility".

"We would be more than happy to talk with them," WCBP's Langston Smith said, adding that he will talk with CWCBP's board, but not Nelson.

"All we're asking is for mutual respect," said WCBP's David Dodd.

After the forum, Nelson told Windy City Times that he feels unity is really needed, but he is not optimistic that both groups will be able to work together and achieve common ground. "They [the community] want one pride," he said. "That's very obvious."

He is, however, "fine with competition," if that's what he comes to, Nelson said, adding that he is "deeply saddened" by how the situation has played out.

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Local News

Healthy harvest: Celebrate Vital Bridges' year-end Harvest of Hope campaign at two events. Celebrate with a game show, raffle and entertainment at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., Dec. 7, from 8-11 p.m. Swing by Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St., Dec. 8, from 10 a.m.-12 a.m. and celebrate with a drag show and raffle hosted by Chanel Exotique. See www.vitalbridges.org.

Laugh it up: Suzanne Westenhoefer will perform for a Lesbian Community Care Project benefit Dec. 8 at Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave., at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and tickets are \$30-\$50. Purchase tickets at www.lccp.org.

And justice for all: Equality Illinois' large annual Justice for All black-tie gala will take place Feb. 2 at the Chicago Hilton and Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave. A premiere reception will be held the day before at Chicago Illuminating Company, 19 E. 21st St. Tickets for the Justice for All gala are \$250-\$350. Call 773-477-7173 or see www.eqil.org.

A triumphant return: Amy Armstrong and Freddy Allen return for seven performances of How the Diva Stole Christmas 2 at Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway St., running Dec. 7-23. Features classic songs and musical numbers. Tickets, \$25, are available at 773-472-3492 or www.lakeshoretheater.com.

World stage: While in Australia recently, revered Chicago-based Pakistani poet Ifti Nasim endorsed the political party known as The Greens as it kicked off its Sexuality and Gender Identity Policy in the Sydney suburb of Stanmore, according to the Aussie news site sxnews.e-p.net.au. The Greens support the ban of all forms of sexual discrimination, including the Labor/Liberal prohibition against same-sex marriage, its Web site (www.greens4sydney.org.au) states.

Entertainment News

Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres' partner Portia de Rossi, who plays Joely Richardson's girlfriend on *Nip/Tuck*, feared she was being typecasted as a lesbian, the actress revealed to USA Today. She said that she almost turned down her role on *Nip/Tuck* for that reason, but then realized that she had turned down other romantic lead roles because this lesbian character was more interesting to her.

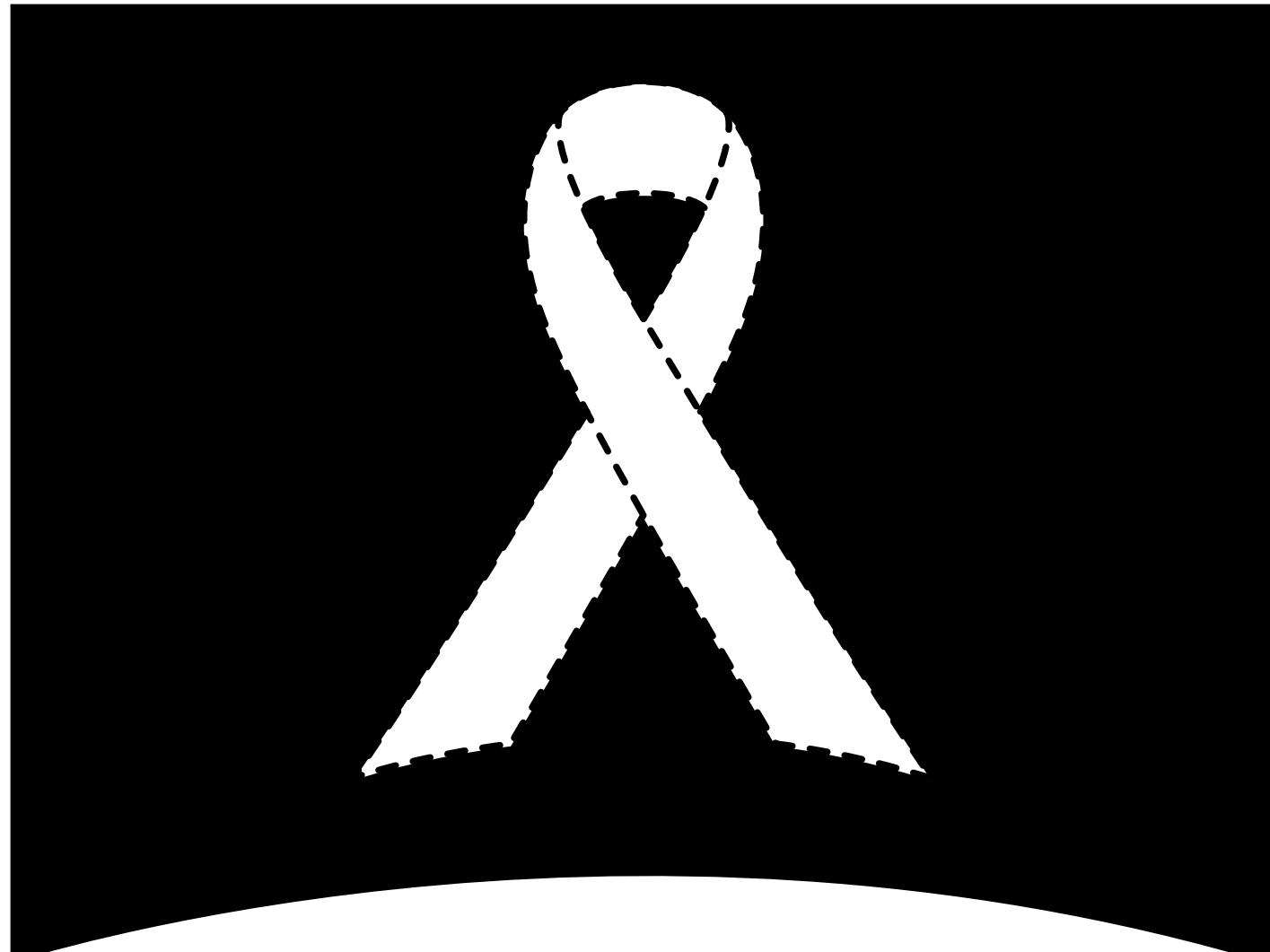
Not too long after the puppy debacle, beloved lesbian talk show host **Ellen DeGeneres appears to be in some hot water** for continuing to put out new episodes of The Ellen DeGeneres show while its Writers Guild of America employees are out on strike. Members of Writers Guild of America East, Eonline.com reported, plan to picket outside the show's studio.

U.K.'s Telegraph reported that **Boy George was charged with false imprisonment**. A 28-year-old Norwegian escort claims the pop singer chained him to a wall in his London home.

The NBA recently reprimanded former Chicago Bulls basketball coach Phil Jackson for a Brokeback Mountain comment he made following the Los Angeles Lakers' recent loss against the San Antonio Spurs. According to the Associated Press, Jackson said, "We call this a 'Brokeback Mountain' game, because there's so much penetration and kickouts." Lakers coach Jackson apologized. "If I've offended any horses, Texans, cowboys or gays, I apologize," he said.

Amazing Race's first lesbian couple, ministers Kate Lewis and Pat Hendrickson, were eliminated in Amsterdam. Hendrickson told AP she was out of shape. The women lost too much time trying to find a color-coded tag among thousands of bikes during a Detour challenge.

Actor Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) recently revealed his reaction to author J.K. Rowling's announcement that Hogwarts' school headmaster Dumbledore was gay to BBC News. "J.K. Rowling is an incredibly intelligent woman," Radcliffe said. "She can't have thought for a moment that that would go down well in the Bible Belt of America, but she put it brilliantly herself: 'He's my character—I can do what I want with him.' Which I think is fair enough."



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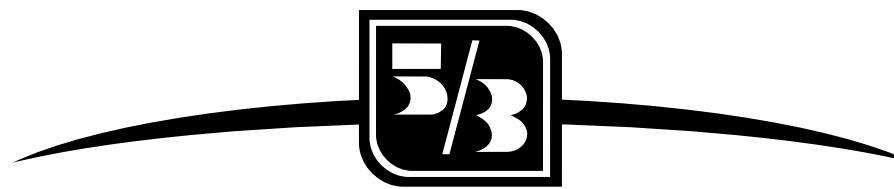
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Trans protest, confront HRC in Chicago

BY AMY WOOTEN

Following the controversy over Human Right Campaign's (HRC) support of a trans-less Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), an emotional dialogue took place during a recent Chicago Gender Society (CGS) business meeting in which local HRC representatives were guests.

On Nov. 13, CGS chose to have HRC Chicago's steering committee speak at their regular business meeting. Former CGS president and Illinois Gender Advocate (IGA) Chair Stevie Conlon, as well as active members of CGS, IGA, Gay Liberation Network (GLN) and others protested outside the venue. The peaceful protesters were invited inside to attend the meeting, where a heated and emotional forum took place. The protest was condoned by CGS in an attempt to begin a much-needed dialogue.

An ENDA that excluded gender-identity protections passed the U.S. House of Representatives 235-184 Nov. 7. While 360 state and national organizations joined United ENDA, a coalition calling for an inclusive bill, HRC backed out on its previous promises and supported Rep. Barney Frank's new, trans-less version of ENDA.

"We are so disappointed," Conlon told Windy City Times. "I don't know if HRC is redeemable."

Throughout the evening, nearly all present expressed extreme disappointment in HRC, saying the national organization has failed the transgender and gender-variant community.

"An ENDA without the inclusion of this community stinks," said HRC Chicago's Robert Berry during the meeting. "It's not what we had in mind. It's not what we wanted."

He added that the decision to support ENDA was made above HRC Chicago's level.

Conlon, who has lobbied with HRC in the past,



Protesting outside the HRC Chicago event, and the HRC panel inside (below right). Photos by Amy Wooten. See trans day vigil and celebration photos page 23 and 24.

is disappointed in the organization. "I don't think they should represent our community anymore because they betrayed us," she said.

"I was appalled when we had the rug pulled out from under us," CGS' Julie Johnson said. "Out of all the people that need ENDA the most, it's the transgender community."

Protesters, such as Conlon and IGA's Cyndi Richards, went so far as to call for the resignation of HRC President Joe Solmonese.

When asked why local HRC representatives did not sign onto United ENDA, despite HRC National's stance, HRC Chicago's Dan McCurdy said "splitting off" simply wasn't an option.

Many present were frustrated by what they



perceive as HRC Chicago's lack of power. "As individuals, you can call on Joe Solmonese to resign," said GLN's Andy Thayer. "It's very simple."

Despite their personal feelings, local HRC members disagreed. "We can't make a decision as a Chicago board; we have to do it as a collective," said HRC Chicago's Catherine Smith, who personally disagreed with HRC's decision. "If we want something to change, we have to have this dialogue."

HRC Chicago's John Barry said he feels the organization's long-term goal is an inclusive ENDA. "I do think HRC wants to pass a trans-inclusive ENDA," Barry said. He received negative feedback when he suggested the national organization backed the trans-less ENDA as part of a "tactical decision."

Many feel deceived by HRC, and wondered what happened behind the scenes. "I wish I knew what happened in those meetings," Smith said in response to questions regarding how informed HRC Chicago is. "We were just as surprised as you are. We don't know, and we're getting the same mixed messages you are."

Chicago HRC representatives told the crowd that they have been kept in the dark. Robert Berry said the local steering committee had "no idea" HRC would support the trans-less bill until it was said and done.

However, McCurdy said that HRC National is "well aware" of their personal stances. Many HRC Chicago representatives voiced their disdain for the national organization's actions. Berry added that state HRC representatives are having similar town hall meetings all across the country to start a dialogue, and that notes taken from the meeting will be delivered to HRC National.

CGS' Carol Rodgers suggested that since HRC Chicago appears to be powerless, the trans community should cease supporting it. Rodgers proposed that those in the room sever all ties with HRC until it changes its stance. The room filled with wild applause, with nearly everyone standing up in support of her suggestion.

Towards the end of the meeting, Equality Illinois' Rick Garcia made an appearance, and he was met with cheers and applause. He expressed disappointment in HRC, and mentioned that Illinois has fought to include gender equality in its laws since 1995.

"We were asked to drop certain legislation," Garcia said. "It was never a discussion. We said 'No.' We dug our heels in. Many of us have been working to make sure everyone is protected."

"You stand with those who stand with you. Do not settle for second best. Anyone who doesn't stand with you, you should never stand with them."

Robert Berry told the crowd he hoped everyone would continue to work together, despite the frustration, disappointment and tension.

Johnson of CGS implored the steering committee to do everything in their power to demand HRC National to do everything in its power to get an inclusive ENDA passed. "Only when you do that will this community believe you," Johnson said.

ABA creates commission on gay, gender ID bias

The American Bar Association (ABA) recently announced the creation of the Commission of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

The commission will "work to eliminate bias and discrimination against persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities in the legal profession, the justice system and society," according to an ABA press release. The commission's first meeting will take place Nov. 30 through Dec. 1.

The ABA is based in Chicago.

Walgreens honored

Walgreens will receive a Food for Life Award from Vital Bridges for the company's continued support of Chicagoans with HIV/AIDS. In a press release, Vital Bridges described Walgreens as a long-time ally.

Vital Bridges will present the award Dec. 2 at the 18th Annual Holiday Brunch at the Four Seasons, 120 E. Delaware St. See www.vitalbridges.org or call 773-665-1000.

Burr joins Prudential

Robbin Burr, who was recently inducted in Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame and previously served as Center on Halsted's executive director, has accepted a position with Prudential Financial. Burr will fill the position of Local Relationship Manager in Chicago, helping area sales offices build relationships with community partners to increase diversity. Burr also serves as the co-chair of the board of the National Association of LGBT Community Centers.

Welcoming church celebrates 150th

Second Unitarian Church, which has held numerous LGBT events over the years and was home to Congregation Or Chadash for 20 years, celebrated its 150th birthday Nov. 18.

The church is located at 656 W. Barry. See www.secondunitarian.org for more information.

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KEEN ON THE TRAIL

Gay news from the presidential campaign trail ...

BY LISA KEEN

EVALUATING LEADS: To watch or read most national discussions of the presidential horse race, Hillary Clinton is so many lengths ahead of the rest of her field, nobody can possibly catch her. But it's worth keeping in mind that, in December 2003, some polls showed Howard Dean with a 32-point lead in New Hampshire over the eventual nominee John Kerry. With that in mind... the latest national poll of Democrats, conducted by Rasmussen Nov. 5-7 of 750 Democrats likely to vote, shows 43 percent support Clinton, 20 percent for Barack Obama, 16 percent for John Edwards, and low single digits for everybody else. Typically, the hype over who wins the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary has always contributed to field conditions, too. Polls in those states show a closer race: In Iowa, the latest poll (by Strategic Vision Nov. 9-12 of 600 Democrats likely to vote) shows Clinton leads Obama by only two points, with Edwards just seven points behind Obama. In New Hampshire, the latest poll (by CBS-New York Times Nov. 2-12 of 279 Democrats who are likely to vote) shows Clinton has a 15-point edge.

