



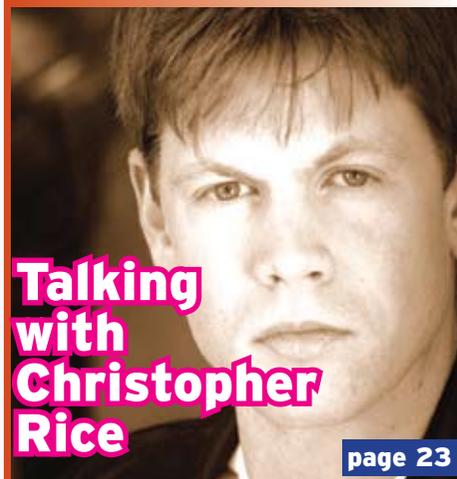
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## Rev. Jeremiah Wright Gets LGBT Support

BY AMY WOOTEN

Several local LGBT people have come out in support of Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama's controversial former pastor following media uproar over short clips from his past sermons.

Media frenzy and a flood of criticism over past comments made by Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who recently retired from leading Chicago's 8,000-member Trinity United Church of Christ (UCC), have caused some unease among Americans, including members of the LGBT community. Some activists have second-guessed Obama out of fear that the man he labeled as his "spiritual mentor" might be anti-gay after seeing the short clips. Since media outlets started showing video clips of racially charged past sermons, Wright has received a high amount of criticism. Even Obama has tried to distance himself from Wright.

However, there are many who vocally support Wright, saying he has been nothing but supportive of the LGBT community over the years. His supporters say three-minute clips taken out of context and shown by the media mar a lifetime of sermons filled with inclusive messages. Others say the uproar over the clips also show a misunderstanding of Black theology and the Black church.



**Sherri Jackson (above) supports Trinity UCC's stances on gays and HIV/AIDS. Photo by Hal Baim**

"I have only the highest regard for Trinity and Rev. Wright," Equality Illinois Political Director Rick Garcia e-mailed to Windy City Times. "It is so sad that a man of faith, a man of justice, a man of fairness is being vilified and that his church is being portrayed as controversial, racist, separatist and marginal. Nothing is farther from the truth."

Garcia described both Trinity UCC and Wright as a "Chicago treasure."

"It disgusts me that rank politics is dispar-

aging the Reverend and his church's exemplary work," Garcia added.

During a recent speech, Obama said that while he does not agree with the message shown in the video clips shown by media, Wright is still a part of his identity and he does not denounce the man. His speech also tried to shed light on how race has become a divisive issue in the run for the White House.

The Rev. Otis Moss II has replaced the recently retired Wright.

While not everyone may fully support the messages of the former reverend shown in the clips, many, including some members of Chicago's LGBT community, have come forward out of anger that video "sound bites" of the former Trinity UCC pastor's sermons have been taken out of context by mainstream media to further divide Americans on issues of race and even sexuality as the race for the Democratic nod drags on. Both Obama and rival Sen. Hillary Clinton have been battling for every vote, including the LGBT vote.

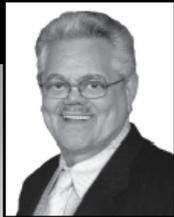
Over the years, Wright has included LGBT-inclusive sermons, and has also been very welcoming to HIV-positive individuals. Trinity had one of

Turn to page 6



## SPRING THEATER PREVIEW

Clockwise from top: The Drowsy Chaperone, Bill T. Jones' Chapel/Chapter, Avenue Q and M. Butterfly are just a few of this season's many local theatrical, musical and dance offerings. Read much more starting on page 11.



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## WINDY CITY TIMES

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People of all ages were part of local anti-war activities. Read more on page 6.

Photo by Yasmin Nair

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Author Christopher Rice (above) talks with Windy City Times. His interview and a review of his latest book are on page 23.

Photo by Toky Photography

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This week's online-only features include:  
-Media Watch  
-An interview with Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award finalist Dwight Okita (right)  
-Heartland Alliance's fight in the global battle for LGBT rights

Photo courtesy of Javier Perez



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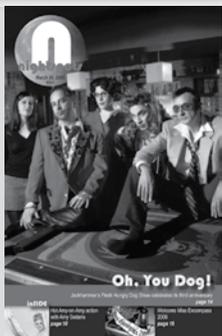
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## OH, YOU DOG!

Jackhammer's Flesh Hungry Dog Show celebrates its third anniversary.

Photo by G. Thomas Ward and Leigh Hanlon



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# U.S. Urged to Fight More for Gay Rights

BY BOB ROEHR



**James Hormel.**  
Photo by Bob Roehr

"We are here to raise awareness of a crisis in abuse and discrimination that is being perpetuated against the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community in many countries around the world," Michael Guest said at a March 18 news conference at the National Press Club.

"The range of abuse is simply shocking. It includes killings, police violence, unwarranted arrest, extortion, and a wide array of legal and other forms of societal discrimination that are being practiced in more than a hundred countries around the world."

These facts were made clear in 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, an annual report by the U.S. Department of State. The document runs more than 5,000 pages and was released on March 11. LGBT issues were mentioned in 189 country reports, an increase from 142

the year before. Still, LGBT issues are "treated almost as an asterisk, lumped in with other issues," he said.

Guest, the openly gay former U.S. ambassador to Romania, is now retired and working with the LGBT Foreign Policy Project, a new coalition working for a stronger American voice in that area.

James Hormel, the first openly gay U.S. ambassador, also spoke. He said, "I believe our country needs to work to eliminate such abuses abroad and at home. We need to renew and reinvigorate our worldwide commitment to human rights, and that includes recognizing LGBT rights as human rights."

He said U.S. embassies can do a lot more. Simply meeting with such groups "can send a message of concern. Leadership from the top down is key to ensuring that these human rights issues will be taken seriously."

Scott Long, with Human Rights Watch, said the report is good but the U.S. needs to follow it with action. "Action needs to be strategic, not necessarily public. Pressure doesn't always take the form of press releases. Action means for every embassy to work with LGBT activities and communities ... to let them help to decide what needs to be done."

He spoke of putting pressure on our friends "because they listen. We can do a great deal by talking to the government of Jamaica because they care about what we think and say."

Long said local LGBT groups need

support to build their organizational capacity. But at the same time, they often are reluctant to take it from outside sources for fear it will taint them. Many anti-gay activists call homosexuality a "western disease" that is an anathema to their societies and cultures.

He urged a change in how requests for asylum are viewed. "The burden of proof should not lie on the defendant. If you are gay and come from a country that has a sodomy law or the death penalty for homosexuality, you shouldn't have to go into the minutia of why you have been persecuted."

"We need an understanding that the closet it-

self is a form of persecution. Saying to people you can go back and hide who you are is not an answer or refuge from being persecuted, it is a reinforcement of persecution," said Long.

Guest said the U.S. government needs to take a higher profile in standing up for human rights in general, and LGBT rights in particular. That is particularly true in countries that are friends and allies of the U.S. "It is time for the U.S. to regain its voice...Our embassies much become advocates for change."

Read the related article, "Death Threats in Kosovo," at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



**Axel Bartolomei.** Photo courtesy of Leslie Bartolomei.

## PASSAGES Axel Bartolomei

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Axel Bartolomei, remembered as a generous and prominent member of the local Latino LGBTQ community, passed away March 17 in Florida, where he had been living since February. He was 41.

Leslie Bartolomei, one of Axel's sisters, described Axel to Windy City Times as "someone you could count on and someone who was outgoing. He was a giver. He was very sociable and had so much charisma. He would come into a

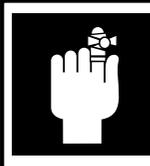
room and you would know he was there—and you [would] feel such a good vibe [from him]. ... He planted a little bit of himself in everybody's heart." Growing up, she said that he was "an outstanding person [who] was always very helpful; if you needed something he was there."

Citing several positions that Axel worked, including campaigning for Illinois State Rep. Ken Dunkin, Leslie said that Axel "was everywhere. He was a legend."

On one of its Web pages, the Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) said of Bartolomei that he "came into this world with a spark in his eye, magic in his heart and a smile personalized for each of his friends. He gave of himself without question, listened without judgment and made us laugh when we needed it the most."

Axel Bartolomei, who grew up in Puerto Rico and, later, Chicago, is survived by his father, Luis, and seven siblings. His mother, Ramonita "Monin" Bartolomei, preceded him in death.

A wake was held for Bartolomei Thurs., March 20, at Alvarez Funeral, 2500 N. Cicero. A funeral was held the following day at Acacia Park Cemetery, 7800 W. Irving Park. People can send donations to help defray the cost of funeral expenses to Leslie Bartolomei, 1204 N. Oak Terrace, Round Lake Beach, Ill., 60073.