FRANK ENDORSEMENT: U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., is endorsing Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination. Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) endorsed Clinton in August.

OBAMA SNUBBED? Just weeks after Clinton graced the cover of The Advocate's 40th anniversary issue, the newsmagazine did an interview with Democratic rival Barack Obama. But rather than the cover, Obama landed only on the newsmagazine's Web site. The interview's still there—below a review of Britney Spears' latest album. Was it a snub? Advocate News Editor Kerry Eleveld says no. The magazine asked for an interview months ago, but Obama said yes only after the controversy erupted over the inclusion of anti-gay singer Donnie McClurkin in the campaign's gospel concert tour in South Carolina. The interview took place by phone and was limited, by the campaign, to 15 minutes, said Eleveld. There wasn't time to go beyond the immediate controversy and the magazine felt it was important to get the interview out to readers as quickly as possible. So, it was posted on the Web site Oct. 30. And, she added, the magazine's print version does not carry an interview

that has run online.

OBAMA SNUBS? Meanwhile, the Obama campaign has not responded to requests from this reporter and several large gay newspapers around the country for a sit-down interview on a wide range of LGBT-related topics. Campaign spokesperson Ben LaBolt pointed to The Advocate interview as evidence that the campaign is responsive to such requests, but he stopped short of saying whether a more comprehensive Q&A might be scheduled with any gay news publication in the future. Last week, the campaign did reach out to the National Gay Newspaper Guild, a coalition of the 12 largest gay newspapers in the country. It sent the papers an essay it said the senator wrote "addressing many of the issues that have come up over the past several weeks." In it, Obama reiterates his position on a number of issues—that he would repeal the entire federal Defense of Marriage Act (Clinton would repeal only part), repeal the military's "don't ask/don't tell policy" and "use the bully pulpit to urge states to treat same-sex couples with full equality in their family and adoption laws." But he also reiterated that he believes "full equality" can be achieved without marriage licenses. And, while he says his administration would support a "fully inclusive" Employment Non-Discrimination Act, he does not specify how he would vote if a sexual orientation-only version comes before him in the Senate next year.

OBAMA BOLDNESS: In his essay, Sen. Obama also asserts, "We will not secure full equality for all LGBT Americans until we learn how to address that deep disagreement [about including LGBT people as "full members of our shared community"] and move beyond it. To achieve that goal, we must state our beliefs boldly," he wrote, "bring the message of equality to audiences that have not yet accepted it, and listen to what those audiences have to say in return." Obama spoke to one of those audiences that have not yet accepted it. Obama granted a sit-down Q&A Nov. 11 with David Brody of CBN News, an affiliate of television evangelical Pat Robertson. Brody asked him about his positions on abortion and gay marriage. Obama called the issues "profoundly difficult" and said they are "ones I grapple with." On gay marriage, he said "My belief is that, as a public official, my role is to make sure that everybody is treated fairly, and everybody has equal rights. And I know that, sometimes in this debate, there's talk about, 'Well, we don't mind giving gays and lesbians equal rights, but not special rights.' Well, the fact is, right now,

many gay couples, for example, can't visit each other in the hospital. And, when I sit down and read scripture, and I think, 'How would Jesus feel about somebody not being able to visit somebody they love when they're sick?' I conclude that that is something that is important. And certainly as a public official, it's important for me to make sure that those basic rights, that basic equality is available." To gauge the boldness of the delivery, go to www.cbn.com/CBNnews/266144.aspx.

GO CRIMSON! A student at Concord High School in Concord, N.H., nailed Republican nominee Mike Huckabee with a tough question this month. Saying he understood the candidate is against gay marriage, he asked, what he would do if the majority of Americans disagreed with him. Huckabee, citing a time in this country when slavery was permissible, said the majority doesn't always make the right decision. "Politicians need to express what they believe is right, take a stand, and pay the consequences.... I'm going to take a stand that I believe is not only the right one but I believe is in the best interests of the country."

OBAMA CONFRONTED: Media attention to the controversy over Obama's gospel concert tour has died down, but audience members confronted him in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, last week. According to the Politico Web site, Obama was asked about the matter during an MTV-MySpace event that was broadcast live and, later, at a different event. At that latter event, the mother of a gay man who hopes to get married asked the candidate what he could do to help. Politico said that, in response, Obama said: "You want the word marriage and I believe that the issue of marriage has become so entangled—the word marriage has become so entangled with religion—that it makes more sense for me as president, with that authority, to talk about the civil rights that are conferred" with civil unions.

MEET THE QUESTION: The question came up again during Obama's appearance on NBC's Meet the Press Nov. 12. Moderator Tim Russert noted that U.S. Rep. John Lewis, whom Obama has referred to as a saint, said this about opposition to same-sex marriage: "I've heard reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. Cut through the distortions and they stink of the same fear, hatred and intolerance I've known in racism and in bigotry. Some say let's choose another route and give gay folks some legal rights, but call it something other than marriage. We've been down that road before in this country. Separate is not equal. The rights of liberty and happiness belong to each of us and on the same terms without regard to either skin color or sexual orientation." Knowing

full well that Obama is one of those who has argued for that separate but equal position on same-sex marriage, Russert asked him whether he agrees with Lewis. Obama reiterated his position: "I have not said that I was a supporter of gay marriage, but I am a strong supporter of civil unions, and I would, as president, make absolutely certain that all federal laws pertaining to married couples—benefits pertaining to married couples are conferred to people who—same sex couples who have civil unions as well." The question one might like to ask in follow-up is what, exactly, a president can do to make that "absolutely certain."

ROBERTSON'S PAT: Right-wing televangelist Pat Robertson gave Rudy Giuliani the metaphorical pat on the back Nov. 7 for the Republican presidential nomination. Robertson has a long record of hostility to gay civil rights. In 1998, he blamed support for gays for devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, terrorist bombings and even meteor strikes. In 2003, after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws, he launched a nationally televised prayer campaign on his 700 Club cable program to ask God to remove three justices from the bench. Robertson represents Giuliani's first major right-wing evangelical endorsement. Meanwhile, other right-wing conservatives with anti-gay credentials have scattered elsewhere. Paul Weyrich endorsed Mitt Romney. Gary Bauer endorsed Fred Thompson. Don Wildmon is behind Mike Huckabee. And former presidential candidate Sam Brownback is now backing John McCain.

ROMNEY ROILS: Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has been touting his opposition to gay marriage even before he became a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. Nowadays, he makes prominent mention of it every chance he gets and, lately, he's been trying to make the point that he's more opposed to it than any other Republican candidate. In remarks before a small liberal arts college in Iowa recently, he boasted that he was the only candidate among the four "nationally leading" Republicans to support amending the federal constitution to ban gay marriage. Depending on how one interprets what the candidates have said and which poll one chooses to reference, there are some degrees of separation between that statement and the truth. Just two weeks ago, the head of one right-wing group told reporters that New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani told him he, Giuliani, would support a constitutional amendment. Giuliani later amended that to say he would support one if "a lot of states" start recognizing same-sex marriage. Fred Thompson said he'd support an amendment, but his variation would be that the amendment would prevent judges from recognizing a constitutional right to same-sex marriage. And, of course, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee supports a constitutional amendment. Romney's exclusion of Huckabee from the "top four" Republican candidates is almost a distinction without a difference. The most recent Pew Foundation poll showed Romney in fourth place with 9 percent of the vote and Huckabee in fifth with 8. What Romney might have a harder time re-characterizing is the reaction of the Luther College audience in Decorah Nov. 1. The crowd booed and hissed when he touted his opposition to gay marriage. And, according to the Rocky Mountain News, that reaction was tame compared to an even more "pointed" rebuke at the University of Denver last month.

MCCAIN MAN CONVICTED: The co-chair—or, rather, the former co-chair—of John McCain's Florida campaign was convicted this month on charges of soliciting sex for money in a public park men's room.

CLINTON'S G-MOMENT: More than any other presidential candidate, Barack Obama has been known to use the words "gay" and "lesbian" in speeches before campaign audiences that are not just gay and lesbian. Hillary Clinton recently did so: On Nov. 11, in speaking to more than 9,000 people gathered for an important Jefferson-Jackson dinner in Iowa, Clinton said that Democrats "believe in labor rights, women's rights, gay rights and civil rights."

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Suit claims suburban cops bashed gay, poz man

BY AMY WOOTEN

A south suburban man and his lawyers have filed suit in federal court, claiming police gay-bashed and humiliated the long-time HIV-positive resident on Memorial Day.

Frankie Brown, 47, claims that Markham police allegedly broke into his home, harassed him and publicly humiliated him while making anti-gay comments and revealing his HIV status to his neighbors.

According to the suit, on May 31, several plain-clothed cops forced their way into Brown's home, guns drawn. Brown was allegedly forced onto his stomach, handcuffed and "slammed" into a chair.

Police had a warrant to search Brown's home for drugs.

The suit claims officers made anti-gay statements towards Brown, such as "I'll sleep better tonight knowing there is one less fag on the street."

The handcuffed Brown was eventually placed on a chair in his front doorway, according to the suit.

"I saw all my neighbors looking at me from the sidewalk," Brown told Windy City Times.

Officers allegedly rummaged through Brown's home and found a photograph of his family and friend, as well as pornographic videos, both of which they displayed to his neighbors outside.

Brown said he became embarrassed and tried to turn his head, so cops allegedly placed him in front of his home and shined a spotlight on him. The suit claims Brown was kept outside in this



Frankie Brown. Photo by Amy Wooten

manner for "well over an hour."

Brown's 19-year-old nephew and legal ward came home, and was immediately harassed by the police, the suit claims. Brown said that the police allegedly harassed his nephew, and insinuated that the two had a sexual relationship.

"He's shocked, hurt [and] embarrassed," Brown said. Brown, now retired, has been caring for his nephew since he was an infant.

Having discovered HIV medications in Brown's home during their search, police allegedly told neighbors and Brown's nephew that he is HIV positive. Brown said that he has never revealed this fact to anyone before. He also added that he was not out prior to the alleged bashing.

"I lived a nice, quiet life," Brown said. "Now, it's not a nice and quiet life. Anything but quiet."

Brown said he has become withdrawn since the incident, particularly because he frequently sees Markham officers in his neighborhood. "I'm a prisoner in my own home," he said.

According to the suit, Brown was eventually taken to the police station. It claims that officers also stole \$150 from Brown's home. Brown said he was forced to sign a statement that he would cooperate with police as an informant.

After 17 hours, he was released without being charged.

When asked how his neighbors have responded, Brown said that they have been very supportive. "They are still mad," Brown said.

Brown told Windy City Times that his experience is just one example of a pattern of harassment by Markham police throughout the years, adding that his sister, a Markham resident, has also been harassed.

"They weren't breaking me down," he said. "They were making me sicker and sicker and sicker with every word."

"It's just the tip of the iceberg," said Gay Liberation Network's Andy Thayer, who also works for Brown's attorneys. "They took the opportunity to say anything they wanted. ... This was a prolonged thing; an incessant campaign where they were trying to break him down and humiliate him in front of all of his neighbors."

Attorneys Jon Loevy and Matt Jenkins, of the civil-rights firm Loevy and Loevy, are representing Brown.

O'Reilly rants about Ill. school's lesbian vote

Pundit Bill O'Reilly has spouted off following the news that a suburban Illinois lesbian couple won the "Cutest Couple" category in their high school's senior yearbook poll.

Waukegan High School recently awarded seniors Brandy Johnson and Lupe Silva the title of "Cutest Couple" for the school yearbook, which comes out May 2008. On Nov. 7, during Fox's The O'Reilly Factor, the host criticized the school's students, accusing them of voting for the lesbian couple in order to "cause trouble." O'Reilly told his guest, Northwestern University Assistant Professor Dr. Laura Berman, that it was an attempt to "normalize homosexuality in public way in an academic setting, high school, among minors."

The school poll has stirred up some controversy. According to the Sun-Times, the "Cutest

Couple" page will be replaced by a "cute couple" page that will feature Silva and Johnson, along with several heterosexual couples that were runner-ups in the poll.

Clinton announces 6 LGBT Illinois delegates

The Clinton Campaign announced that it filed its full list of 119 delegates and alternate delegates in Illinois, and six are openly LGBT.

The Clinton Campaign filed to place Sen. Hillary Clinton on the Illinois primary ballot. It also filed its full list of Illinois delegates and alternates who have pledged they will support her if they attend the 2008 National Democratic Convention.

The LGBT delegates are: Malissa Rainey (2nd District); Aimee A. Pine (5th District); Tracey E. Smith (6th District); Rocco Claps (6th District); Jose M. Zuniga (9th District), and Gay E. Bruhn (13th District).

Four Chicago organ recipients get HIV

In the first case since 1986, four organ transplant recipients at three Chicago-area hospitals have been infected with HIV and hepatitis C from a single donor, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

U.S. health officials say the organs came from a high-risk donor who most likely became infected a few weeks prior to the procedures. According to those investigating the incident, CDC guidelines were followed properly.

The test conducted prior to organ donation was done correctly, but came back negative. However, the test used is unable to detect very recent infections.

The organ transplants occurred in January at three Chicago hospitals: Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush University Medical Center and University of Chicago Medical Center.

An investigation is underway to see if the donor recipients infected anyone else.

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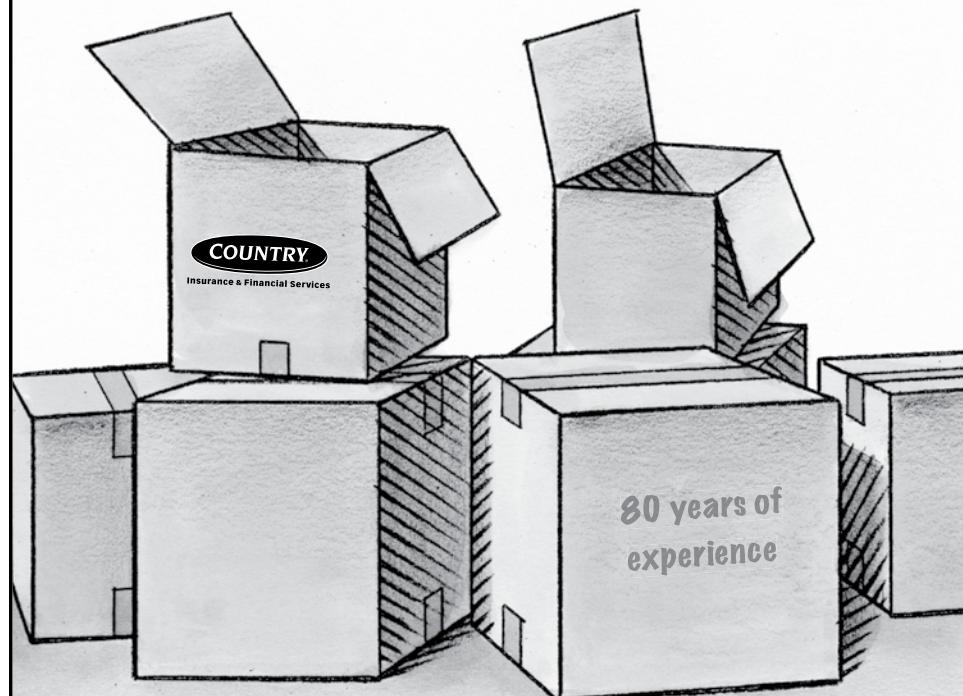
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Thankful

BY MARY CARDARAS

When I was a little girl I would ask my mother if anyone could ever take me away from her. She would go to her bedroom to retrieve a folded set of papers and hand them to me with great patience and gentleness.

"Do you know what those papers say, Mary?" I looked up at her with my big, dark brooding eyes. "They say they that no one, not ever, can take you away from me and Daddy. It means you belong to us forever."

There was a feeling of impermanence in me that was terrifying. I came back frequently with the same question and she always gave the same explanation.

It has been 52 years since I was adopted and 48 years since I became an American citizen. As I celebrate Thanksgiving, I think of my birth mother, my parents, my grandparents, my children and the person who gave me the gift of my own family.

Were it not for my birth mother, I would not be here today. Her decision to have me was courageous. She was a poor girl from Greece, a child really, at 16. No one knows exactly the circumstances of my birth, but we do know she traveled from a small northern village to give birth alone in Athens. She quickly returned home.

She put me up for adoption as I spent my first year of life in a public foundling home. I was among dozens of infants left for others to take. No one knows how she felt or what she may have considered her options. No one knows if she cared for me at all, but she did the right thing, that is for sure. She had no means of support and no one around her who was supportive. She decided that someone else could give me a better life. Her decision led me to the people who would take me from Greece to American parents. They could not have children of their own.

She saved my life by giving me the chance for another.

Those American parents could not afford a trip to Greece in the '50s. The man who would be my father was on strike from the steel mill in Gary, Ind. My future parents asked the people who would become my grandparents to bring the baby home for them.

In that crowded orphanage, where there were two babies to a crib, my grandparents walked up

one aisle and down another, searching for someone perhaps who looked like them. As they scrutinized and whispered and gently rubbed dozens of tiny, little hands, they kept noticing one head, my head, bobbing up from the depths of a crib.

I was picking myself up, stubby arms extended, watching, recording their every move. They said to the wet nurses and attendants who showed them around, that they didn't care what sex I was; I was the baby they wanted and I was the baby they would take. I did resemble my future mother, and as my grandmother would later say, "I chose them."

Indeed. I chose them.

They were the arms that, for the first time, would never let me go.

I was baptized in Greece because that was one prerequisite for my ticket out of the country. We boarded an ocean liner for America, stopping in Lisbon before venturing across the open sea to New York City. In Queens I met my mother, who was with a new aunt and my uncle, her brother. From there we flew to Chicago, where I met my new Dad. My mother always said, "You went right to him the minute we got off the plane as if you had always known him."

In Gary, Ind., I joined a big, fat Greek family on both sides: godparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. While a party was raging outside my bedroom to welcome the new baby from Greece I slept, perhaps like never before. I had parents, a family and a bed of my own. Dreams could come true in this new life.

My parents have told me they came in the room often that first night. Dad said he wanted to make sure I was breathing and just to watch me sleep. I was his girl growing up. We lived and died to the White Sox together. He showed me how to throw a ball and drive a car. He taught me that a sense of humor would go a long way in this life. We took long drives on Sunday morning, just my Dad and me, and on Saturdays we would go down to the mill to pick up his check. Even though he died, seven years ago, I swear sometimes I can still hear the sound of his voice.

I still have my mom, a healthy vibrant woman at 80. As we both age, we have forged something wonderful and close. We talk about the life we've known and the people we have loved. We are both grateful people, who find the good in life. We share a belief in not making excuses for our mistakes and our choices, which are life's baggage we've packed all on our own.

My grandparents are long dead, but I was their daughter, too. More than a granddaughter; they

felt responsible. They found me. They brought me home. They were very much a part of my life and taught me to love Greece and my heritage. My heart hurts when I think of their faces.

My family gave me an identity and a healthy sense of myself. They made me strong by reminding me all these years that I was wanted and loved. How lucky was I?

Even when I came out as a lesbian, something my family knew for years, they thought I was the same person I ever was. I was only more of me. That was the extent of any shock over the revelation. I came out because I met someone I wanted to spend my life with. She was a Greek woman with children. They touched my heart the minute I met them.

Never in a million years would I have believed that I could have a life as full as the one I have. I met someone, who 16 years later, I still have a huge crush on. I was able to raise two children with whom I have shared and given everything. They are my pride and joy. I was able to marry their mom in the great and progressive state of Massachusetts, and the day after Thanksgiving, oh yes, the adoptee will become the adopter. On Nov. 23, 2007, we become a family in the eyes of the law. On Nov. 23, 2007, my mom has two more grandchildren and my big extended Greek family just got a little bit bigger.

Fran has given me the best, the biggest, the most precious gift of all and that is her children to share with me, to entrust with me. At eighteen, Harrison and Nick have chosen me, too.

How do you thank anyone enough for all that? When the judge hands us those papers, I know that deep inside me, I'll be that little girl from Greece with my big dark, brooding eyes, hearing my mother's question: "Do you know what those papers say, Mary?"

Do I know what those papers say? They say they that no one, not ever, can take us away from each other. It means we belong to each other. Forever. A family.

Mary Cardaras is department chair of Digital Media & Communications at The New England Institute of Art in Brookline, Mass. She teaches journalism at Northeastern University and is a Ph.D. candidate in International Relations and Public Policy at the same institution in Boston.

GUEST VIEWPOINT



MARIE KUDA

Whatever happened to Monica Lewinsky's dress?

A recent *Vanity Fair* (Nov. 2007) excerpt from Sally Bedell Smith's forthcoming book, *For Love of Politics—Bill and Hillary Clinton: The White House Years*, quotes a former consultant to Al Gore's campaign, Robert Boorstin: "Would I say with absolute zero doubt in my mind that we would have won the election if Clinton hadn't put his penis in [Lewinsky's] mouth? Yes. I guarantee it." I beg to differ with Mr. Boorstin. Presidents, and for that matter many, many congressmen, have been putting their cocks in questionable orifices through-

out the history of this republic. What brought Clinton to his knees (metaphorically speaking) was that Monica kept that damn dress.

Instead of slicing and dicing whether having oral sex was a "relationship" (which anyone on the other end of a glory hole could have answered), a firm denial would have closed the matter—except for that dribbled-on dress. So he would have lied. (Wouldn't we all put Clinton's lie against that of Bushies on WMDs?) In a column contemporary with the impeachment hearings I suggested that Clinton would have been better served by a military cocksucker, given his "don't ask, don't tell" policy. I speculated on Monica's reasons for preserving her unwashed garment. Now all these years later, I wonder what has, or should, become of that dress. I doubt that it will ever hang in the presidential library along the Arkansas River as a coda to Bill's tenure, which promised to be a "bridge to the 21st century."

Perhaps it will find its way instead into Bush 43's

library as a trophy of his 2000 election "triumph." Or maybe it should fly from the ramparts of Osama bin Laden's camp; the dress, in the long run, as much as the madness of the Twin Towers, broached our infernal conflict with radical Islamists. Many believe that Gore, as president, would not have let us be conned into war with Iraq. Should Monica's dress then fly from a flagstaff over the CIA? The Pentagon? The Defense Department? Should it be draped over coffins of returning dead?

Maybe, in the long run, because of our increased global ecological awareness, Gore's defeat (aided by the little blue) will turn out to be good for our planet. But in the short run, America has paid a terrible price that could have been avoided by the cost of a good dry cleaning. Perhaps Monica's dress should be buried, ultimately recycled into fodder, food for thought, about what are really important issues. We are on the eve of new elections, with high stakes. Sex lives, ours or anyone else's, shouldn't be a distraction on the ticket. As for impeachment, aren't there bigger fish to fry?

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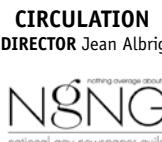
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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Daughter: Raúl Castro backs gays in the military

Raúl Castro, who is leading Cuba during his brother Fidel's lengthy illness, supports gays serving openly in the military, says his daughter, Mariela Castro Espín, director of the island's National Center for Sex Education, CENESEX. Castro Espín was asked about "gays in the military" in a Nov. 4 interview with the Buenos Aires daily newspaper Clarín.

"I always say where there's humanity there's diversity, and in the military world there are gays also, but, of course, they are careful because it's a milieu that doesn't accept them," Castro Espín said. "It is still considered that the conditions to make changes do not exist. Well, my dad, the minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, says to me: 'Look, I think that to the extent the population changes, the army will change, because the population is in the army also. Go on working, raising awareness, doing things, changing Cuban society, and you'll change everything else, including our institutions.'"

Castro Espín said she has taken a direct interest in gay issues since 2004.

"A group of more than 40 cross-dressers and transsexuals from Havana came to see me at CENESEX to let me know about the difficulties they were having with the police in the central La Rampa zone, where they were meeting and still meet," she said. "The police were arbitrarily arresting them and then letting them go without charges, just because people were complaining [about them]."

Three years later, Cuba is set to begin offering sex-change surgery.

"There are 27 transsexuals waiting for the operation [and] the medical team is being trained," Castro Espín said. "As soon as it's ready ... they will start to operate."

Castro Espín also told Clarín that 80 percent of people with HIV in Cuba are men, and 85 percent of those are men who have sex with men, "often in connection with prostitution."

She also mentioned that she wants to visit the U.S. "but they won't give us a visa."

"I was there once and I've been invited back twice since then, but they didn't give it to me," she said. "I asked for it and they didn't respond. ... [But] when they want, professional Americans come [to Cuba] via a third country and we have excellent relations and excellent e-mail contact."

Italian gay leader dies

One of the most important gay activists in Italian history died Nov. 4 of colon cancer. Massimo Consoli, 61, also was a journalist, writer, playwright, poet, theorist, translator, archivist and historian. He wrote more than 30 books,

mostly on gay issues. Among his many accomplishments, Consoli founded two Italian gay organizations in the days before the Stonewall Riots. In 1971, he wrote "Gay Manifesto," which inspired the creation of other gay organizations, including the important Italian Revolutionary Homosexual United Front, FUORI!.

In 1976, Consoli organized the nation's first pride-related activities. He went on to organize hundreds of other demonstrations, conferences, exhibitions, and intellectual and artistic events.

Later, he also was an AIDS and safer-sex organizer.

"I've lived the history of the gay movement. It's inside me," Consoli told the International Herald-Tribune last year.

His Web site, cybercore.com/consoli, will remain online, maintained by friends.

Hungary not ready for same-sex marriage

The Hungarian Parliament's human-rights committee declined Nov. 6 to open debate on a bill to allow same-sex marriage. The legislation was introduced by the Free Democrats party, which claimed banning same-sex marriage is unconstitutional.

But members of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Party said society is not yet ready to go down that road.

South Korea nixes gay protections

South Korea's Justice Ministry has removed "sexual orientation" protections from a proposed law aimed at strengthening anti-discrimination statutes. Christian groups and some business owners had vocally opposed including gays in the measure. Human Rights Watch denounced the development. "A supposed landmark non-discrimination law has been hollowed out to exclude Koreans, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, who are in need of protection," said HRW researcher Jessica Stern. An HRW report on the matter is at tinyurl.com/yrnp85.

Belgian same-sex marriage rate remains high

Belgian gays and lesbians continue to marry at a high rate.

Belgium is one of six nations where same-sex couples have access to full marriage. In 2006, 1,124 same-sex couples tied the knot, compared to 1,027 in 2005. The nation legalized same-sex marriage in 2003, and 854 gay couples married that year.

Brussels has the highest rate of gay-male marriages while Antwerp leads in lesbian marriages. The country has 10.3 million residents, slightly more than the population of Los Angeles County, California.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"DUMBLEDORE IS GAY. ... IF I HAD KNOWN
this would have made you so happy, I would have told you years ago." — Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling speaking at Carnegie Hall in New York City, Oct. 19.

"WHEN J.K. ROWLING ANNOUNCED AT CARNEGIE HALL THAT ALBUS DUMBLEDORE—her Aslan, her Gandalf, her Yoda—was gay, the crowd apparently sat in silence for a few seconds and then burst into wild applause. I'm still sitting in silence. Dumbledore himself never saw fit to come out of the closet before dying in book six. And I feel a bit like I did when we learned too much about Mark Foley and Larry Craig: You are not quite the role model I'd hoped for as a gay man. I'm not defending the closet, a perilous and sad place. But I don't see how Rowling's outing of Dumbledore strikes a blow for gay equality so great that even Carnegie Hall—cathedral of the arts, cynosure of homosexuals—should erupt in joy." — John Cloud writing in *Time* magazine, Oct. 23.

"NO, I AM NOT OPEN TO PERSUASION MYSELF, BUT THE IDEA OF HOMOSEXUALITY IS ACCEPTABLE TO ME. I grew up in a city where half the people I know are gay. Both of my godfathers are gay." — Actor Jake Gyllenhaal (*Brokeback Mountain*) to London's *Telegraph*, Oct. 21.

"[I]N PLACES LIKE NEW YORK I THINK PRIDE IS RATHER REDUNDANT, whereas in a place like Selma it's just as scary to be out now as it was decades ago." — Gay filmmaker John Waters to the Carolinas gay newspaper *Q-Notes*, Oct. 20.

"I DID 210 WEDDINGS WHEN I WAS MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY. So I have experience doing this. They were all men and women. I hope. You got to give me a little slack here. It was New York City, you know." — Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani during an Oct. 21 candidates debate in Florida.

"YOU WANT THE WORD 'MARRIAGE' AND I BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE OF MARRIAGE HAS BECOME SO ENTANGLED—the word 'marriage' has become so entangled with religion—that it makes more sense for me as president, with that authority, to talk about the civil rights

that are conferred [with civil unions]." — Presidential candidate Barack Obama speaking in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Oct. 29.