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## CDPH Survey Spotlights Gay Behavior

BY AMY WOOTEN

A Chicago HIV behavioral survey recently presented by the Chicago Department of Public Health shed more light on the local gay male population and its HIV risk behaviors.

Nikhil Prachand, a CDPH epidemiologist, presented "Guided by the Community: Chicago HIV Behavioral Surveillance 2004-2007" on March 17. It is an assessment of HIV risk behaviors among Chicago MSM (men who have sex with men), heterosexuals and injection drug users (IDU's).

Project CHAT was a detailed, diverse survey conducted in 2004 on over 1,000 Chicago MSM. Heterosexuals and IDU's were also surveyed in later years. The purpose was to estimate and monitor risk behaviors, HIV testing behaviors and exposure to prevention.

MSM were surveyed at various community settings, such as bars, clubs and social organizations. The results provide interesting information about the local MSM community.

For example, although HIV testing rates were high across all groups, the study showed that nearly 30 percent of those surveyed were unaware of their current HIV status.

The results also showed where Chicago MSM received testing. Over a fourth reported testing at a doctor's office.

Light was also shed on Chicago MSM's sex behaviors. For example, 60 percent reported having three or more partners over the past year, and 75 percent had more than one sex partner. Forty-one percent reported having unprotected anal sex, which was more common with a main partner than a casual sex partner.

Nearly two-thirds had no idea of the HIV status of their last casual male partner, and one in

three had unprotected sex with a male whose status was unknown.

Younger MSM frequented gay internet chat rooms at higher rates. For example 36 percent of 18-19 year olds visited such chat rooms more than one time a week. Younger MSM and MSM of color were also more likely to have had sex with a female partner.

Drug use was also evaluated. Among MSM drug users, 77 percent used marijuana, 38 percent used poppers, 33 percent used cocaine, 26 percent used Ecstasy and 20 percent used meth.

The number of sex partners was highest among frequent meth users. Non-meth using MSM had a mean of 7.4 sex partners. Those who used in the past year reported a mean of 16.6 partners, and MSM who used once a week or more reported a mean of 19.9 sex partners. Frequent meth users also reported much higher rates of unprotected anal intercourse in the past year (47 percent, compared with 16 percent of non-users).

With the information gathered, CDPH will develop new prevention strategies and tweak current strategies. Public health officials also hope to address current issues and trends, and evaluate local efforts.

A second phase will be conducted in the MSM community starting around June of this year. It will look at childhood experiences, drug use and public sex environments.

## Clewer murder unsolved for four years

March 24 marked the four-year anniversary of the unsolved murder of Kevin Clewer.

Clewer was killed March 24, 2004. He was found murdered in the bedroom of his apartment on the 3400 Block of North Elaine. Clewer died from multiple stab wounds.

A man possibly named "Fernando" is being sought in connection with the incident. He is described as a male, white Hispanic, 5'7" tall,

with a slim/athletic build, who speaks with a Hispanic or European Spanish accent. Anyone with information should call Chicago Police, Area Three Homicide, 312-744-8261; refer to case number HK-259944.

A Web site, [www.4chicagoev.com](http://www.4chicagoev.com), contains a sketch of the suspect; there is a MySpace page as well.

## Black lesbian author receives award

Chicago-born Black lesbian performance pioneer and award-winning author Sharon Bridgforth received a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Award for her newest work, *delta dandi*.

*Delta dandi*, a multi-disciplinary theater piece, is an NPN Creation Fund Project that is co-commissioned by Women & Their Work in partnership with Center on Halsted and NPN. The piece follows the life of a Black female jazz musician in the '40s.

Bridgforth can be seen at Northwestern University's upcoming Black and Latino Queer Performance Festival Sat., April 19, at 2 and 8 p.m.

See [www.sharonbridgforth.com](http://www.sharonbridgforth.com).

## Black Pride coalition supports Nelson

The International Federation of Black Prides (IFBP) formally announced its support of Charles Nelson's Chicago Windy City Black LGBT-SGL Pride's upcoming Black Pride celebration.

According to IFBP, its board formally transferred the official IFBP-supported Chicago Black Pride from the non-profit Windy City Black Pride to Nelson's current organization, Chicago Windy City Black LGBT-SGL Pride.

Due to a schism that occurred last year in the Black Pride community, Chicago is now home to two Black Pride organizations. Windy City Black Pride ousted its former president and founder,

Charles Nelson, who has since created Chicago Windy City Black LGBT-SGL Pride. Both organizations have plans to throw Black Pride events in July.

The IFBP-supported Black Pride is set for July 2-July 7. Windy City Black Pride will hold its own Black Pride celebration July 3-July 6.

Nelson is a member of IFBP, which is a coalition of 28 Black Pride organizers across the U.S.

In a recent press release, IFBP president Earl Fowlkes said that the coalition is behind Nelson "100 percent."

## Gay tourist book available April 1

The Chicago City Navigaytour, a 42-page gay and lesbian travel guide, will be available April 1.

The guide, in its fourth year, will be available at most tourism offices, as well as other locations such as hotels. This year's edition includes a newly-designed restaurant guide, as well as information about historical sites, nightlife, shopping, entertainment and other attractions.

The guide is supported by organizations such as the Center on Halsted and the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, among others. See [www.citynavigaytour.com](http://www.citynavigaytour.com).

## LGBT parenting presentation at HBHC

Mindy Berkson, founder of Lotus Blossom Counseling, will present a free, informal discussion for LGBT couples who want to have children Wed., March 26, 6-7 p.m., at Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan.

Topics will include choosing fertility centers; maximizing insurance benefits; and financing treatment. For more information, see [www.lotusblossomconsulting.com](http://www.lotusblossomconsulting.com).

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## Anti-War Advocates Get Creative

BY YASMIN NAIR

On the five-year anniversary of the United States' war on Iraq—Wed., March 19—anti-war protestors marched through downtown Chicago, echoing nationwide protests. Departing from tradition, a broad coalition of Chicago's anti-war groups decided to continue the spirit of protest with a day of "creative actions" and civil disobedience on the following day, March 20. According to a spokesperson, Mitchell Szczepanczyk, groups and individuals were encouraged to speak out against the war outside the format of speeches and rallies. By his account, events began at 7 a.m. with a group dropping a banner commemorating Malachi Richter, who self-immolated in protest of the war in 2006, at the Millennium Flame near the Kennedy Expressway.

Reports of various actions throughout the area filtered in constantly, including one about a march at University of Illinois at Chicago, against a laboratory that does research on Raytheon Missile Defense Systems.

During lunchtime, Voices for Creative Non-Violence (VCNV) set up a penny poll. Passersby were offered ten pennies each and asked to decide how they would symbolically fund education, health care, the military, environmental issues, and housing. Food Not Bombs, a group that advocates dumpster diving against homelessness and hunger, offered free lunches. Wary and jaded down-towners appeared perplexed at the free food, but were more enthusiastic about the poll. Vera Banks, a participant, thought it was "...wonderful! It lets them know exactly how we feel about it." Afterwards, a group of seven people including VCNV executive director, Kathy Kelly, was arrested inside the Federal Building.

At 5 p.m., approximately 100 people con-



John Volkening. Photo by Yasmin Nair

verged at Federal Plaza and continued acts of street theater, mixing the somber with the irreverent. Some participated in a snake march with an empty casket to symbolize the dead. Eric, a self-declared "fag-mo," laid out a sheet with eggs and pastel paints, inviting people to color eggs for peace, while others drummed in circles. The threat of an invasion of Iran was evident on much of the signage. The largest was a black banner with the words "Don't Iraq Iran."

Participants recounted the day's events, some of which had led to arrests. John Volkening, a member of VCNV and Christian Peacemaker Teams, described an action outside Congressman Rahm Emanuel's office earlier in the day: "He [Emanuel] continues to keep us chained to this unjust and immoral war and the destruction of Iraq and the destruction of the Iraqi people. So we went over and we chained ourselves to his office on Irving Park Road and we said, 'You have chained us to this unjust and immoral war. Unchain us.'" Volkening and his partner Gerald Paoli were among those arrested and later released.

The events of March 20 marked the first such day of "creative actions." Speaking about the need for more of these, Donte Smith, a member of Gay Liberation Network and Bash Back! said, "Stopping the occupation of Iraq is bigger than just stopping the occupation, much bigger. There're so many other things involved. So everyone finds their own ways [to resist]."

## WRIGHT from cover

Chicago's first church-run HIV/AIDS ministries. Toward the end of 2007, Wright voiced his opposition and disgust of anti-gay violence in a sermon following news of the murder of Trinity's openly gay choir director Donald Young, according to congregation members.

Former congregation member and current minister Sherri Jackson said that although she has "outgrown" Trinity, she had several positive experiences while there.

"I'm grateful for that part of the journey, and to have been under Wright's leadership, and his spiritual guidance, his scholarly teaching of liberation theology and Black theology—that's what I was in search for," Jackson, an out lesbian, said.