"LARRY CRAIG ... CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT, IS CALLING THE WHOLE MORAL BRIGADE'S BLUFF. After he was busted in the Minneapolis airport, Republicans insisted he undergo an ethics committee investigation on the assumption that he'd disappear before they could conduct it. Now they will have to make good on their word. Mr. Craig is not just refusing to leave, but, as he demonstrated to Matt Lauer, he is ready, willing and able to re-enact his toilet pas de deux on national television. The Larry Craig show could be C-Span's hit of the election season. It will culminate with its star's return to the scene of the crime during the Republican National Convention, which, as



Photo by Tracy Baim at the AIDS Foundation 2001 gala.

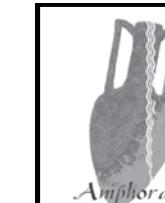
...MY GAY FANS can be a little more enthusiastic

—Singer Chaka Khan to St. Louis' EXP Magazine, October issue.

perverse poetic justice would have it, is taking place in Minneapolis." — New York Times columnist Frank Rich, Oct. 28.

"[S]QUALID, ANONYMOUS TOILET SEX ISN'T SOMETHING MOST OPENLY GAY MEN engage in. It is, for the most part, the preferred mode of sexual expression for closeted gay and bisexual men. Cruisy toilets and parks, while frequented by some openly gay men (none of whom ever seem to get caught, however), are primarily patronized by straight-identified closet cases, married men, losers, and priests—hell, the existence of cruisy toilets and parks make it possible for many of these men to remain closeted. ... Unless the police are careful to avoid arresting men with rainbow stickers on their cars, the arrest records prove what most gay men know to be true: cruisy toilets and parks are for messy closet cases, not healthy, sexually adventurous gay dudes." — Gay writer Dan Savage on his blog, Oct. 30.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley



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WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



SIT UNDER MY 'UMBRELLA'

Farewell Umbrella, which begins its nine-show-only run Wednesday at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, is in Spotlight on page 17.

PROFILE

Frances Sternhagen,
page 20



DANCE

Eddy Ocampo, page 13



THEATER

Paula Vogel,
page 15



Pop Making Sense

BY DAVID BYRNE AND TONY PEREGRIN

Cathy Richardson is due to perform at Fitzgerald's, 6615 Roosevelt Road, Berwyn on Fri., Nov. 30. Her latest, *Delusions of Grandeur*, shows off this artist's versatility, blending her rocking live sound (*Closet Cultivator*) with her softer side (*A Phone Call To Joe Quinn*). This Grammy nominee also has been praised for her portrayal of Janis Joplin in the off Broadway production of *Love, Janis*. Always a live favorite, Richardson conjures up the spirit of her late idol while on stage. Hopefully, this concert will sate fans until Richardson returns to the summer festival circuit.

First, **The Cliks** were hand-picked by Cyndi Lauper to partake in the True Colors Tour this summer; now the Canadian quartet has been selected by The Cult to open for the goth-alternative rock outfit on The Jaegermeister Tour. Making a stop in Chicago at the House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, on Sun., Nov. 25, The Cliks have fine-tuned their live show thanks to a heavy touring schedule. Leave it to the mainstream media to be hung up with this band's make-up, often overlooking the genuine rock n' roll found on its album *The Snakehouse*. Trans lead singer Lucas Silviera makes tongues wag as he locks lips with comedian Margaret Cho repeatedly in the video for *Eyes In The Back Of My Head*, a surefire hit on YouTube.

Stepping out of a time capsule to kick off a U.S. tour in the City of Angels is the British trio **The Pipettes**. Imagine combining the sounds of The Ronettes with a hint of Bananarama's DIY sugar-coated punk attitude and Amy Winehouse's British flavoring of Motown's heyday. The Pipettes add their own polka-dot style to the girl-band formula with girl-power anthems like *One Night Stand* and *Your Kisses Are Wasted*.



The Cliks.

On Me with tongue firmly planted in cheek. Accompanied by the backing band The Cassettes, this buzz-worthy group is scheduled to swing by The Double Door, 1572 N. Milwaukee, on Wed., Nov. 21.

Also looking into the past while marching into the future is **Nicole Atkins**. Her full-length debut, *Neptune City*, is out now on Columbia Records. Here, Atkins has the charm of a young Lesley Gore (*Maybe Tonight*) and the aching of Patsy Cline (*The Way It Is*, *War Torn*), yet distinctively blends this sound with the more modern melancholy of Beth Orton, courtesy of Swedish producer Tore Johannson (*The Cardigans*, *Saint Etienne*, *New Order*). On the title track the singer-songwriter pays homage to her New Jersey hometown in a tragically epic way. Atkins may be familiar to some, since she is featured in an American Express commercial. Rolling Stone Magazine has dubbed Atkins as one of its "Top 10 Artists To Watch," whereas *Neptune City* finds itself on my list of the year's top 10 albums.

Glenview native **Brian Mazaferri** just released his debut bow, *All Roads Lead To Roads*, on the Chicago-based Sophic Records. Here, he ponders What Tomorrow Will Hold and If No One Understands, in the process drawing the worlds of folk and cabaret closer. Mazaferri was the lead singer and primary songwriter for the al-



The Pipettes.

ternative-rock quintet Red Line District. Fresh from performing at The Elbo Room, Mazaferri plans to return with shows at The High Risk Art Gallery, 1113 W. Belmont, on Sat., Dec. 1, and at 3160, 3160 N. Clark, on Fri., Dec. 7. *All Roads Leads To Roads* is out now via cdbaby, iTunes and brianmazaferri.com.

Natalie Merchant recruited fellow high-profile artists to contribute to her latest charitable project, *Give Us Your Poor*. This compilation has artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Michelle Shocked, Bonnie Raitt, Mario Frangoulis and Merchant herself collaborating with musicians who are or were homeless. *Give Us Your Poor*, a Boston-based non-profit policy research organization, provided Merchant with 50 original songs from the nation's network of homeless shelters to consider for this project. In an effort to raise awareness about homelessness, *Give Us Your Poor* is out now via Appleseed Recordings with a companion documentary in the works.

On Sat., Dec. 1, **The Old Town School of Folk Music** celebrates its 50th anniversary with an all-star line-up. Sharing the stage are Wilco's frontman Jeff Tweedy, banjo player Bela Fleck, harmonica maestro Corky Siegel and Luna Negra Dance Theater, among others. Taking place at The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress, the concert will benefit the non-

profit educational institution. For more details on the event, please visit oldtownschool.org. Tickets are available through The Auditorium Theatre box office and Ticketmaster.

The pairing of **Roland Belmares** and **Mike Cruz** on Global Groove: Live 2 takes a turn in the Global Groove series. Leaving the feel-good vocals at a tea dance, Los Angeles' Belmares and New York's Cruz compliment each other with this edgier set. Former C&C Music Factory vocalist Zelma Davis makes quite a comeback wailing on *My Life with Deep Influence*. Also highlighting this Centaur release are the club hits *Make It Last* by Dave Aude featuring Jess and Activate; *My Body* by The Perry Twins featuring Jania; and *Piece of My Love*, featuring rising star Debby Holiday. Out now, Global Groove: Live 2 is available at retailers, iTunes and at www.centaurmusic.com.

More entertainment interviews, features, reviews and listings online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Eddy Ocampo's Dance Fever

BY ROSS FORMAN

Eddy Ocampo attended his 20-year reunion from Argo Community High School in September and easily was named the Most Changed.

At Argo, located in south suburban Summit, Ocampo was a 5'3" 200-pounder. He liked break-dancing back in the day and now admits, "Even as big as I was, I learned how to spin on my back."

Now 38, Ocampo is the picture of athleticism, a 5'8" 150-pounder with, oh, less than five percent body-fat. Oh yeah, he's still dancing, just to more hip styles.

In fact, he's developed into an exceptional professional dancer who now is an award-winning choreographer and master teacher of the art. Just consider Ocampo's resume:

— Won the Dance Chicago 2004 Outstanding Choreography Award.

— Won the 2005 Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation Outstanding Choreographer Award.

— Inducted into the Filipino Hall of Fame in 2005 for his work as a dance teacher.

— Won the Leo's International Choreography Event at the Harris Theatre this past August, selected from over 200 applicants worldwide.

— He will be working with several dance companies next spring, including the Houston

Metropolitan Dance Company and Odyssey Dance Theatre in Salt Lake City.

— Won the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble National Choreography Competition in Detroit in July.

— He teaches locally at the Lou Conte Dance Studio and Visceral Dance Chicago.

"I guess I'm doing OK," he said modestly. "I never imagined that I'd be a professional dancer, nor that I would become a professional choreographer and a master teacher who people actually want to hire. It blows me away everyday and I'm grateful for it, especially in a difficult industry."

Dance was not his initial interest. He was accepted into medical school after graduating from the University of Illinois-Chicago back in 1993, but that's when his dance career kicked off.

Ocampo actually started dancing in college, in a course called Modern Dance. "I thought it [would be] like the dancing in the clubs and thought it would be fun. But it was totally not what I thought it was going to be," he said.

Ocampo had a teacher at UIC who pushed him toward dance because she saw the talent he possessed.

"Dancing, I think, was my destiny. It was like the shoe that fit," he said. "But dancing was difficult at first; I had to persevere."

His first professional gig was with the Augusta Opera, then in a musical at the Drury Lane Theatre in Oak Brook. "I remember thinking, 'Man, we get paid to do this,'" Ocampo said.

He eventually started an apprenticeship at the River North Chicago Dance Company, then



Eddy Ocampo. Photo by Ross Forman

landed at the Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago.

Ocampo danced for Giordano for seven years before retiring in 2003, and then moving into full-time choreography and teaching.

"I definitely have some fond memories [of my dance career]. I had some great, great stuff happen," he said. Being a professional dancer, "is a hard life, but a very fulfilling one. There's not a lot of money in dance and no one expects to be in it for the rest of their lives because, well, it's difficult to make a living at it."

"But it's a lot of fun."

Ocampo, who was born and raised in Chicago and now lives in Lakeview, has been an independent teacher and choreographer for the past four years.

"I have done some really great stuff in my short independent choreography career, so I'm not complaining," he said. "I do enjoy it, though it can be stressful at times."

Ocampo is an integral part of Dance Chicago

2007, running Nov. 2- Dec. 2 at the Athenaeum Theatre (2936 N. Southport Ave.). He'll be a choreographer for the event and also return to his roots—as a dancer.

"Dance Chicago is a venue for me to create new work," he said.

Ocampo teaches dance at the Forum Jazz Dance Theatre in northwest suburban Libertyville, where he has been for eight of the company's 10 years. The group recently performed at the University of Arizona—and Ocampo was the choreographer for the gig.

Ocampo, who is gay and single after a 14-year relationship, said dance "definitely has a high percentage of gay men in the industry."

"I think you have to be really in touch with your feminine side to be a dancer, though some might disagree with me on that," he said.

Getting To Know ... Eddy Ocampo

Age: 38. **Hometown:** Chicago (Lakeview).

Also has lived in: Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Ocampo on the popular dancing TV shows, such as Dancing With Stars: "I like them. They have really elevated dance in this country."

In the future: "I want to create a huge body of work, and then disappear and never be seen from again."

On losing about 50 pounds and sculpting his physique: "The dancing really helps. Plus, when you have to wear shiny lycra on stage, you learn how to drop the weight because shiny lycra doesn't lie."

The Stars Behind Starrbooty

BY DAVID BYRNE

RuPaul and Mike Ruiz presented the film Starrbooty to a full house at The Lakeshore Theatre Nov. 14. The viewing was part of the Reeling 2007: Chicago Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival.

Combining elements of the blaxploitation movies of the '70s with the shock value of John Waters, RuPaul's comeback film pays homage to camp classics like Foxy Brown, Female Trouble, Charlie's Angels and Showgirls.

Starrbooty is a character RuPaul had developed in the '80s before becoming a household name as the Supermodel of the World. In Starrbooty's latest adventure, the top agent goes undercover as a street hooker named Cupcake to rescue her kidnapped niece Cornisha (Jazmine Jimenez) from the evil corporate mogul Annaka Manners (Candis Cayne). Hilarity ensues.

Prior to premiering the film, RuPaul readied the audience by saying that Starrbooty has everything he loves in movies: hair, frontal and 'backal' nudity, terrible one-liners and bad act-

ing. Following Waters' footsteps, the film's star also warned the crowd that if nobody leaves the theater in disgust, then he accomplished his goal with Starrbooty.

The supporting cast includes Lahoma Van Zandt, Gus Mattox, Lady Bunny, Michael Lucas, Owen Hawk, and Ari Gold. During the Q&A session, the film's director Ruiz readily admitted to striving to have every role filled by an adult film star or transgendered actor.

Both Ruiz and RuPaul confessed that this movie is a labor of love. RuPaul not only wrote and starred in this action-packed comedy, but he also produced it and assumed the musical duties, too.

While the film was dedicated in loving memory to the late Reverend Jerry Falwell, the pair said this film is a love letter to the right wing, as well as to the politically correct left-wing liberals.

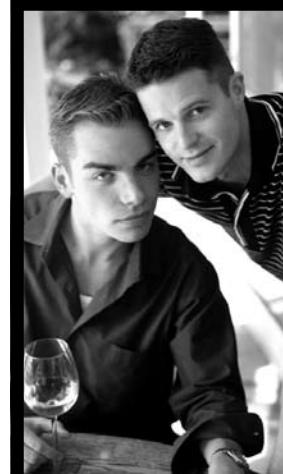
A reception and karaoke contest hosted by RuPaul and Ruiz at Goose Island followed the Q&A session and a DVD signing.

This is the first full-length feature film for the famed celebrity photographer. Ruiz has photographed the entertainment industry's top divas including 50 Cent, Beyoncé, Dolly Parton, Eva Longoria and Kristine W.

Starrbooty is available now on DVD.



RuPaul (right) and Mike Ruiz. Photo by David Byrne



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THEATER REVIEW

Seven Brides ...

Playwright: David Landay and Lawrence Kasha; **Score by:** Johnny Mercer and Gene de Paul; **At:** Circle Th., 7300 W. Madison, Forest Park; **Phone:** 708-771-0700; **\$24-\$26**; **Through Dec. 23**

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers will never be considered a high art musical. It wasn't even an original stage show to begin with, but a screen-to-stage adaptation of the classic 1954 MGM film musical most famous for Michael Kidd's athletic choreography.

The 1982 stage incarnation of Seven Brides... lasted less than a week on Broadway after receiving lukewarm reviews, causing some cast members of the closed show to picket The New York Times for "killing family entertainment." But Seven Brides... went on to have a long and healthy life in regional productions.

Circle Theatre seemingly made an odd choice to get hitched to Seven Brides ... for the holiday season. The musical's pedigree isn't the best, nor would it seem possible for the show's requirement for a huge cast to squeeze onto Circle Theatre's post card-sized stage.

But Circle Theatre defies the odds. The surprising result? Pure marital bliss!

Circle Theatre has a hoot performing this retrograde cornball musical by playing up the silliness of it all. As a rootin' and tootin' family-friendly adaptation of Plutarch's Rape of the Sabine Women (mispronounced by the characters here as "Sobbin' Women"), one tends to forget the so-so score and the stereotyped gender roles.