She appreciated the church's work in HIV/AIDS ministry, same-gender-loving ministry and on domestic violence issues, noting that many churches avoid addressing those issues from the pulpit.

"It has always been a very welcoming place for LGBT individuals to come," said Ronald Wadley, who has been a member of Trinity since 1987, and has participated in the church's same-gender-loving ministry program. He said he has had nothing but positive experiences with the church and Wright.

Prior to coming to Trinity, Wadley said he was raised in a Baptist church that taught anti-gay messages. He applauds the leadership at Trinity for refusing to "gay-bash from the pulpit."

"I'm a very vocal, very political, African-American gay man, and being able to also go to church and worship God and not have to feel like I'm going to hell because of who I am and who God created me to be is very important," Wadley added. "What I love about Trinity is I never have to step in that door and wonder, 'Oh God, what's the pastor going to say about gay folks today that's not welcoming?'"

Although Wright has been inclusive during his years of service, there have been inconsistent moments. In a 2005 article titled "Maybe I Missed Something!" Wright spoke out against the UCC's decision to endorse same-sex marriage. He wrote, "Are 44 million Americans with no health care insurance less important than 'gay marriage?'" he wrote. "Why aren't Black Christians in an uproar about that? Maybe I am missing something!"

Jackson said she was very upset by the 2005 article. "He and I had discussions about that," she said. "That article, from a political standpoint, if you are out and active, can be taken in many ways."

She said that Wright should have had more dialogue with more political, out people, because LGBT people are also victims of racial disparity.

However, Wright was vocal about his opposition to a federal marriage amendment around the same time. Some say the article has also been taken out of context, and say he wasn't attacking gay marriage so much as stating his priorities for issues impacting the Black community.

Others have voiced their disappointment that Wright never accepted the invitation to join UCC's Open and Affirming Program. Open and affirming churches have publicly stated that they welcome LGBT people.

"It does bother people," Jackson said. "Not everyone, but it does bother some people."

However, according to the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns board member Rev. Mike Schuenemeyer, Trinity's failure to hop on board is very common. In fact, there are several thousand churches that have not accepted the invitation over the years.

According to Schuenemeyer, the Open and Affirming Program is a movement within the denomination, and there has been a steady increase of church's adopting open and affirming policies over the years. However, in order to be recognized as an open and affirming church, a church has to vote in an inclusive policy, and



Ronald Wadley. Photo by Hal Baim

they can do that in a number of ways.

"We have a lot of churches that may offer a welcome, but just don't have it in their culture, in general, to vote an action on anything, much less an action about sexual orientation," Schuenemeyer said.

"Just because they have voted on it doesn't mean that they haven't been working at it, and there haven't been folks in leadership who haven't been trying to help the congregation build toward an understanding of values and fusing their sense of values with what it means to be welcoming to people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual," Schuenemeyer said. "That's a cultural shift, and you have to respect the culture of a congregation."

"When you look at the positive things Jeremiah Wright has said in support of LGBT rights, you can know that he was working his leadership of the church in a very radical way, trying to move things along in that congregation," he continued, adding that he has witnessed sermons of Wright's that have addressed his opposition to a federal ban on same-sex marriage, his opposition to anti-gay violence and his support of those living with HIV/AIDS.

Schuenemeyer recognizes there are congregation members who are frustrated that it isn't moving forward as quickly as they'd like. "But it's also okay to say that steps have been made," said Schuenemeyer. "It may happen at some time, and even if it doesn't, there are people who find themselves welcome at that congregation."

Wadley said Trinity and Wright do not support separatism, and as an out, gay man, he supports Trinity "100 percent." "You have people who don't look like us judging what is being said," Wadley said.

"People just don't get it," he added. "People are judging that he teaches Black theology, which is nothing more than preaching about standing on your own two feet in society. Immediately people don't understand, so they think it's racist. It's not racist, it's believing in one's self. ... Why do we have to follow someone else's framework?"

Jackson described as being "very hurt" by how Wright has been portrayed by the media, as well as the attacks on Obama. "I was there for that service, and the sermon has been totally blown out of context. ... I was very upset by it because of what we have not talked about, and what it's become. It was always going to be a race and gender issue in this election, and now we see how it's really becoming a race issue."

"...They picked five minutes and 15 seconds of a sound bite, without politically and spiritually addressing what the whole sermon was all about and what was he really saying," Jackson added. "Instead, he looks like a madman."

Jackson hopes that some good can come of this, and that much-needed discussions can take place, especially in the Black church, about racial disparities and LGBT issues.

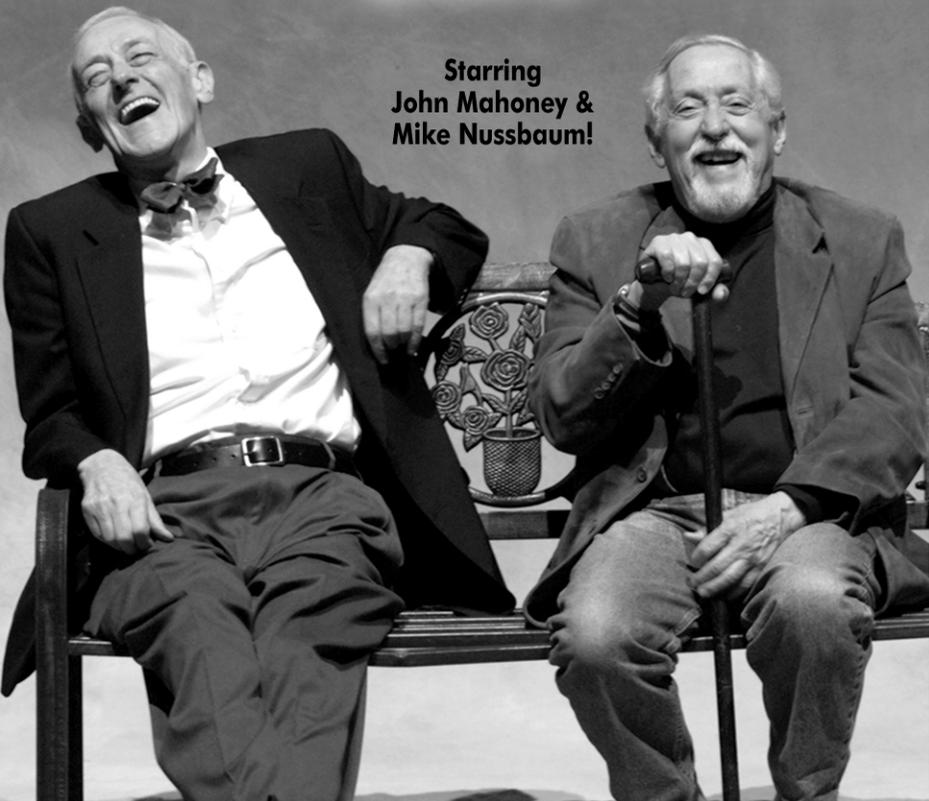
"But we're afraid to do that behind the pulpit," she said.

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# WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

## ILGA-Europe to meet in Vienna

The European branch of the International Lesbian and Gay Association will stage its annual conference in Vienna this year Oct. 30 to Nov. 2.

"The theme ... is 'Think globally, act locally,' and reflects the work of ILGA-Europe and its members on advocating for international human rights standards and practices and their implementation at the local level," the group said.

The Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, Thomas Hammarberg, will take part in the gathering, and Austrian President Heinz Fischer and Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer are serving as honorary organizers.

For more information, see [ilga-europe.org/conference](http://ilga-europe.org/conference).

## Norway plans to legalize same-sex marriage

Norway's government announced plans March 14 to open marriage to same-sex couples. The nation has had a registered-partnership law that gives gay couples the same rights as marriage since 1993.

The government's minister of children and equality, Anniken Huitfeldt, said letting gay couples marry "won't weaken marriage as an institution; rather, it will strengthen it."

"Marriage won't be worth less because more can take part in it," she told *Aftenposten*.

The law would permit same-sex couples to



ILGA-Europe at last year's Budapest gay pride parade. ILGA-Europe photo

marry in churches, adopt children and receive state-funded medical assistance in getting pregnant.

The bill is expected to pass Parliament before summer, although two government ministers—Minister of Local Government Magnhild Meltveit Kleppa and Transport Minister Liv Signe Navarsete—said they oppose the part that would fund assisted fertilization for lesbian couples.

The state Lutheran Church of Norway, which counts 85 percent of the population as members, is conflicted on same-sex marriage and likely will allow parishes to choose whether to perform gay weddings.

Full marriage is open to same-sex couples in Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain and Massachusetts. Numerous nations have civil-union or registered-partnership laws that grant same-sex couples some, most or all rights and obligations of marriage.

## Brit bareback films pulled from market

Two barebacking gay porn movies have been pulled from the British market by their maker after a BBC investigation suggested the performers may have been infected with HIV during filming.

Said the BBC: "Two of the DVDs featured footage from a weeklong shoot during which eight British models had sex with each other in multiple combinations without condoms. Four of those who took part were diagnosed as HIV-positive soon after."

One performer told the BBC he believed the movies showed him becoming infected and that was distressing.

The BBC report claimed that 60 percent of gay porn movies now depict barebacking—anal sex without condoms.

## Venezuelan Supremes nix same-sex marriage

The constitutional arm of Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice ruled March 4 that same-sex marriages cannot be constitutionally authorized even though the Constitution bans discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The court said, "If the 1999 constitutional body opted to protect monogamous matrimony between a man and a woman as the essential nucleus that gives origin to the family in the Venezuelan historic and cultural context, the extension of its [marriage's] effects to common-law unions ... should require, at the least, that these [unions] fulfill the same essential requirements—that they are stable and monogamous unions between a man and a woman who have no marriage impediment ... and that the union is based on the free consent of the parties."

But the tribunal added, "The court wants to emphasize that the constitutional norm does not prohibit or condemn common-law unions between persons of the same sex, which find constitutional cover in the fundamental right of free development of the personality; it sim-

ply does not grant them reinforced protection, which does not constitute a discriminatory act in regard to sexual orientation."

Judge Carmen Zuleta de Merchán dissented from the decision, arguing that the Constitution grants implicit rights to same-sex couples, and that the other justices were influenced by ingrained social and religious prejudices.

The gay group Affirmative Union of Venezuela commented: "We see this decision as an advance with respect to the previous situation in which we had no legal existence, we were invisibilized and our human condition was negated in this society. ... We commit ourselves to continue fighting, with all legal means within our reach, to obtain what should be common sense: the overcoming of discrimination in Venezuelan society."

## 302 couples register in Mexico City

Three hundred two couples have taken advantage of Mexico City's civil-union law since it came into force in March 2007.

Unions have been registered in 15 of the city's 16 boroughs, led by Cuauhtémoc, with 59 unions, and Iztapalapa, with 46.

Some 94 percent of the unions were between people of the same sex.

The law allows gay and straight couples—as well as two friends, roommates or extended family members—to register their relationship and receive spousal rights in areas such as inheritance, pensions, property, co-parenting and medical decisions.

Only one couple has dissolved a civil union, and one union ended when a partner died.

The state of Coahuila, which borders Texas, is the only other locale in Mexico with a civil-union law.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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# NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY AMY WOOTEN

A divorce court judge recently ruled that **former New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey**, who is openly gay, didn't destroy his wife emotionally. McGreevey resigned in 2004 after his affair with a man was brought to light. Dina Matos McGreevey is still allowed to proceed with her claim of marriage fraud, reported the Associated Press. The divorce trial is scheduled to begin early May. In other news, the Newark Star-Ledger recently reported that a former aide revealed that he participated in several three-way romps with the couple before McGreevey became governor.

The **Maryland Senate approved expanded rights for both gay and straight unmarried couples**. The Senate approved, 30-17, to allowing domestic partners to make medical and funeral decisions for each other. The unmarried couples have to meet certain criteria, such as having joint checking accounts or owning property together. The bill will advance to the House for a vote.

**An out lesbian now heads the liberal group, People for the American Way.** Gay City News reported that People for the American Way announced that lesbian civil rights lawyer Kathryn Kolbert is the organization's new president. Kolbert has a partner of 30 years and two kids.

According to Advocate.com, **a lesbian couple who wed in Massachusetts before moving want their marriage annulled in Missouri**. One of the women says that she doesn't recognize the marriage, and is therefore seeking an annulment. The other woman says that their marriage was legal. The couple wed three years ago, shortly before moving to Missouri. Missouri passed a same-sex marriage ban, along with multiple other states, in 2004.

**In Pennsylvania, a Senate bill that okays a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage is one step closer to a Senate floor vote.** The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 10-4 to approve the bill, according to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. The bill will now go to the Appropriations Committee, and if it is approved, will move to the Senate floor for a vote. However, if it is approved, the bill would also need to be passed by the 2009-2010 Legislature before the referendum can be placed on the November 2009 ballot for voters to decide.

**Two Florida legislators introduced legislation that would allow gays and lesbians to adopt.** In Florida, gay and lesbian people cannot adopt, due to a 30-year ban that Gov. Charlie Crist supports. However, they can be foster parents. According to the Associated Press, state Sen. Nan Rich and State Rep. Mary Brandenburg introduced legislation that would allow a judge to decide whether being adopted by a lesbian or gay person or same-sex couple is in the child's best interest.

Democratic National Committee Chair **Howard Dean recently criticized the Washington Blade's continuing coverage of the discrimination lawsuit** of a gay DNC staffer who was fired two years ago. Dean criticized the Blade's coverage, saying he has "given up on the Blade," and that their coverage of the DNC has been "incorrect." Following Dean's critical words, the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association announced its support of the publication as it pursues the story.

Republican Oklahoma State Rep. Sally Kern, who recently made headlines when a YouTube video of her making anti-gay remarks surfaced, refuses to apologize. **Kern, who said homosexuals are a bigger threat to national security than terrorists, told an Associated Press reporter that she refuses to apologize.** She was reported as saying, "I see no reason to apologize for what God says, that homosexuality is a sin." Kern also failed to meet with PFLAG members and other activists at a recent Oklahoma rally. She had been invited to engage in conversation with local activists.

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu** will be the next recipient of the New York-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission's OUTSPOKEN Award. Tutu is a Nobel Peace Prize recipient and a pioneer for human rights. Tutu has done a large amount of human rights work in South Africa. In recent years, he has become very vocal about challenging anti-gay discrimination, likening it to apartheid. Tutu will be presented with the award in San Francisco April 8.

Fort Lauderdale police recently told the Miami Herald that **the murder of Simmie Williams, Jr., an openly gay man who wore female clothing, is not being classified as a hate crime.** However, police also said that they won't rule out his sexual orientation as a possible factor in his death. According to William's family, he identified as gay but wore female clothing. He was shot to death in February in an area known as a hangout for transgender prostitutes.



Sen. Gordon Smith.

## ETHA Inches Forward

BY BOB ROEHR

Action by the Senate would allow states to initiate Medicaid demonstration projects of the Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA). The effort was led by Sens. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and was adopted March 14 as part of the 2009 Budget Resolution.

ETHA has been the holy grail of AIDS advocates for more than a decade. It would allow states, through Medicaid, to offer access to treatment to low-income persons infected with HIV prior to their health deteriorating to full-blown AIDS.

It is modeled after existing programs for breast and cervical cancer, and a component

of SCHIP legislation that would have extended health coverage to more children. SCHIP was vetoed last year by President George W. Bush and Congress fell a few votes short of overriding that veto.

The amendment creates a reserve fund for ETHA. Initially that was set at \$500 million but the final version of the amendment included no dollar figure for the program, it simply allows the budget chairman to fund it if offsetting funds can be identified elsewhere in the budget.

The overall budget resolution passed the Senate 51 to 44, largely on a party line vote.

A companion ETHA bill was introduced in the House last August. However, it was not included in the Budget Resolution that passed that body 212 to 207 on March 13.

It is not clear whether ETHA will survive a conference between the two chambers to work out differences between the two bills. It is even less clear whether Congress eventually will appropriate funds for ETHA demonstration programs by state Medicaid offices.

Under budgetary restraints adopted by the Democrats known as "paygo" [pay as you go], new spending has to be offset by cuts elsewhere or by the imposition of new taxes. The later course is not considered a viable political option in an election year.

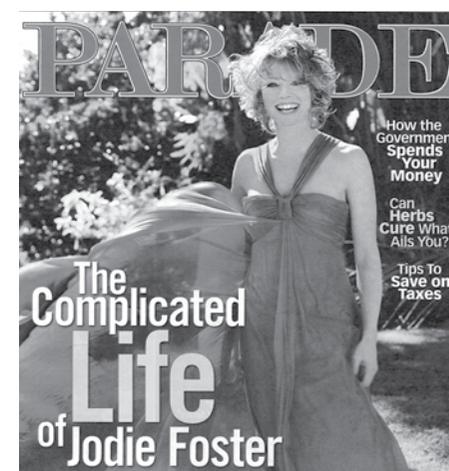
Back in the House, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., was pressing the case for more funding for the Minority AIDS Initiative in a March 19 letter to the Appropriations Committee signed by 79 members. They are asking for \$610 million in fiscal year 2009, an increase of about 50 percent over current funding.

## Jodie Foster in a 'Parade'

The March 16 issue of Parade Magazine featured actress Jodie Foster, and the popular family-oriented publication even took a peek inside Foster's personal life—something that is notoriously off-limits to the media.