Set in the Pacific Northwest in the 1850s, Seven Brides... shows how grown orphan Millie (Rachel Quinn) marries Adam Pontipee (Eric Lindahl) who fails to mention his six other uncivilized alphabetically Biblical brothers he

lives with. A battle ensues between Millie who tries to teach her brother-in-laws etiquette to woo the town's sparse population of marrying-age women, while Adam prefers the brute force technique as told by Plutarch.

Director/choreographer Kevin Bellie makes it all work with an energetic and lovely cast (particularly the sometimes shirtless men) who sing nicely and deliver the material with a winking eye to its goofiness. The cramped space for dancin' and fightin' may not allow for the athleticism of Kidd's film choreography, but Bellie and his crew still raise the energy despite the crowded conditions.

In the teeming cast, several ensemble members stand out. Lindahl's Adam shines with his lovely tenor voice, while Quinn's no-nonsense Millie is strong.

Adam Pasen has fun butchering it up as the brother Ben, Shawn Quinlan is a wonderfully madcap Caleb, Mat Labotka milks the jokes out of the unfortunately named Frankincense (named since there were no Bible "F" names) and Tony DiPisa makes for a strong voice of reason as youngest brother Gideon.

High art it ain't, but Circle Theatre's Seven Brides will surprise you with its country charm and eagerness to please. It may be a bit crowded, but Seven Brides makes for great company this holiday season.

THEATER REVIEW

Tesla's Letters

Playwright: Jeffrey Stanley; **At:** TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington; **Phone:** 773-281-8463; **\$30, \$25**; **Runs through: Dec. 23**

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

If you're reading this by electric light you should thank not Thomas Edison but Nikola Tesla. Who? Exactly. Edison's smear campaign against the man who developed alternating currents makes

those swiftboaters who sank Kerry look like Boy Scouts. But while Edison was electrocuting dogs and cats to 'prove' how dangerous Tesla's system was, AC power became the light of the future. Even so, Edison won where it mattered: AC powers the world, but Tesla died broke and alone.

With Tesla's Letters, TimeLine Theatre offers a brainy feast that uses the Tesla as a switch to illuminate a rich, multi-faceted examination of matters historical, philosophical and political. Through Tesla, playwright Jeffrey Stanley broaches atrocities of both war and capitalism, the uneasy legacy of a mythical killing machine and the endless ability of people to turn a blind eye toward barbarities that don't have an immediate and detrimental impact to their own bottom line. Director Nick Bowling has an encyclopedic amount of material to work with in this intelligent, talky drama, and he manages it nimbly. Even when the dialogue veers toward expository clunkfest, Tesla's Letters crackles with smarts and heart.

Tesla was genius, that much is inarguable. Born in 1856 he came up with his first invention at 4—a wheel powered by June bugs. But his seemingly boundless creativity was matched by an equally boundless darkness: Tesla was afflicted by hallucinations and night terrors throughout his life and displayed a host of classic obsessive-compulsive disorder symptoms from

constant hand-washing to a horror of touching round objects. Whispers continue today about Tesla's rumored "death ray," a small, lethal weapon capable of annihilating thousands with a single, deadly beam.

Yet as vivid as Tesla is within Tesla's Letters, the man is not a character in the drama, not in the corporeal sense. Set in 1995 (52 years after Tesla's death), the story moves from Belgrade's Tesla Museum to Croatia and back, as American graduate student Daisy (Tien Doman, a penetrating mix of idealism and wariness) learns far more than she anticipated while researching her thesis. Daisy intends to study Tesla's correspondence, but museum caretakers Dragon (Joel Stanley Huff) and Biljana (Janet Ulrich Brooks, deftly concealing and revealing the layers of Biljana's own history) have their own agenda for her. Tesla's personal tragedies become entwined within the tragedy playing out in the Serbo-Croatian war as Daisy finds herself entangled in both her thesis subject's past and his country's future.

Tesla's Letters skirts the edge of didactic too closely to be a great drama, and by ending the first act literally with a bang, Stanley pens a manipulative cliff hanger that isn't necessary. But TimeLine's production has depth, insight and intrigue, welcome additions all in this season of singing Santas and dancing reindeer.

CRITICS' PICS

Machos, Teatro Luna at Chicago Dramatists; through Dec. 16. This women's exploration of what it means to be macho Latinos is a hoot, especially since the whole ensemble dons male drag and has manly stereotypical mannerisms down pat. SCM

The Philadelphia Story, Remy Bumppo at Victory Gardens Greenhouse, through Jan. 6. You all know the famous film with Hepburn, Grant and Stewart. The original play's a little different but just as stylish and sophisticated a period comedy, with a great cast. JA

The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Rosemont Theatre, through Dec. 2. Sugar plum fairy teddy bears, break-dancing elves, and the here-to-eternity, high-kicking Rockettes. CS

The Rocky Horror Show, Mercury Theatre, through Dec. 2. It's astounding. Time is fleeting. But the sense-surround quarters and chest-thumping amplification make this 30-year-old liberation manifesto every bit as toucha-toucha-touch-me exciting as we recall. MSB

By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan



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FIRST
FRIDAYS

A Talk with Paula Vogel

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Professor, playwright, social radical, Pulitzer Prize-winner, lesbian ... Paula Vogel is all of these things, although not necessarily in that order. She is the author of a score of plays over 30 years, among them *The Mineola Twins*, *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, *The Oldest Profession* and—most famously—*How I Learned to Drive*, the work about the sexual molestation of an adolescent girl by her uncle that won her the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Vogel's play *The Baltimore Waltz* also is widely produced and admired, a fictionalized version of her relationship with her brother, who died of AIDS. All of the above plays have been produced in Chicago at the Goodman, Next and Northlight theaters, among several others.

Vogel recently made a rare visit to our town to conduct weekend writing workshops at Chicago Dramatists, and she made a precious half-hour available to talk with Windy City Times. Compact in the best Judi Dench sort-of way, Vogel is warm and relaxed and speaks with ease, enthusiasm and great intelligence without ever lecturing. She is free with information about her own upbringing amid economic hardship in Washington, D.C. "We lived below the poverty line," she says. "No one in our family went to theater; we didn't have money to go to theater, so it's highly improbable that I'm a playwright."

Vogel began writing musical skits in high school and then started writing plays as a scholarship student at high-toned Bryn Mawr College. "And then I wrote a play about the breakdown of civilization at a women's college, based on *Lord of the Flies*. The students and faculty loved it; the administration was not amused. It was no surprise that my scholarship wasn't renewed." She moved on to Catholic University back in Washington where, she says smiling, "a lesbian feminist was not exactly welcome in 1972."

Cornell University was her next academic stop, where she found a teacher who definitely steered her towards a theater career and guided her into the doctoral program. She paid her way as a clerk-typist. "I typed my way through the first year at Cornell," she recalls. "I could type 85 to 90 words per minute, which is a very useful skill for a playwright to have." Having completed her dissertation, she fell victim to a coup within her department in which her liberal faculty advisors were replaced with their politically opposite numbers. They ordered her to trash her

two years of dissertation work and start over. She told them to shove it and quit.

After some years as a struggling playwright, although one whose plays were produced, Vogel was recruited by the very prestigious Brown University where she has remained for close to 25 years. She's now a Professor of Creative Writing and famous for the playwriting workshops she organizes each year. Despite her success and fame, she says that even within the liberal milieu of an Ivy League university and the world of professional theater, she has found a surprising degree of prejudice and bigotry.

"I think I was fired at Cornell in part because I was open (about being lesbian). ... There has been some horrific bashing in the field of theater as well as academics. I've had graffiti written in my notebooks or on the blackboard, jokes told to my face ..." Her inspiration as a writer and role model—not that Vogel claims to be one, but she is—has been Marie Irene Fornes, now 77, a New York writer who was born in Cuba and is a legend of Off-Broadway theatrical innovation, progressive values and the women's movement. "Marie Irene Fornes is my mantra. Being

in the closet is not an option because of her. Being in the closet is just not an option because of my brother." She chuckles, "Been gay so long, looks like straight to me. Yet I don't feel I can speak for young lesbians."

Despite her own lengthy and successful career, Vogel says "The American theater remains homophobic. In fact, there's a peculiar misogyny combined with homophobia that's very potent. If we say that only 17 percent of all plays produced are written by women, can you imagine how few of those are written by lesbians?"

Vogel's own current writing project is work of musical theater, *A Civil War Christmas*, combining literature and music from the great War Between the States, and set on Christmas Eve, 1864. She's spent eight years researching the history, literature and music of the period to shape the work, which will see two developmental productions next year under the direction of the gifted Tina Landau (a Steppenwolf Ensemble member).

"My first love has always been musical theater (but) I took a 30-year detour," she says, explaining the gap between the musicals of her high school and college years and today. "The musical is the American art form. It's the most like Brecht's work was (in 1920's Germany) as an expression of Americanism."

Vogel has a great deal to say about contemporary America, to be sure, and none of it is very good when it comes to the current state of our politics and our government. She decries the Bush administration and its compulsive need to foster subjects of hatred, whether Islam, immigrants or gays and lesbians.

She does believe that the creative impulse within everyone is a saving grace, or might be if it were not wrung out of most of us as children by conformity-driven social and educational systems. "I come from the point of view that we are all born innately artists; that creating in the arts is a human impulse. ... If all men and women are artists, then every man and woman is gay or lesbian."



Paula Vogel.

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THEATER REVIEW OF
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THEATER REVIEW

Sinbad

Playwright: Stuart Ardern
At: Piccolo Theatre, Evanston Arts Depot,
 600 Main St.
Phone: 847-424-0089; \$25
 (12 and under, \$12)
Runs through: Dec. 8

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

In the mid-19th Century, our English cousins took elements of music hall, slapstick comedy, traditional children's stories and fairytales, clog dancing and drag artistry and combined them in lavish productions staged only during the holiday season. Thus, the British pantomime or "panto" was born, although THESE pantos talk, sing and dance. Traditions abound in pantos, such as that which has a woman play the leading man--often Robin Hood or Aladdin or Puss-in-Boots--while a man plays the ugly old dame with a clock-stopping face and matching wig.

A good panto plot is simple while the humor simmers between silly and sophomoric. "Booty is in the eye of the beholder," declares a pirate. "What kind of tree has hands?" someone asks, only to be answered "A palm tree!" "I'm seek-

ing your hand in marriage," the hero says, to which the heroine replies, "What about the rest of me?" Kids love such nonsense, as do far too many parents. Throw in some kid-level audience participation, some original songs, some fantasy and a little magic, and you have the classic traditional panto.

That's what you get with Sinbad. The Piccolo Theatre's fifth annual panto is so true-to-form the actors even use British accents. The story involves Sinbad and a bad guy competing for a princess, aided respectively by good and bad genies. The acting mostly is over-the-top while the shtick is thick as--shall we say?--shaving cream and the puns and gags come fast and furious. Everything's in your face in the tiny Piccolo space, with actors literally inches from the audience.

Indeed, what's missing is scale. The Piccolo is a miniature theater with beautifully painted scenery resembling a life-size Victorian pop-up book. But pantos typically are played in large, well-equipped theaters that can support all kinds of stage magic. Sinbad certainly is ingatiating holiday fun, yet offers only a fraction of the effect of a large-scale panto.

Also, arguably it's a bit too slavishly traditional. There are times and reasons to bend or break tradition. Now that Piccolo has established its



Sinbad.

annual holiday panto, perhaps it's time to find an equivalent American story or provide a more vigorous and contemporary musical score. That's what the Brits do: panto stories stay the same, but each year there's a new version with original pop music, new business and frequently with top stars in the lead roles.

In the breeches role as Sinbad, Deborah Craft provides proper gamin charm and a buoy of un-

derstatement afloat in a sea of overstatement. As the dame, the buxom Glen Proud (is he wearing the Edna dress?) boasts a remarkable and consistent falsetto. Ken Raabe is the oily villain with—surprise!—Chicago ties. Joshua Allard's splashy Arabian Nights costumes are apt and fun.

Simon and Sondheim in St. Sebastian's Season

The Saint Sebastian Players (SSP) have announced its 2007-'08 season, which includes works involving everyone from Stephen Sondheim to Neil Simon. The 27th season is dedicated to the memory of SSP board member Scott Rosengarden, who passed away in June.

The season opens with the long-popular musical *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart. The production runs Oct. 19-Nov. 11. *Tribute* by Bernard Slade, which will be directed by SSP member Steven Walanka, runs Feb. 15-March 9, 2008. Last is *Fools* by Neil Simon, directed by SSP member Jonathan Hagloch, which will run May 2-25, 2008.

One of SSP's most notable events is its annual Monologue Matchup Competition, a one-of-a-kind fundraiser created by the company in 1993, that gives actors the opportunity to show off their best monologues before a panel of distinguished theatre directors. This year's event, which is open to spectators as well as competitors, takes place Mon., Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.

Call 773-404-7922 or visit saintsebastianplayers.org. Also see www.ticketweb.com.

MCA Names

1st Female Director

Madeleine Grynsztejn has been appointed Pritzker Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago, according to a media release. With over 20 years of institutional experience, Grynsztejn is internationally recognized for her scholarship and leadership, and has held top curatorial positions at several of the world's leading art museums. Grynsztejn is currently at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and plans to assume her responsibilities at the MCA in early spring 2008.

Grynsztejn becomes the seventh director—and the first female—to lead the MCA. She succeeds Robert Fitzpatrick, who announced his resignation this past March. Grynsztejn, 45, will leave her position as Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA where she, among other things, was responsible for developing museum programming; producing scholarly publications; and advancing relations with artists, collectors and colleagues around the world. Her current exhibition, *Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson*, recently opened at SFMOMA to strong critical reviews and will travel to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

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SPOTLIGHT



We usually run the other way when adult artists claim to be "infused with childlike imagination," but there are exceptions and James Thiérrée is one of them. This French grandson of Charles Chaplin is an extraordinary physical actor and clown by virtue of his genes, his training and his own creative exuberance. Chicago Shakespeare Theater brought him here in 2005, and he returns now with his **Compagnie Thiérrée** in a new work, **Farewell Umbrella** (*Au Revoir Parapluie*), a dancing, tumbling, musical combination of circus, theater, dazzle and delight. Thiérrée's last appearance sold out fast, and this one probably will, too. Don't wait. Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier, through Dec. 1 only; 312-595-5600; \$46-\$56.

Stage Door Jonny

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Dear readers, Stage Door Jonny and Chicago's Finest (that's the police, not the strippers at Lucky Horseshoe) and Forbidden Broadway: Special Victims Unit need your help. It seems that a lavish and expensive costume was stolen from the Forbidden Broadway dressing room at the Royal George Theatre, and Jonny knows damn well that SOME FAT QUEEN took it!