Parade commented that late last year, Foster opened the window slightly on her emotional commitments by publicly acknowledging her longtime friend, Cydney Bernard, at a Women in Entertainment breakfast in Los Angeles, during which the actress called Bernard "my beautiful Cydney." Parade also noted that both of Foster's sons, Charles and Kit, have the middle name Bernard.

Foster did not openly discuss her orientation or name her kids' father to Parade—putting the "private" in her private life. When asked why



she has not been in love, Foster responded, "Oh, my life is basically from the head up. I'm definitely not proud of that. I'm very analytical."

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Debra Chasnoff.

**MOMBIAN****Talking with Debra Chasnoff**

BY DANA RUDOLPH

"It definitely surprised me," said director Debra Chasnoff of the decision by the Evesham, N.J., school district to exclude her documentary *That's a Family* from its curriculum, after certain parents objected to its inclusion of gay and lesbian families. In the film, elementary school children explain to their classmates what they'd like them to know about their families. There are kids who were adopted, have multiracial families, are being raised by a single parent or guardian, have divorced parents, or have same-sex parents. "It's been used in hundreds of communities with no fuss," the Academy Award-winning filmmaker notes, adding that it was also screened at the Clinton White House.

The Evesham brouhaha began, as did a similar situation over an LGBT-inclusive storybook in Lexington, Mass. (see *Bay Windows*, 10/4/07), because of a parent's reaction—or overreaction. Chasnoff explained, "Rather than going and talking to his child's teacher, he went to the local NBC affiliate and just made a stink. The media ran with it, and fanned the flames of the controversy. It turned out this person is a fundamentalist, and he's been quoted as saying he's doing God's battle by trying to stop the use of this film. He was very successful in gauging other conservative religious organizations to help with all the frenzy."

The Evesham incident has not, however, stopped her and her media company, Ground Spark (formerly Women's Educational Media), from preparing a re-release of their 1997 film, *It's Elementary*. While *That's a Family* is aimed at children, *It's Elementary* targets parents and educators, documenting how others have addressed LGBT awareness in the classroom. *It's Elementary* "has been used in countless ways to provide training to staff, to be a catalyst for dialog in school communities," Chasnoff explained. She hopes the re-release "will be an opportunity for people all over the country to engage in a dialog about how far we've come and what else we need to do."

The new DVD also includes a companion piece, *It's STILL Elementary*, which looks at why the film was made, people's response, and the situation today. Chasnoff and her team also tracked down six of the original students, and asked whether a lesson in school about LGBT people made a difference in their lives. "All six of them were profoundly affected by the experience,"

Chasnoff found. Five identify as straight, but all are active allies. "Some of them have formed gay-straight alliance networks. One of them goes to school in a very conservative area, and she's constantly speaking up on behalf of LGBT issues and people. One of them ... had been one of the most prejudiced kids in the class. ... Today, he's working with youth, and finds himself in the role of intervening when kids call each other anti-gay names." Another child, filmed in fifth grade, turned out to be gay. He said that during the lesson captured in the film, he began to think "Maybe that's what's going on with me." He came out years later, but "just having that experience in a classroom where a teacher was saying supportive things made a world of difference to him."

Both films are part of Ground Spark's Respect for All Project, which "seeks to create safe, hate-free schools and communities" through documentaries and accompanying educational campaigns. The series also includes *Let's Get Real*, an exploration of name-calling and bullying in middle schools, and *Straightlaced* (in production), about the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. Chasnoff says the key to success in using any of the films is for schools to communicate first with parents about why they're airing them. Showing them without laying the groundwork "could be upsetting to some families that are not on the same page with why it's so important."

She advised screening the films in advance for parents. Parents see kids like their own "talking with brutal honesty about what's going on in school" and get motivated to initiate or support diversity education in their schools. Parents in non-traditional families get excited that classes will be discussing these issues. Chasnoff also recommended inviting families again when the films are shown in the classroom, to make the stories "real and relevant." She reiterated, "Parental involvement and partnership is really key." The Evesham school did not involve parents from the beginning, "so they missed out on having the support of all the parents who would have stood by their side. They got kind of blindsided by a vocal minority who didn't think it was important, or thought it was wrong."

Ground Spark also produces curriculum guides and training programs for each film, but these should be only a starting point, Chasnoff asserted. A screening of *Let's Get Real* can help tackle bullying, for example, but needs follow up. "It's got to be woven into the curriculum on an ongoing basis. People have to see that addressing bullying and name calling and bias is not an adjunct. It's not a discretionary activity that's less important than reading or math or science. It's crucial in order for good reading, math, or science to occur."

For Chasnoff, a mother of two teens, making the films has a very personal component. "My boys have been a real motivation," she said. "I've seen what they go through and it's really fueled my desire to do this."

**It's Elementary and It's STILL Elementary are available through [www.groundspark.org](http://www.groundspark.org). Visit Dana Rudolph at [www.mombian.com](http://www.mombian.com).**

**QUOTELINES**

BY REX WOCKNER

**"AS YOUR PRESIDENT, I WILL USE THE BULLY PULPIT** to urge states to treat same-sex couples with full equality in their family and adoption laws. I personally believe that civil unions represent the best way to secure that equal treatment. But I also believe that the federal government should not stand in the way of states that want to decide on their

own how best to pursue equality for gay and lesbian couples—whether that means a domestic partnership, a civil union, or a civil marriage. Unlike Senator Clinton, I support the complete repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). ... While some say we should repeal only part of the law, I believe we should get rid of that statute altogether. Federal law should not discriminate in any way against gay and lesbian couples, which is precisely what DOMA does." — *Barack Obama in an open letter to the LGBT community, Feb. 28.*

**"I REALLY HAVEN'T [EVER KISSED A WOMAN].**

And if I had, I'd have let you know. I'd have told you years ago." — *Oprah Winfrey on her TV show, Feb. 25.*

**"THE PILOT HAD BEEN PICKED UP FOR WILL & GRACE,** and now it was all about casting. And I was sitting in the Bel Air home of a very famous gay director. And when I told him about the script he said, 'Just make sure you don't make it too butt-fucky.' And I said, 'What does that mean?' And he said, 'You never want the American public to have to think about butt-fucking.' And it could not have been better advice. ... I could have gone full-tilt in the first 13 episodes. But I chose to not do explicit stuff, and edgy, edgy gay stuff. Because I wanted people to stay with it, get comfortable with it." — *Will & Grace co-creator Max Mutchnick to AfterElton.com, March 5.*

**"I COULDN'T WEAR SOME OF MY GIANT CHICKEN OUTFITS** to the Oscar party, A, because I wouldn't fit in them anymore, and B, because, you know, I'm 61 years of age next month and I don't dress as flamboyant as I used to. ... I'm nowhere near the fashion victim that I was a long time ago." — *Elton John to CNN's Larry King, Feb. 25.*

**I'm really just a drag queen.**

—Singer Patti LaBelle



GLAAD photo

**"WE ARE FACING AN UPHILL BATTLE AGAIN** IN countries that you thought you'd crossed, you'd done that, you've covered that territory. Because people think, 'Well, you know, even if I do get HIV, I'm going to be OK.' They don't realize the toxicity of the drugs they have to take. And I just think it's so reprehensible, with the information available to them. But they do it and so we have to help them." — *Elton John to CBS News, Feb. 25.*

**"I'M REALLY JUST A DRAG QUEEN.** I'm flamboyant, over the top. I have big hair and the clothes. Maybe that's why I'm so popular with the gay community!" — *Singer Patti LaBelle to Instinct magazine, March issue.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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VOL. 23, No. 28, March 26, 2008

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REV. IRENE  
 MONROE

## If Obama can throw his pastor under the bus, what will he do to us?

When the religious narrative you tell about your life to the American public is revealed to be vastly different than the one you actually lived, you have more than a credibility problem- you have a dilemma as Obama is finding out.

And the dilemma is not just that Obama's religious narrative is fictitious, but so too is the media spin on his pastor.

While the moral high ground to address the public's shock with Rev. Jeremiah Wright's condemnations on America's foreign and domestic policies appeared to be Obama's address on race, Obama actually ran aground with many African American Christians by anchoring the public's outrage and his fear of losing the presidential bid on the back of one of this nation's most revered African American ministers.

"He's used Jeremiah, and Trinity is his strongest base. He handled the media abysmally, and the uncle reference was demeaning. Many of us said we saw it coming," a member from Trinity told me in anonymity to not have the press come after him.

Rev. Wright was the man who brought Obama to Christ, presided over his nuptials baptized him and his daughters, and was the inspiration for his bestseller, "The Audacity of Hope."

And while Obama has now denounced Rev. Wright's incendiary remarks, after twenty years of hearing them, suspicion nonetheless still surfaces about his professed faith as a Christian.