Just consider, dear readers. First, the costume was stolen on Halloween. Second, the missing costume is the oversize dress used in a satire of Edna in Hair Spray. You know, Edna? The role played by Harvey Fierstein and Bruce Vilanch? You know, a man (loosely defined)!! Third, the perp did NOT steal the fat suit that the Forbidden Broadway actor must wear under the dress. The perp already was big enough to fill the dress. And fourth, the perp also stole a bottle of vodka from the Royal George bar! Hello? It doesn't take rocket science to figure this one out.

The producers of Forbidden Broadway are offering a reward: anyone supplying information that leads to recovery of the costume will receive four tickets to the show of his or her choice. Of course, that won't induce the perp to return the outfit. After all, she's already seen the show! FYI: the dress is made from the same material as the original Broadway costume, an enormous pink-and-purple paisley print with pink feathered cuffs and collar. Maybe you saw it strolling down Halsted late on Halloween.

There will be more than a stage full of fruits on display at the Dec. 7-8 concerts by Chicago Gay Men's Chorus. This year, the 150-voice ensemble will highlight a song called "Fruit Cake," the lyrics to which are, in fact, the recipe for making fruit cake. Even more, while the Chorus sings, the Hearty Boys (of catering and Food Network fame) will be there actually MAKING fruit cake. The product of their labors will be available for sampling at intermission, or for bludgeoning your favorite guy/gal into submission. FYI: Jonny LOVES fruitcake and feels this traditional holiday treat is much maligned. The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus sings at the Athenaeum Theatre; 773-296-0541.

Maripat Donovan, the original Sister from Late Night Catechism (and the show's co-author), makes a rare return to the Chicago area on Dec. 1 when she performs her own piece, Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold, at the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University. The show also features

an appearance by the local Marian Catholic High School Choir, who will help Sister Maripat solve the age old mystery of what happened to the Magi's coveted golden treasure. Performances are at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. The Center is in south suburban University Park; 708-235-2222; free parking.

WTW-Channel 11 will broadcast a documentary profile of playwright and activist Tony Kushner, author of Angels in America, on Dec. 12 9-11p.m. Wrestling With Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner is a film by Oscar winner Frieda Lee Mock that features Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson, Mike Nichols and Maurice Sendak as well as Kushner himself. In addition to his playwriting, Kushner is an outspoken social critic and gay progressive. The broadcast is part of PBS's P.O.V. series produced by American Documentary, Inc.

By all reports, a fellow named Ben Lerman a very funny gay musician, comedian, designer and videographer although the idea of a funny videographer is a non-starter in Jonny's jaundiced view. Nonetheless, the New York-based Lerman is taking his act on the road to 15 Midwest cities, of which Chicago is one. Lerman will perform Ukelear Winter 2007 (a fusion of nuclear and ukulele) Nov. 25 at Mary's Attic (Hamburger Mary's) and Dec. 18 at Homolatte at Big Chicks. Heaven knows where Lerman will travel between those dates and Jonny wishes him well if it's Peoria or Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Lerman is founder of the gay satiric rock band The Isotoners and plays ukulele because he's "too lazy to schlep a keyboard."

Jonny received a note: "Hi! I am an openly gay singer/songwriter currently touring in The Phantom of the Opera--now at the Cadillac Palace." Jonny thought it was a billet doux requesting a rendezvous, but it was not. "I was born in Chicago and lived here in the '80s doing theater and music. My sister, Claudia, lives here now and teaches at the Theatre School, DePaul University." Brother and sister, D. C. and Claudia Anderson, are offering a holiday concert for one night only, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m., at Theatre Building Chicago. They will be joined by Hope Nunnery with Steve Tarshis. D.C. performs theater songs, his sister specializes in Celtic story songs while Nunnery and Tarshis sing "rousing Baptist by way of the juke joint tunes." Cash only; \$15 at the door.

CORRECTION

The review of *Machos* which appeared in last week's paper was written by Scott Morgan, not Catey Sullivan. The Windy City Times regrets the error.

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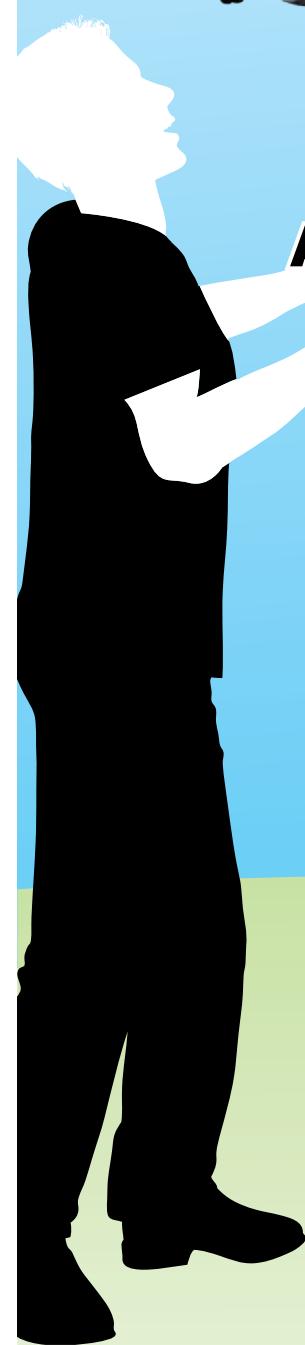
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THEATER REVIEW

Defiance

Playwright: John Patrick Shanley
At: Next Theatre at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St. in Evanston
Phone: 847-475-1875; \$23-\$38
Runs through: Dec. 23

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

A hit play taking top honors always puts extra pressure on its author, whose next play must then match his own record despite a considerably shorter gestation period. The influence of his multiple-award winner, *Doubt*, is apparent in John Patrick Shanley's likewise laconically-titled *Defiance*. Once again we find ourselves in a parochial subculture—not religious this time, but martial—whose isolation is threatened by social issues outside its cloistered world.

The place is Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in 1971, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Morgan Littlefield. In the first scene, he and his steel-magnolia spouse entertain two visitors—Captain King of the Judge Advocate General's office (the legal department, to civilians), an officer so strack that he moves in parade-drill formation even when unnecessary, and Chaplain White, a born-again Bible-hugger from Alabama. The Colonel enlists the aid of the former in his efforts to reduce racial tensions on base—King is, after all, African-American, a product of the ghettos—while rejecting the latter's rosy-eyed passivity. But King (are you paying attention to these names, by the way?) is wary of assuming too much individual responsibility.

The judges who praised *Doubt* apparently demand conflict-with-a-capital-C, however, so we get a distraught private who claims that Littlefield has made sexual overtures to his wife—an infraction not without precedent in military units since antiquity. The cautious King proceeds to consult White, hitherto presented as a platitude-quoting cracker, for a debate over

military vs. moral values, both men adopting an emotional tone wholly at odds with their characters as previously established. Mrs. Littlefield eventually joins in to further muddy the scope of the argument at hand, until it falls to the Colonel himself to review the options engendered by his lapse of discipline and take appropriate action.

No, he does NOT retire to his office and shoot himself, though in this Next Theatre production, such a melodramatic ending wouldn't surprise us at all. It's unclear whether this inexplicable breach of dramatic unity is due to Shanley relying on narrative short-cuts, director Jason Löewith's mistrust of audiences bereft of obvious road-signs, or actor Joseph Wycoff's choices for the role of Chaplain White. But the results are that only Steve Pickering's Littlefield displays behavior consistent with a single personality throughout Shanley's befuddled polemical skirmishes—an accomplishment worthy of recognition, if not by the Colonel's superiors, then by playgoers looking for guidance in uncertain times.

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Times Are Changin': Haynes Does Dylan

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Todd Haynes, the openly gay filmmaker who spearheaded the queer cinema movement with his revolutionary film *Poison* and last made *Far From Heaven*, has returned with a fascinating film centered on musical icon Bob Dylan, *I'm Not There*. Haynes' film is less a bio-pic and more a movie valentine to Dylan. Inspired by Dylan's music and life, the film, told in a non-linear style, weaves together biographical and artistic elements and features Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, Richard Gere, Ben Whishaw, Carl Marcus Franklin and Cate Blanchett all playing different versions of Dylan—who is never referred to by that name. Haynes, wearing a cream-colored western-style shirt and black pants was relaxed and full of passion as he talked with Windy City Times about his latest project. Highlights:

WINDY CITY TIMES: You came at Dylan's music in such a different way. I loved how you told the story through his influences and through the viewpoint of his fans and the people around him. I couldn't help wondering—this passion that you have for music—because it's been the basis of other of your films—do you play?

TODD HAYNES: Not really. I wish I did. I've fooled around with music a little bit, but given all the people that I know who do it for real, it's hard to even cop to.

WCT: What was it about Dylan that suddenly opened the door for you?

TH: It happened at the end of my 30s. I really hadn't listened to Dylan seriously or regularly for 20 years and it was definitely some kind of a signal or urge. I think it had mostly, initially, to do with a need to just help move myself from one place in my life to another. The focus on



Todd Haynes on the set of *I'm Not There*.

Dylan all of a sudden became this reminder, I think, of a time when the future was full of all hope and promise and potential when I was a kid.

WCT: When you decided to make the film it must have been amazing to get the letter or the phone call saying you'd gotten the rights to his music.

TH: Yes, yes, it was.

WCT: Did you feel a sense of responsibility to Dylan's life or music at any point? Was that a pressure at first?

TH: The responsibility I felt was to Dylan's weirdness.

WCT: (laughs) I love that you said that because that's so true.

TH: Yes, it's really true. That's what's amazing about Dylan. It's not that he wrote "Blowin' in the Wind." It's that he wrote everything else and that he's still Bob Dylan and that he would never compromise or change what he did for an audience or for a place on the Top 40 or whatever.

WCT: Has he responded?

TH: No, not that I know of. He has a DVD in his suitcase and I'm happy just knowing that. I think I could just go on thinking, "That's cool—Dylan has a DVD of my movie all about him in his suitcase on his never-ending tour and maybe he'll never get to it."

WCT: Let's talk about the cast for a minute. I can see Ben Whishaw who was so good in *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* and Christian Bale and Heath Ledger but what clicked

in your head to say, "Cate Blanchett must play Bob Dylan?"

TH: I wanted an actress to play that part from the very first formation of the concept. I knew I wanted to have a woman play Dylan in the '66 period and mostly because, again, it was trying to unlock the weirdness of that moment that he really was some hybrid gender, some creature that was not by any stretch of the imagination traditionally masculine or male looking, acting. He was much skinnier; he was in that amphetamine haze of the times, the hair was bigger, the gestures were completely dandified and extravagant and strange; just bizarre.

WCT: Also, any individual like that—anybody who was speaking out against the establishment spoke to a lot of subgroups must have been electrifying—speaking to my gay readership here.

TH: Absolutely. He was so enamored of Allen Ginsberg and queerness and that kind of gay New York of the mid '60s. That aspect of hipster queerness was cool for Dylan and he vocalized it at this one time of his life as well. He said things like, "Oh yeah, I hustled when I first came to New York in 1961." He was just flaunting a kind of "cooler than thou" attitude that who knows the veracity of every word? But it was in the spirit, certainly.

WCT: That's also the one time in the movie when he gets excited—when he spots Allen Ginsberg.

TH: Completely. It's so romantic. He had a

crush for sure.

WCT: Okay, going back in your career for a moment. *Poison* really sparked the queer film movement but with each subsequent movie you've seemed to move away from that identification. You've become Todd Haynes, filmmaker, not Todd Haynes, queer filmmaker. Is it demeaning now to think of movies in that genre? To be linked with that?

TH: No, not especially for the time when *Poison* was made. New queer cinema was a really apt and necessary category to describe all these movies that were coming out of a kind of fresh, political necessity in the AIDS era and coming out very closely aligned with activism around AIDS and questions of identity representation that came out around that time. I feel incredibly proud to have been part of that time and those films.

WCT: Is it relevant again now with our country having swung back into a conservative mode?

TH: Yes, absolutely.

WCT: Do we need those queer voices even more now?

TH: We do it's just that we're in a much more complicated place. Not all in a bad way. I mean, on the one hand, the big issues among gay people getting the most attention are gay marriage and gays in the military and these couldn't be more "conventional" or conservative wishes. On the other hand, *Ugly Betty* is like the hit show of the country and I just saw *Hairspray* on the plane here and I was thinking, "These are huge hits and these are incredibly queer, gay products" which I think is just fascinating and they also both have their cool, ethnic awareness. Obviously there is a much more complex cross-pollination in mainstream society today of what we at once called an underground gay sensibility. There isn't the same sense of that kind of counter-culture that new queer cinema could be. The issues now are more subtle.

WCT: So what is next?

TH: I don't know yet. I've been really flipped out about the results of the Bush-Cheney era. It's been overwhelming and incomprehensible and profound and so big that words seem weird; they seem evil and silly. How we get out of it; how we move forward and how we reckon with it are big questions that I'm thinking about.

For the full interview, go to our Web site at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

Getting 'Closer' to Frances

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

My brother-in-law's mother is actress Frances Sternhagen and for years it's been fun to watch the recognition from friends when they don't quite know the name but suddenly light up when they remember one of her indelible TV roles. She played Cliff's mom on *Cheers*, Kyle MacLachlan's possessive mother Bunny MacDougal on *Sex & the City* and is now mother to Kyra Sedgwick on *The Closer*. The two-time Tony winner and stage veteran (this year marks 55 years on the stage) is also an accomplished screen actress. Her debut in 1967's *Up the Down Staircase*, just out on DVD, as the frustrated school librarian is brief but memorable. She's had great roles in the little-seen but fascinating *Fedora*, *Outland*, *Starting Over*, *Misery*, *Raising Cain*, and *The Laramie Project*, among others. Now Sternhagen (who is called "Frannie" by family and friends) has a large supporting part in *The Mist*, the long-awaited adaptation of the Stephen King horror novella. We recently chatted about that, her part on *Sex & the City* and the filming of *The Laramie Project*, the play and HBO movie that examined



Frances Sternhagen with writer Richard Knight, Jr. (left) and his partner Jim Bailey.

the emotional impact of the murder of gay hero Matthew Shepard on the townspeople where he was killed. Highlights from our conversation:

WINDY CITY TIMES: The *Laramie Project* was obviously something that was very, very special. Can you talk about your involvement with it?

FRANCES STERNHAGEN: Yes, Moisés Kaufman was so attentive and careful about how to portray people's prejudice without making them look ridiculous or point it up. What he wanted to do and what I think he succeeded in doing was showing how these really ordinary and loving people—people who had no idea that they

had any prejudice—were unaware as to how this could happen.

WCT: I sense that it must have been an emotionally draining project all around.