Although religion came to Obama late in life, and he was reared in a non-religious household, his religious convictions,—“he say?”—were formed during his 20s at Trinity while a community organizer working with local churches on the South Side of Chicago.

As a central, powerful and revered institution within the African-American community, the Black Church captivated Obama's attention. He says he came to understand “the power of the African-American religious tradition to spur social change.” However, how much Obama really covets the power of the Black Church for his own political aggrandizement, rather than for its religion, now raise questions in the minds of many black Christians since his address.

While MSNBC talk-show host Tucker Carlson was the first to publicly suggest Obama's faith is “suddenly conspicuous,” suggesting that Obama has only recently begun addressing his religious background as part of “a very calculated plan on the part of the Democratic Party to win” religious voters in the 2008 presidential race, the suspicion is now looming even larger.

If Obama, however, is indeed using religion to win votes, he unfortunately placed himself in a difficult quagmire—not only with LGBTQ and liberal voters, but also by still being a member of Trinity. Why? Because he worships in a conservative black church within a liberal denomination. And Trinity is provisionally opened to the idea of same sex marriage.

In July 2005, the UCC General Synod overwhelmingly passed a Resolution of Marriage Equality. But in August 2005, Wright spoke against the Synod's position causing my LGBTQ parishioners to leave.

“Please tell me what is going on here? Why does it appear we are under attack? Maybe I am reacting, but this seems to be even from the folks we admire in the church that black same-gender loving issues are not important. We are still seem as gay and white,” stated a gay member of Trinity.

In the church's magazine “The Trumpet” his his article “Maybe I Missed Something!” shows how LGBTQ issues are not a priority in his present-day prophetic social gospel intended to ameliorate the social conditions of all God's African-American children.

“While our denomination grappled with how to address that human problem, the denomination also, at that Synod, voted to ordain a homosexual. Guess which item made the newspapers? Maybe I missed something!”

And in his closing tirades on the issues, Wright stated this: “Are 44 million Americans with no health care insurance less important than ‘gay marriage?’ Why aren't Black Christians in an uproar about that? Maybe I am missing something!”

When the article came out in light of the United Church of Christ's stance on ordaining and marrying LGBTQ people, it was disheartening for many to know that Pastor Wright broke rank with his liberal denomination to stand in solidarity with a more conservative Black Church position.

“Folks were very hurt by his remarks he made in the Trumpet article. I wanted to know where he really stood with us on same-gender loving issues. The chair of the same-gender family wrote him if the church will address black heterosexism and black homophobia. He said we have done that over the thirty years and that his sermons should speak for his support on these issues. In his articles he said he was not putting same-gender loving person's down. Just showing how society only appears to be focused on those issues and not the issues that impact Black issues. I reminded him I am a black female

out lesbian. I do not choose to be one or the other which is all of my being,” stated a lesbian member of Trinity

I wonder now how much of Obama views on gay civil right is shaped by Trinity? Or, if not, does he use those Christian views to avoid giving us our full civil right?

Or perhaps Obama is playing us as much as he has played his pastor?!

So it is also not surprising when Obama appeared on CNN's “Situation Room” with Wolf Blitzer, Obama stood where his pastor does on the issue.

“Well, I think that marriage has a religious connotation in this society, in our culture, that makes it very difficult to disentangle from the civil aspects of marriage. And as a consequence, it would be extraordinarily difficult and a distraction to try to build a consensus around marriage for gays and lesbians. What we can do is form civil union that provide all the civil rights that marriage entails to same-sex couples. And that is something that I have consistently been in favor of. And I think that the vast majority of Americans don't want to see gay and lesbian couples discriminated against when it comes to hospital visitation and so on.”

Many African-American Christians are now suspecting Obama of using the “race card” to win their votes, at the expense of pitting their interests against gays.

For example, when he ran for the U.S. Senate in 2004, Obama campaigned at the Salem Baptist Church on Chicago's South Side. It's the 22,000-member black mega-church of Rev. James Meeks, who has called homosexuality an evil sickness. Outside of the hallowed walls of church the Rev. James Meeks is State Sen. James Meeks.

Obama knew to pander to his base. When news first got out about Wright's Afrocentric theology and Sunday sermons that disparagingly speak ill of whites and Israel, Obama began immediately to distance himself. Yet these same sermons were not a problem for Obama when they were spiritually nurturing him into becoming a public figure. Now Obama will no longer continue to speak and write about the special relationship with his pastor, because it has run afoul of his ambitions.

In explaining his relations to the media about Wright, Obama described him as a crazed uncle we all have in our family. And in his address Obama stated that he “can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother.”

However, I beg to differ. There is a distinct difference between the biological family you are born into and the church family you choose to worship with.

And so too is there a distinct difference between telling the truth to the American public and telling us a lie.

If Obama can throw his pastor under the bus, what will he do to LGBTQ voters on his way to the White House?

## March 27 budget hearing

Dear Editor,

As local elected officials, we have an obligation to provide our constituents with constant communication on the actions of our state government, especially when it comes to our state's finances.

This year, lawmakers and the governor will have to make some very difficult decisions to close a deficit that fiscal experts estimate at \$750 million forcing us to make hard decisions about how taxpayer dollars are spent while still preserving vital services.

We are hosting a regional state budget hearing this month to bring state government to the

people, provide a greater understanding of Illinois' current financial condition and give local residents the opportunity to offer their views on what state funding priorities should be. We will hear from community organizations, local officials, health care facilities and school districts as we work towards crafting a responsible state budget.

The budget hearing for our area will take place Thurs., March 27 at 6 p.m. in the Olson Auditorium of Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, 836 W. Wellington. We encourage anyone who is concerned about the condition of our state's budget to attend this hearing. For more information, please call Jon Paul Valadez at 312-814-4887.

We look forward to seeing you March 27.

Sincerely,

State Representatives

Rich Bradley – 40th District

John D'Amico – 15th District

John Fritchey – 11th District

Greg Harris – 13th District

Lou Lang – 16th District

Joseph Lyons – 19th District

## LETTER



# GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Orlando production design model by Andrew Hays and Kimm Kovac

## 'ORLANDO' BLOOMS

Handel's Orlando is one of Chicago Opera Theater's offerings this season. See page 24.

### THEATER

Blade runners. Page 12.



### MOVIES

Peirce-ing the veil. Page 20.



### DANCE

A thing of 'Beauty'. Page 14.



## Bill T. Jones Starts a New 'Chapter'

BY ANDREW DAVIS

It speaks to Bill T. Jones' iconic status that he is revered by so many different groups of people—including dance enthusiasts, the African-American community and the LGBT demographic. Part of the reason he is idolized is because his works with the New York City-based Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company (co-founded in 1982 with his late life and business partner) still push the boundaries of modern dance. The other facet involves Jones' own seemingly regal bearing, composed of curiosity, intellectual authority and his courage to come forward as a Black, gay, HIV-positive individual.

On Wed-Sat., April 9-12, Jones will present his newest work, Chapel/Chapter (which covers three dramatic stories involving violence and murder), at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago. Jones talked with Windy City Times about Zane, the evolution of dance and the Tony Award he won last year for choreographing Spring Awakening.

**Windy City Times: Could you talk about what Arnie [Zane] was really like?**

Bill T. Jones: I met him when I was 19 and he was about 20 or 21. To say he was dynamic would be an understatement. He was motivated, and had strong opinions and passions. He was very organized, and was husband and wife to me.

He was a bit of a Napoleon; he had this vision of taking over the world. He wanted a life in the suburbs at a time when all of our cool friends were living in the East Village, which was a very wise thing on his part.

He came from an Italian-American father and a Jewish mother who met each other in the Bronx in the '40s; they loved each other madly. His

mother was from a family of rabbis, so there was a very strong Jewish identity, but it was somehow mediated by his father. The father converted to Judaism and changed his last name to Zane because [the former surname] sounded too Gentile—I think that's the way the story goes. Arnie had an elastic identity. There was a point literally when he was going through a spiritual phase, and he was wearing a Star of David and a Christian cross at the same time.

I loved him madly—I really, really loved him—and some of the most important things I discovered I did with him by my side. Taste in decor, taste in art, taste in food—all of those things were developed with him.

**WCT: Let's talk about your personality. You've always stood out to me as being proud. Has this [strength in character] always been a part of you or did you have some sort of epiphany one day?**

BTJ: I think "proud" is one way to put it. By temperament, I think I'm an introspective extrovert. Coming from a very large family—12 kids—one had to really struggle for identity, and I understood that one way to [achieve] that was through language. Also, I had the good fortune—unlike my oldest siblings—to be raised in the North instead of the South, so I was

## Windy City Times' Spring Theater Preview

allowed to learn how to speak, and I was expected to express myself. Like I said in [Jones' memoir] Last Night on Earth, one was expected to speak a certain way at the predominantly white schools we attended, but when we came home we were expected to not put on airs.

So, as a young child, you had to know what was a usable personality for the outside world and what was an authentic personality. Having to reconcile those two problems all my life had me constantly alert. By the time I started making art as a young man at 19, I was quite belligerent—and maybe that's what you mean by "proud." I've always been interested in ideas, I question everything and I do believe that there is an essential self—and an essential self has to be defended, and sometimes that does feel like a "fist in the air" position, less so now that I'm in my middle years. This is another way of saying that the person inside was and

is very vulnerable—a person with a deep sense of insecurity but a great capacity for love and, I dare say, forgiveness.

**WCT: When I talked with choreographer Joel Hall a couple years ago, he commented that "there's a discrepancy between Blacks and white in terms of opportunities and jobs [in dance]." How do you feel about that statement?**

BTJ: Let's put it this way: You may be

correct, but a young Black male [who is] halfway well-trained and disciplined can write [his] own ticket. The dance world is hungry for males, first of all, but also young Black ones; they are much in demand.

Having said that, I know that there are all sorts of prejudice against our intellectual capabilities. It's one thing to be a young stud on stage, dancing and sweating in somebody else's work. It's something else altogether to get the world to take your ideas—your intellectual engagement—seriously. That's the biggest gap I've found there.

You have to realize that, in general, dance is not a valued commodity in the culture, no matter what they say about [the TV shows] Dancing with the Stars or So You Think You Can Dance? Anyone who goes into the dance world is going to realize that it's going to be a very difficult career, there will be few rewards and one has to fight to make a middle-class living, never mind establish a highly individualistic and idiosyncratic way of creating art.

**WCT: It's interesting you mentioned Dancing with the Stars because, for some people, that's their idea of what dancing is.**

BTJ: Well, having never seen the show—I've only read about it and shuddered—I think that it's unfortunate. For me, dance came in the footsteps of people who were rebelling against the classical modern dance that was defined somewhere between the 1930s and 1960s. There was a generation of avant-garde artists—primarily white, middle-class young people—that began to question [established] notions of what dance was. They were anti-technique, anti-glamour and [against] the position that early modern dance took.

My generation came after that generation of modern dance. We were more open to things like technique, theatrical presentation and glamour—and we were very conscious of trying to make careers. And the generation that came after



Bill T. Jones. Photo by Kevin Fitzsimons

Turn to page 24



Los Desaparecidos. Photo by Beth Cummings

## Lovers on the Lam: Barbara Lhota Talks about Los Desaparecidos

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Don't be fooled by the title. *Los Desaparecidos* is not a grim sociodrama recounting atrocities in South American dictatorships. In this case, it is the "vanished" who engineer their own disappearance in Barbara Lhota's swashbuckling romance set amid the repressive society of 16th-century Spain.

*Los Desaparecidos* is the winner of an international playwrighting competition, now in its second year, sponsored by the Joining Sword And Pen branch of the Babes With Blades—an all-female performance group dedicated to expanding opportunities for women in the field of stage combat. The eligible scripts were required to include, in addition to plenty of swordplay

and fisticuffs, a replication of the scene depicted in the painting by José Ribera entitled *Duelo de Mujeres* or *Duel of Women*. (The image chosen for last year's contest, based on 19th-century artist Emile Bayard's *Affair of Honor*, resulted in several actresses stripping to the waist before proceeding to slash at each other with rapiers.)

The challenge for Lhota, then, was to forge a coherent dramatic narrative incorporating a battle in a public square, fought by two women garbed in classical robes and armed with shields and *espadas* (Spanish single-swords), while a crowd of surly commoners bear witness to the altercation. And since the Babes With Blades troupe boasts a number of trained female fighters—none of whom would be happy at being excluded from the martial action—this must not be an isolated spectacle, but one of many complications leading to the clash of steel on steel.

Two sisters of noble birth comprise the central characters in our play—Isabel Garcia de la Barrera and Diana Garcia Diaz, the former married and the latter, widowed. Isabel's straitlaced mother-in-law has been demanding grandchild-

ren, but her husband cannot bring himself to fulfill his marital duties, instead spending his time with his "business associates" in the city. Compounding his young wife's predicament is her curious attraction to her newly-hired maid-servant, the hoydenish Eliana. In the meantime, Diana has her own problems, having fallen for her Muslim dressmaker, Antonio—a match likewise forbidden, despite the suitor's having long ago converted to Christianity.

**Windy City Times: Are you, yourself, trained in stage combat?**

Barbara Lhota: Not at all. When I was in graduate school at Brandeis University, David Woolley came to teach stage combat to the acting students. Unfortunately, it wasn't offered to the playwrights. We were expected to analyze the geometric structure of the absurdists and things like that.

**WCT: You were part of the graduate playwrighting program in grad school, then?**

BL: I wrote my first play when I was an acting major undergraduate at Wayne State University. It was later performed in the studio with my roommate directing. The professors seemed more impressed with my writing than with my acting, and frankly, I liked it better, too.

**WCT: How did you hear about the Joining Sword And Pen competition? And what attracted you to try writing a play with such strict prerequisites?**

BL: My partner, Lisa [Hecceg], has worked with the Babes throughout the years, so I've seen their shows, and I think their mission is totally empowering! I was at one of their benefit events, when Dawn [Alden, founder of the troupe] held up this Spanish painting and announced a call for scripts inspired by this image.

**WCT: And you jumped at the chance?**

BL: Oh, no! I didn't consider myself the appropriate playwright for this contest at all. Some of my plays had physical confrontations in them, but never sword fights—and certainly not in the context of a full-length period play.

**WCT: So did you start out to write a fight play, or did you write a romantic comedy and then add the violence?**

BL: Actually, it all came together symbiotically. I was writing specifically for the Babes, yes. But when I began reading about 16th- and 17th-century Spain, I was struck by the similarities to things happening today in the world community—especially the persecution of Jews, Muslims and homosexuals by religious groups looking to enhance their political power. Then I asked myself, "Why would two women fight?" Growing up in Detroit, I saw lots of schoolyard fights, and none of them were over boys. They were mostly about a friend's feelings being hurt, or somebody "messing" with somebody's sister or brother. That's when I decided that the characters and dynamics in my play would focus on siblings. I could easily imagine a woman fighting for her sister.

**WCT: So the play is based in historical fact?**

BL: It's true that homosexuals were not only suppressed, but punished severely, at that time.

Where I took some liberties was in the equating of lesbianism with witchcraft, so that poor Isabel has to undergo exorcism. It's more likely that in the 16th century, homosexuality in women, as opposed to men, would probably go unnoticed almost altogether.

**WCT: How have your gay sensibilities affected your artistic vision?**

BL: I think everything about me—being from Detroit, being the youngest child, being short—affects my artistic vision in some way. The play deals with being gay, but it deals more with intolerance and the need to overcome intolerance. The prejudice of 16th- [and] 17th-century Christians against Muslims, the post 9/11 prejudice in our own country, the hostility faced by my own sisters' interracial relationships during the 1970s and '80s—they aren't so different.

**WCT: So we've got a play with three gay and two het lovers. They're all being helped, or hassled, by well-meaning relatives. They can be imprisoned, starved or burnt at the stake. Everybody waves sharpened blades at each other on the slightest provocation. And it all ends happily?**

BL: [Laughs] It sounds so dark and dreary, doesn't it? But I see it as more of a romantic adventure. I set out to make it entertaining—and there's a lot of humor—but I still wanted to explore some serious issues. I hope that's what I've done, even with the shifts in tone.

## CRITICS' PICS

**The Beastly Bombing**, Trap Door Theatre, through April 26. This post-9/11 musical comedy about dastardly terrorists, written in the manner of a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta, comes to us from Los Angeles and sounds just quirkily enough to be interesting. JA

**The Misanthrope**, Greasy Joan & Co., Athenaeum Theatre, through April 5. This updating of Moliere's cutting social comedy brilliantly taps into the die-hard fan base of Bravo TV. The great acting (particularly of Kevin Cox) also makes it a must-see. SCM

**Slipping**, The Side Project; through April 1. Daniel Talbott's world premiere drama about a self-destructive gay teenager has been extended, no doubt due to the incisive performances of the cast. Also the male nudity probably helps. SCM

**A Steady Rain**, Royal George Theatre, through April 27. We've seen cops with a death wish before, but playwright Keith Huff finds gripping tragedy in this brutally-stark deposition by squad-car partners acted by Randy Steinmeyer and Peter DeFaria. MSB

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The House of Yes. Photo courtesy of Will Act for Food

#### THEATER REVIEW

## The House of Yes

Playwright: Wendy Macleod

At: Will Act for Food at Cornservatory,  
4210 N. Lincoln

Phone: 773-327-9726; \$10-\$18

Runs through: April 13

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

You've got to admire the altruistic bent of Will Act for Food. Not only does this non-profit organization produce theater in Chicago and Boston, they also collect donations for area food banks. (Be sure to bring a non-perishable food item for a discounted ticket.)