FS: Yes. I met through one of these students the woman who I played because she'd warmed up to these students. She was the mother of the sheriff of the woman (played by Amy Madigan) who had to be in quarantine because she had handled without gloves the boy who had HIV. They discovered this after they had taken him down from where he'd been tied up in that hill. One of the young actors who had originally gone there with Moisés introduced me to the mother

and we all had dinner together. It was really quite touching.

WCT: Having worked and lived in an urban/liberal environment for so many years, wasn't that just mind-blowing that those attitudes existed?

FS: Well, yes, but I think it would have been a lot more mind-blowing if they all had not been prepared by these students a couple of years before—whenever the play came out. Coming from New York your first tendency is to play the stereotype. When the actor playing the student who first comes to interview me Moisés had to bring me there—having much more of a kind of prejudice against the boy and against being asked any questions. My tendency was to be more sympathetic and Moisés wanted to show that in the beginning these people were not that welcoming.

WCT: As they would not be.

FS: Exactly and it took a long time for this woman that I was playing to warm up to the point toward the end of the movie where she was telling the boy about what had happened to her daughter.

WCT: Did you feel that the people there had also made that emotional journey?

FS: Yes. Definitely.

WCT: That's good to know that some tolerance got through. Boy, that's a really powerful piece. Hard to watch.

FS: I know; I'm getting choked up just thinking about it.

Turn to next page



I'm Not There, This Christmas

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Todd Haynes, the writer-director whose movie *Poison* kick started the queer film genre in the early '90s, is back with another beautifully made film. *I'm Not There* is Haynes' contemplative treatise "Inspired by the music and many lives of Bob Dylan." His script (co-authored with Oren Moverman) about the elusive, mysterious folk hero whose life and career reached their apex during the turbulent 1960s, is a doozy. To tell his story, Haynes uses a battery of actors to play his leading man. Christian Bale, Perfume's Ben Whishaw, Heath Ledger, Richard Gere, Carl Marcus Franklin, and Cate Blanchett all take turns at aspects of the role. None are called Bob Dylan in the movie (and Gere and Franklin actually play

characters who inspired Dylan).

It's a brilliant stroke—a biography that doesn't ever mention its subject by name—and Haynes poetic audacity nearly carries the day. Dylan's story is viewed through the attitudes and visual signposts of the time in which he rose from idealistic cult figure to superstar. The threads of his life and inspirations weave together throughout the movie. In one, Haynes gives us the offstage Dylan (portrayed by Brokeback Mountain's Ledger) through the ever distancing relationship of Dylan to his wife and children. In another, fans of Dylan (now played by Blanchett) are shocked when the strident folkie plugs in his guitar and with a literal boom; goes electric at an outdoor folk festival. This section is sure to be the most talked about part of the movie.

The reason for that is Blanchett's mesmerizing turn as Dylan—it's a dead on interpretation, down to the frizzy Harpo hairdo, the Ray Bans, leather jacket, and incoherent mutterings. The performance is not just a sleight of hand, either. Haynes gives Blanchett the gift of Dylan at the height of his celebrity and his alternate embrace and denounce of it. It's no coincidence that the segment is filmed in black and white and is populated by the leering faces, persistent paparazzi, and long tracking shots of Fellini. In paying homage to the maker of *La Dolce Vita* and *8 1/2*, Haynes creates another prism through which to view Dylan and the celebrity culture he inspired (it also includes snippets of Dylan's love for gay poet Allen Ginsberg and his odd relationship with Warhol superstar Edie Sedgwick).

Throughout, we are constantly reminded that we are watching a movie; that its folly to think that the real Dylan could ever be captured on

film. Other sections of the movie are mystical and poetic (those involving Gere and Franklin), drawing on Dylan's influences and Haynes' fascination with rebellion against the constraints of rigid conservatism (a theme he also explored more literally in *Far From Heaven*) aren't easily linked to Dylan but are beautifully filmed and feel right.

The jigsaw puzzle approach of *I'm Not There* takes some getting used to and audiences steeped in traditional Hollywood structure are going to probably find this non-linear film that leaves the moorings of traditional bio-pics far behind tough going. Plus, not all the threads bind together but even with missteps Haynes takes you on a marvelous journey and its an intensely felt picture that actually gets on the screen the enormous power that music in the hands of a genius can have on the world. There's never been a film quite like *I'm Not There* and even though it's too long and gets a little too cow-eyed at times, Haynes' unique vision, the cinematic equivalent of the ultimate fan mail love letter, may be the precursor to an entirely new genre of poetic bio-pics. That a potential new film genre has once again been initiated by a queer artist with the unique vision and tremendous gifts that Haynes' possesses isn't a bit surprising. Want to see queer sensibility finely tuned to its height? Go see *I'm Not There*.

This Christmas, written and directed by Preston A. Whitmore II is standard issue holiday fare, Soul Food-style in which Loretta Devine presides over a family with lots of stereotypical problems returning to her California home for Christmas. I love Loretta Devine, who should have gotten

many more high-profile movie roles after *Waiting to Exhale* (and plays a variation on that role here) and am always happy to see her with another big screen part—even in a standard issue picture such as this. Regina King is the oldest daughter who has taken on familial responsibility after the father left for good while Sharon Leal is the younger, beautiful and selfish sister who went to New York for a modeling career. There's an older brother on the lam from bookies, a younger brother who is hiding the fact that he's a talented vocalist, and a middle brother who is home for the holidays on leave from the Army and is hiding a secret, too.

I'd forgotten that the trailer for the movie reveals the secret (he's hooked up with a white woman) and was hoping things would get interesting and that maybe he'd bring home his gay lover (talk about don't ask/don't tell!). But not a bit of it. All the characters and their motivations are so stereotypical, in fact, that none of them really registers. On the plus side, inane as it is, at least this isn't one of those strident, slapstick white holiday movies—like *Christmas with the Kranks*—and also unlike its white counterparts, this black holiday movie features gorgeous jazz versions of the Christmas standards and a sassy Soul Train line dance sequence (which wears out its welcome, however, when Whitmore, who apparently loved it a lot, repeats it at the movie's conclusion for a full five minutes before rolling the credits).

Check out my archived reviews at www.windyctytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. There is also ordering information on my new book of collected film reviews, "Knight at the Movies 2004-2006."

Itty Bitty Fun

The after-party for the sold-out Reeling LGBT Film Festival screening of *Itty Bitty Titty Committee* was packed with queers who enjoyed the fun and the eye candy. Photos by Mel Ferrand



FRANCES from 20

WCT: Okay, so we're going to move to something a bit lighter.

FS: (brightens) Okay, I'm ready.

WCT: *Sex in the City*—you've done so many series—*Cheers*, *ER*, now you're on *The Closer*, but you've said that you've never had as much recognition as you have for playing *Bunny MacDougal*.

FS: It was such a breakthrough or an eye opener for me about how the right character at the right time can really have such an impact. I'm very curious as to how the movie is going to go. Of course, I'm not in the movie but the four girls are. With all the DVDs out I almost have a feeling of, "Isn't that enough?" (laughs).

WCT: Well, maybe they'll put *Bunny* in a sequel if it gets that far. Okay, now let's talk about *Stephen King's The Mist*.

FS: I'm curious to see it because when I read it I thought, "Well, this is nothing I'm going to pay to see." It's so full of horror and spooky things and not anything I'd go to see! (laughs) It's so funny, my neighbors who are in their 80s are so excited and keep saying to me, "Oh, Frances, when is it coming out!?" and I keep saying, "You're not going to want to see it." (laughs) They're going to spend the entire time with their eyes closed. It's amazing what they can do and

did do with the green screen and these hideous creatures that they made up on the second floor of the studio in Shreveport where we shot.

WCT: I'm a little nervous for that reason.

FS: Me too. I don't see scary movies. I do not see them but here I am in one. When I got there, unfortunately, the two things that I was supposed to do with that darling little boy, Nathan Gamble who was in *Babel* got taken away. For the first one the centipede was too big. They couldn't make it work and the other rescue I was supposed to do also got taken away. They had Thomas Jane not get attacked by this particular bug that I was supposed to get off him. So, the only thing I really do is a spider in the pharmacy. We go over there to get some medication for the people who have been attacked in the supermarket. I felt bad because there was nothing leading up to my killing the spider and also when Nathan said, "You're my favorite because you rescue me." I actually no longer did so how could I still be his favorite? (laughs)

WCT: What's next for you?

FS: Well, there are two back-to-back episodes of *The Closer* on Dec. 3 which is fun and this is a good double episode about Christmas. It's funny but it's also at times very touching and then in February I'm going to India for two weeks and then, we'll see.



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Kathleen Turner was the special keynote speaker at Personal PAC's annual gala and awards for pro-choice leaders. Personal PAC founder Marcie Love, choice activist Tracy Fischman and filmmaker Faith Pennick were honored for their work. FROM TOP: Tina Tchen and Pennick. Karen Dixon, Nan Schaffer, Kathleen Turner and Lisa Loudin. Personal PAC CEO Terry Cosgrove with Marcie Love. Turner and Tracy Fischman. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More online at www.windycitymediagroup.com or www.mysticimagesphotography.com



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Trans Night Out

Broadway Youth Center of Howard Brown Health Center hosted a Night of Fallen Stars celebrating the transgender community, following the Day of Remembrance Vigil, at Center on Halsted Sunday night. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More online at www.windyctymediagroup.com. Also see p. 24.



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Locals Challenge Lutheran Celibacy Rule

BY AMY WOOTEN

In a direct challenge to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) life-long celibacy policy for gay and lesbian clergy, Chicago's Resurrection Lutheran Church and the newly formed nonprofit Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) has ordained a lesbian minister.

Jen Rude's Nov. 17 "extraordinary ordination" service, called such because it is performed outside of Lutheran guidelines, was the first official challenge to ELCA's new "refrain and restraint" resolution, and the fourth challenge to the celibacy policy in the past 13 months. The resolution, which was passed in August during ELCA's biennial Churchwide Assembly in Chicago, was a very small step toward LGBT inclusion. The resolution urges bishops to refrain from punishing gay and lesbian clergy members in committed relationships. The celibacy rule, however, has yet to be overturned.

ELM provides support to gay and lesbian pastors and their congregations.

Chicago Bishop Wayne Miller has already gone on the record that he will not discipline Resurrection Lutheran Church for calling a lesbian to be its pastor. Miller replaced former Bishop Paul Landahl, who brought the "refrain and restraint" resolution to the floor during the August assembly.

The anti-gay policy was a hot issue during the summer assembly, following the July removal of a popular Atlanta pastor, Rev. Bradley Schmeling, from the ELCA roster because of his committed same-sex relationship.

Rude said Miller could have taken a variety of actions if he wanted, ranging from writing a letter of censure to removing the congregation from the ELCA. Congregations have been expelled only a couple of times since 1990.

"He is looking forward to staying in conversation and community with Resurrection," Rude said. She has been with Lakeview's Resurrection since August 2005, when she started as an intern. Since August 2006, she has served as the church's community minister. Rude is also a youth outreach minister with The Night Ministry.



Jen Rude.

The congregation voted to call Rude as their pastor in late October. "It's really exciting," she said. "I am honored and humbled to receive this call from a congregation."

While in college, Rude felt the call to ministry. During that time, she also came out. Despite ELCA's celibacy rule, Rude decided to go through the process of candidacy for ordination. The ELCA candidacy committee indefinitely postponed its decision to approve Rude due to her non-compliance with the celibacy rule.

"I went through, ...knowing that I probably wouldn't get through the whole process, but knowing it was important to keep the issue on the table and keep real people's lives in the face of committees and in the face of decisions," she said.

ELM has already planned to also ordain lesbian Jen Nagel of Minneapolis' Salem Lutheran in January 2008. Twelve "extraordinary ordination" services have taken place since the first one was performed in San Francisco 17 years ago.

Despite the fact that the discriminatory celibacy policy was not stricken down at the biennial assembly, Rude remains hopeful. "I believe it will happen eventually," she said. "I feel like people are moving and challenging the policy. It's really going to take congregations and pastors stepping up and coming out as either GLBT or as allies and challenging the church."

**REV. IRENE MONROE**

Remembering Two-Spirits This Weekend

BY REV. IRENE MONROE

As I prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, I am reminded of the autumnal harvest time's spiritual significance. As a time of connectedness, I pause to acknowledge what I have to be thankful for. But I also reflect on the holiday as a time of remembrance—historical and familial.

Historically, I am reminded that for many Native Americans, Thanksgiving is not a cause of celebration, but rather a National Day of Mourning, remembering the real significance of the first Thanksgiving in 1621 as a symbol of persecution and genocide of Native Americans and the long history of bloodshed with European settlers.

I am also reminded of my Two-Spirit Native American brothers and sisters who struggle with their families and tribes not approving of their sexual identities and gender expressions as many of us do with our families and faith communities.

"Yes, there's internalized homophobia in every gay community, but as Native Americans we are taught not to like ourselves because we're not white. In our communities, people don't like us because we're gay," Gabriel Duncan, member of Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS), told the Pacific News Service.

And consequently, many Two-Spirit Native Americans leave their reservations and isolated communities hoping to connect with the larger LGBTQ community in urban cities. However, due to racism and cultural insensitivity, many Two-Spirits feel less understood and more isolated than they did back home.

But homophobia is not indigenous to Native American culture. Rather, it is one of the many devastating effects of colonization and Christian missionaries that today Two-Spirits may be respected within one tribe yet ostracized in another.

"Homophobia was taught to us as a component of Western education and religion," Navajo anthropologist Wesley Thomas has written. "We were presented with an entirely new set of taboos, which did not correspond to our own models and which focused on sexual behavior rather than the intricate roles Two-Spirit people played. As a result of this misrepresentation, our nations no longer accepted us as they once had."

Traditionally, Two-Spirits symbolized Native Americans' acceptance and celebration of diverse gender expressions and sexual identities. They were revered as inherently sacred because they possessed and manifested both feminine and masculine spiritual qualities that were believed to bestow upon them a "universal knowledge" and special spiritual connectedness with the "Great Spirit." Although the term was coined in the early 1990s, historically Two-Spirits depicted transgender Native Americans. Today, the term has come to also include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and intersex Native Americans.

The Pilgrims, who sought refuge here in America from religious persecution in their homeland, were right in their dogged pursuit of religious liberty. But their actual practice of religious liberty came at the expense of the civil and sexual rights of Native Americans.

And the Pilgrims' animus toward homosexuals not only impacted Native American culture, but it also shaped Puritan law and theology.

In the New England states, the anti-sodomy rhetoric had punitive if not deadly consequences for a newly developing and sparsely populated area. The Massachusetts Bay Code of 1641 called for the death of not only heretics, witches and murderers, but also "sodomites," stating that death would come swiftly to any "man lying with a man as with a woman." And the renowned Puritan pastor and Harvard tutor, the Rev. Samuel Danforth in his 1674 "fire and brimstone" sermon preached to his congregation that the death sentence for sodomites had to be imposed because it was a biblical mandate.

Because the Pilgrims' fervor for religious liberty was devoid of an ethic of accountability, their actions did not set up the conditions requisite for moral liability and legal justice. Instead, the actions of the Pilgrims brought about the genocide of a people, a historical amnesia of the event, and an annual national celebration of Thanksgiving for their arrival.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush ironically—if not ignorantly—designated November as "National American Indian Heritage Month" to celebrate the history, art, and traditions of Native American people. As we get into the holiday spirit, let us remember the whole story of the arrival of the Pilgrims and other European settlers to the New World.

On a trip home to New York City in May 2004, I went to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to view the UNESCO Slave Route Project, "Lest We Forget: the Triumph Over Slavery," that marks the United Nations General Assembly's resolution proclaiming 2004 "The International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and Its Abolition."

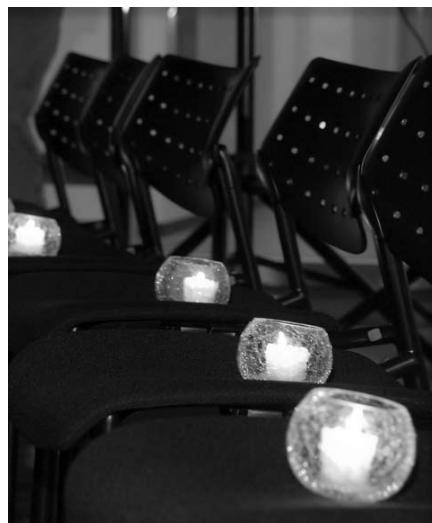
In highlighting that African Americans should not be shamed by slavery, but instead defiantly proud of our memory of it, I read the opening billboard to the exhibit that stated, "By institutionalizing memory, resisting the onset of oblivion, recalling the memory of tragedy that for long years remained hidden or unrecognized and by assigning it its proper place in the human conscience, we respond to our duty to remember."

It is in the spirit of our connected struggles against discrimination that we can all stand on a solid rock that rests on a multicultural foundation for a true and honest Thanksgiving.

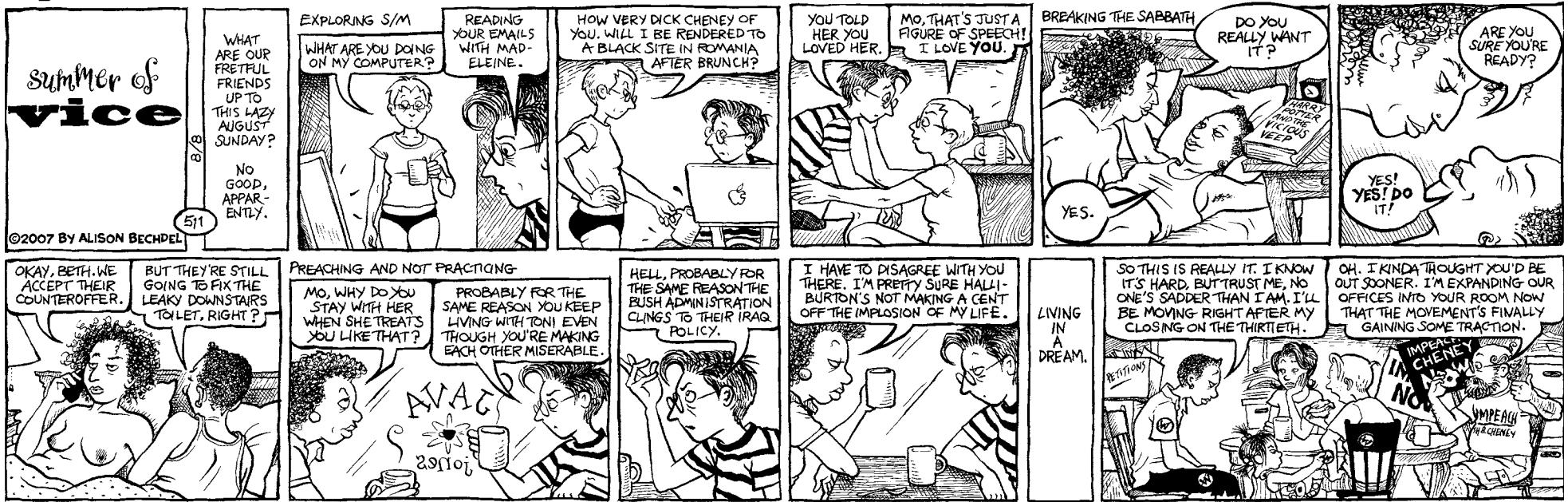
And in so doing, it helps us to remember, respect, mourn and give thanks to the struggles not only our LGBTQ foremothers and forefathers endured, but also the ongoing struggle our Native American Two-Spirit brothers and sisters face everyday—and particularly on Thanksgiving Day.



Day of remembrance The annual Chicago vigil that coincides with the national Day of Remembrance for those lost to anti-trans violence was held Sunday, Nov. 18, at the Center on Halsted, followed by a Night of Fallen Stars. Events were sponsored by Center on Halsted, Illinois Gender Advocates, and Howard Brown Health Center with its Broadway Youth Center. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More online at www.windyctymediagroup.com and [www.mysticimagesphotography.com](http://mysticimagesphotography.com)



Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



www.DykesToWatchOutFor.com

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Nov. 21

Afrik Productions Feast. DJ Craig Loftis & DJ Kenae, sexy dancers, hors d'ouevres. 11 p.m.-4 a.m., \$12 at door, Tokyo 21, 901 W. Weed St., xotikchicago@aol.com

Association of Latino Men for Action Fundraiser. Every Wednesday night at Bocadillos, 8 p.m.-1 a.m., \$5 donation benefits ALMA, 6739 Ogden Ave., Berwyn, www.merenderobocadillos.com

Berlin Thanksgiving Eve Dance Party. DJ Larissa. Host: Shayna X. 954 W. Belmont, www.berlinchicago.com

Circuit Wild Wednesday dance party. DJ Alex Perez. 9 p.m.-4 a.m., 3641 N. Halsted St., www.circuitclub.com

Crew \$1 lite draft & \$1 well drinks. 4804 N. Broadway, www.worldsgreatestbar.com

Hunters Nightclub Feast Super Wednesday. DJ Ron G., lights by Dustin, dancers, adult pornstar Ricky Sinz (showtime 10:30 p.m.). Party starts 9 p.m., \$5 cover, 1932 E. Higgins Rd., www.huntersnightclubs.com

Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association Red, a weekly drop-in for les-bi women ages 16-26. Meets every Wednesday night. 7:30-9:30 p.m., 947 Garfield, Oak Park, 708-386-3463 or www.opalga.org

Windy City Gay Naturists Anniversary Party. Register by Nov. 20 to attend. 7 p.m., Touche, RSVP and details at 312-494-2654, wcgn60660@aol.com

Thursday, Nov. 22

Crew Open 11:30 a.m.. Celebrate Thanksgiving at Crew; serving full menu and traditional favorites. 4804 N. Broadway, www.worldsgreatestbar.com

New Town Writers Workshop. 7:30 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.newtownwriters.org

Friday, Nov. 23

Affinity Singles Mingle; Game Night. Every fourth Friday. 7-9 p.m., 5650 South Woodlawn Avenue, Garden Level, www.affinity95.org

Clubhouse/Afrik Africaribe Urban-Caribbean Party. DJs Gavin-T, Anton, Kenae, sexy Dominican dancers Machine and Kiko. 11 p.m.-4 a.m., Circuit, 3641 N. Halsted St., [urbanochicago@](http://www.centeronhalsted.org)

aol.com

Hydrate DJ Jeannette. 3458 N. Halsted, www.hydratechicago.com

Saturday, Nov. 24

Center on Halsted Co-ed Open Volleyball. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., \$5/person, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org, RSVP_culture@centeronhalsted.org

Circuit Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nitro party. 3641 N. Halsted St., www.circuitclub.com, www.n2-nitro.com

Clubhouse/Afrik Xotik weekly Saturday party. Thanksgiving Party. DJs Anton, Kenae. Sexy Dominican dancers Machine and Kiko. 11 a.m.-5 a.m., \$12 at door, Tokyo 21, 901 W. Weed St., xotikchicago@aol.com

Hydrate Ralph Rosario. 3458 N. Halsted, www.hydratechicago.com

Sunday, Nov. 25

archurch4me Service. 11 a.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.archurch4me.com

Archdiocesan Gay and Lesbian Outreach Chicago Mass. 7 p.m., 700 W. Belmont, www.aglochicago.org, 773-525-3872, aglochicago@sbcglobal.net

Center on Halsted Co-ed Open Basketball. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., \$5/person, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org, RSVP_culture@centeronhalsted.org

Women & Children First Bookstore LaShonda Katrice Barnett: I Got Thunder: Black Women Songwriters on Their Craft. 4:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Monday, Nov. 26

Center on Halsted A Conversation with Achy Obejas. Book release party for This is What Happened in Our Other Life. 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$10, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

House of Tut/Clubhouse/Afrik Mz. Ruffy's Thanksgiving. Show and dance party featuring top entertainers. 11 p.m.-4 a.m., \$5 before 12 a.m./\$8 after, Circuit, 3641 N. Halsted St.

SAGE Women's Book Club: Lucky in the Corner, Carol Anshaw. 2-4 p.m., free, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, Nov. 27

Center on Halsted Mental Health

Program launches LGBT immigrant support group. Weekly, free. Pre-register by calling 773-472-6469, ext. 261

Chicago Prime Timers/Center on Halsted Book Group: My Lives: An Autobiography, Edmund White. 7:30-9:30 p.m., free, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Meditations on Activism Powerful Peacemaking by and for Teens: Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution for Everyday Life.

Presenters from Thousand Waves and Alternatives, Inc. Free and open to public. 6 p.m., ca. 773-472-7663

Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association Amigos Latinos Apoyando Siempre for Latino MSM 18 and over. Meets second and fourth Tuesdays. 7:30-9:30 p.m., 947 Garfield, Oak Park, 708-386-3463 or www.opalga.org

Wednesday, Nov. 28 Center on Halsted Dyke Mc 2.0. Gwen Mitchell, AquaMoon & Carrie Lydon perform. 8-9:30 p.m., \$10, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Center on Halsted Women & Money Matters Series: How Can I Get the Job I Want? 6-8 p.m., donations accepted, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus Open mic for World AIDS Day with host Mz. Ruff N Stuff. 6-9 p.m., free, Little Black Pearl and Design Center, 1060 E. 47th St., 773-285-1211, www.luvethybrotha.com

Chicago NOW Rise up! Raise your voices in song and sing along for all that is wrong. Even with CNOW, Kristin Lems, Peggy Lipschutz, Jim Bilger and Terry Veras. 7-9 p.m., \$5 or free with CNOW membership, The Theatre Building, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., janniefried@yahoo.com for more info

Women & Children First Bookstore Elynne Chaplik-Aleskow: "The Revolving Door," Chicken Soup for the Chocolate Lover's Soul. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Thursday, Nov. 29

AIDS Foundation of Chicago World of Chocolate, AFC's annual holiday event. 5:30-9 p.m., \$75

advance, \$100 at door, other tickets \$150-\$700, Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., RSVP and info at www.aidschicago.org or 312-922-2322

Leather Archives & Museum

CineKink Chicago film festival. Through Dec. 1. All screenings \$30 advance and \$45 at door; individual tickets \$8 advance and \$10 at door, see www.leatherarchives.org for more info, or www.cinekink.com

Newtown Writers Chicago's GLBT

literary group holds an open reading. 7:30 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., frauman8@yahoo.com, 773-528-3637

Test Positive Aware Network Team

(Treatment Education Advocacy Management) Training. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., limited space, RSVP at 773-989-9400, 5537 N. Broadway, www.tpan.com

Test Positive Aware Network

Pulse social. 6-10 p.m., North End, 3733 N. Halsted St., www.tpan.com

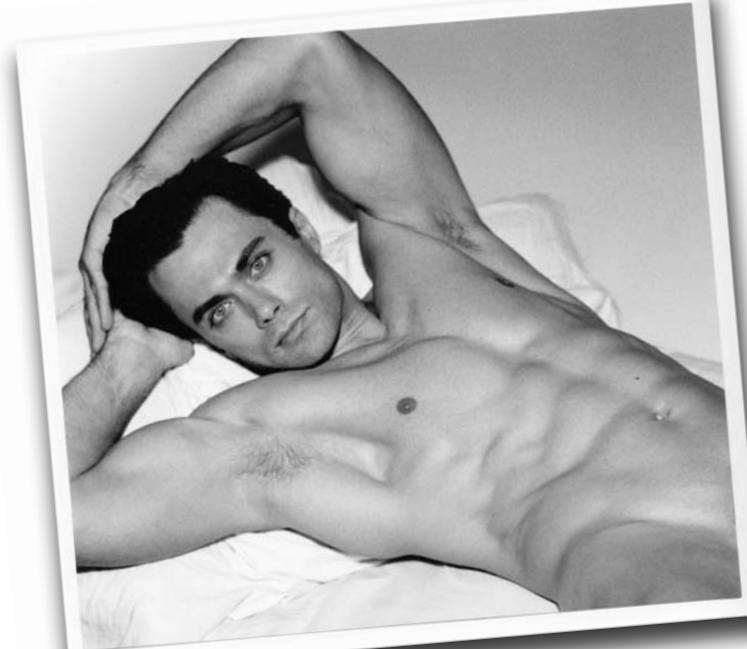
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Women & Children First Bookstore Anne Elizabeth Moore: Unmarketable: Brandism, Copyfighting, Mocketing, and the Erosion of Integrity. 7:30 p.m., 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

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LCCP Fall Brunch

The Lesbian Community Cancer Project is now the Lesbian Community Care Project, a program of Howard Brown Health Center. Their first post-merger event was the annual Fall Brunch benefit, held at Feast in Wicker Park. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More photos online at www.windycitymediagroup.com and www.mysticimagesphotography.com.



Bingo for Beyondmedia

Beyondmedia held a fun and wild bingo benefit recently. Beyondmedia is a group which collaborates with under-served and under-represented women, youth and communities to tell their stories, connect their stories to the world, and organize for social justice through the creation and distribution of alternative media and arts. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald. More photos online at www.windycitymediagroup.com and www.mysticimagesphotography.com.



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Gendercating

Former Chicago filmmaker Catherine Crouch attended the local premiere of her controversial short film, *The Gendercator*, a futuristic look at forced gender roles. The 15-minute film, shown at Center on Halsted as part of the Reeling annual LGBT film fest, was followed by more than an hour of debate and discussion with a panel of experts on gender issues, as well as comments by Crouch about her intentions behind the project. Panelists included Judith Halberstam and Casey Schwartz (top), Jackie Anderson (right) and Catherine Crouch (left), along with Ronnie Drantz and Kate Kane. Photos by Tracy Baim



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