So it's with some regret when I say that Will Act for Food's production of Wendy Macleod's *The House of Yes* didn't do it for me. But then I'm not a fan of the play itself.

Most people know *The House of Yes* from its 1997 movie starring Parker Posey, the then-darling of the indie-film world. In addition to Posey's crazy-ass performance of the Kennedy-assassination-obsessed Jackie-O Pascal, the film is also brightened by Tori Spelling and Freddie Prinze, Jr.

More crucially, the film is able to illustrate the imperious wealth and wackiness to the status-obsessed Pascal family, who owns a Washington D.C., mansion next door to the Kennedys. This element gets lost when you produce the play on a shoestring budget in a tiny storefront theater.

Macleod's approach to *The House of Yes* also feels like she's aping the weird style of Christopher Durang (but without the same level of cleverness or profundity). And, like Durang, that arch and mock style of comedy is very hard to convincingly pull off.

The cast assembled by director Scott Pasko do their very best, but there is a unifying spark to the production that is missing. Catherine Dughi does best dramatically as the unassuming fiancé, Lesly, who gets squeezed through an emotional wringer when she discovers her fiancée, Marty (a very handsome Justin Speer), has been involved in an incestuous relationship with his mentally unstable twin sister Jackie-O (Lacy Coil, who plays crazy as if from a prompt book). Andrew Jordan, as college dropout Anthony, drags down the comedy by being too lethargic, while Carrie Corrigan looks far too young to be the ever-drunk Pascal family matriarch.

In terms of what Macleod is trying to say with *The House of Yes*, she does point out that some families can get away with anything purely due to their enormous wealth and privilege. But why she has to drag in incest and fratricide is a head-scratcher.

Alas, Will Act for Food's uneven production of *The House of Yes* can't overcome Macleod's crazy situations and frustrating characters. It's a game attempt, but that's it.

#### THEATER REVIEW

## A Man of No Importance

Playwright: music by Stephen Flaherty,  
lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, book  
by Terrence McNally

At: Bailiwick Repertory Theatre at  
Bailiwick Arts Center, 1229 W. Belmont  
Phone: 773-883-1090; \$25-\$35  
Runs through: April 20

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Oscar Wilde was Irish by birth, which meant that beneath the cavalier demeanor he affected for the stiff-upper-lip Brits who first lauded and then loathed him, there lurked a sentimental streak as wide as the river Shannon. This contradiction provided the foundation for Barry Devlin's 1994 screenplay, and later, Terrence McNally's text for this 2002 musical play recounting the liberation of a humble middle-aged homosexual transit conductor enamored of the literary icon with the "biting wit and the heart of a poet". When our closeted hero's community-theater troupe's proposed production of Wilde's *Salomé* (pronounced "suh-LOW-mee", to rhyme with "spumoni", by the St. Imelda players) runs



A Man of No Importance. Photo by David Zak

afoul of the parish hall guardians, he is forced to reconsider his view of the world, and the choices he has made in his life.

This is a premise that could easily lead to an evening of love-that-dare-not whimpering, but McNally is not about to let it. Nor are composer Stephen Flaherty and lyricist Lynn Ahrens, who, in addition to the requisite wistful ballads, attack the potential gloom with an array of lively ditties celebrating the power of art—whether found in Victorian verse, or at the corner pub—to elevate its participants above the restrictions of their mundane experiences, and to unite them in affirmation of universal human values. Gradu-

ally, our shy hero comes to learn that his is not the only yearning forbidden by a repressive society, but that friendship ultimately triumphs over dogmatic pettiness.

Musical Director Robert Ollis and his four-member orchestra wring every bit of ethnic poignancy from melodies brimming with vigor while sparkling with romantic delicacy. (Don't be ashamed to cry at Rus Raineer's sweet, but never maudlin, elegy to marital affections.) Scott Ferguson directs a first-rate cast for this Bailiwick Repertory production, led by Kevin D. Mayes as the would-be Aesthete, with full-bodied support forthcoming from Nancy Kolton as his devout sister and Chuck Sisson as his dogmatic nemesis. But starwatchers should take special note of Ryan Lanning's fetching portrayal of the smarter-than-expected object of desire. If this wholesome lad's tour through "The Streets Of Dublin" doesn't send you home vowing to book tickets for a vacation in that city right away, you've no ear for poetry.

Reviews continue  
on page 17...

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## Spring Dance Preview

BY ERIC EATHERLY

Chicago's dance scene is revving up for a busy spring, full of many great performances by local groups and some fantastic visiting companies. Here is a sampling of dance performances to look forward to:

Very timely for Earth Month, modern dance ensemble **The Seldoms** premieres *Monument* April 3-12 at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn. This evening-length work, choreographed by Artistic Director Carrie Hanson, explores the idea of the trash landfill as a "monument" to society's addiction to consumption and waste. 312-328-0303; \$12-\$18.

**American Ballet Theatre** (ABT) gets audiences in the mood for spring with the Chicago premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty*, with staging by artistic director Kevin McKenzie, former ABT ballerina Gelsey Kirkland and Michael Chernov. ABT brings this classic fairy tale about the beautiful Princess Aurora and the evil sorceress Carabosse to life in a lavish all-new production. Seven performances only, April 9-13, at the Civic Opera House, 20 N. Wacker; 312-902-1500; \$30-\$110.

The Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago, presents the latest creation from the **Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company**, *Chapel/Chapter*, April 9-12. Through a seamless blend of dance, music, text and video, *Chapel/Chapter* addresses the news media, the judicial process and the prison system in an evocative tale of violence, morality and humanity. 312-397-4010; \$28-\$40.

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre** makes its annual spring visit to Chicago's Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress, April 16-20. Each of the company's seven performances will feature a different program, with highlights including Maurice Béjart's innovative reworking of Fokine's *Firebird*; the company premiere of Robert Bat-



**American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Gene Schiavone**

tle's sensuous *Unfold*; and the company revival of Talley Beatty's 1959 *The Road of the Phoebe Snow*, among other great pieces. 312-902-1500; \$30-\$79.

**Zephyr Dance** presents its spring concert April 17-19 at the Holstein Park Auditorium, 2200 N. Oakley. The program will include the Chicago premiere of Emily Stein's *An Atlas of Here*, a work for four dancers and numerous rolls of masking tape that explores geography, travel and memory. In addition, Artistic Director Michelle Kranicke will preview excerpts from her newest work-in-progress, *Erased Dance*, exploring how women are depicted in visual art. 773-489-5069, \$10.

**The Joffrey Ballet** presents a program showcasing the beauty and power of contemporary ballet in "American Moderns," May 14-25 at the Auditorium Theatre. The Joffrey dancers show off their athleticism in four pieces, including Paul Taylor's hip and elegant *Cloven Kingdom*; Mehmet Sander's *Inner Space*, a funny and harrowing work for three dancers in a Plexiglass Box; Lar Lubovitch's "...smile with my heart";

and The Joffrey premiere of Twyla Tharp's *Waterbaby Bagatelles*, featuring dancing from the company's men lit by ever-shifting arrangements of fluorescent bulbs. 312-902-1500; \$25-\$140.

**Hedwig Dances** opens its 24th spring season at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts May 16-18. The company presents two works by Founder/Artistic Director Jan Bartoszek, including the world premiere of *Earthly Tongues*, which explores the rich terrain of ancestry, memory and the human tendency to fantasize about individual and collective origins. Also on the program is the revival of *Ache of the Arc*, a quintet piece performed on a set of ladders and walls that contrasts the human capacity for both extraordinary kindness and profound cruelty. 773-871-0872; \$15-\$22.

**Salt Creek Ballet** (SCB) brings its acclaimed staging of *Alice in Wonderland* to the McAninch Arts Center of College DuPage, 425 Fawell, Glen Ellyn, May 17-18. This three-act ballet features guest artist Alexander Kozadayev as the Cheshire Cat and a corps of over 40 dancers, with imaginative choreography by SCB Artistic Director Sergey Kozadayev and Susan O'Connell. 630-942-4200; \$18-\$28.

Celebrating National Tap Dance Day, the **Chicago Human Rhythm Project** presents "Windy City Rhythms" May 22-24 at the Vittum Theatre, 1012 N. Noble. These tap dance performances will feature Guillem Alonso and his Spanish ensemble *Tap Olé*, the Huntley Hoofers, *Tre Dumas' JustLiTeN*, The Cartier Collection, Reggio "the Hooper" McLaughlin, Lane Alexander's group *BAM!*, Jimmy Payne Jr. and Nico Rubio's *ILNoise*. 773-281-1825; \$15-\$25.

Rounding out the spring season will be **Same Planet Different World Dance Theatre's** "Vintage Modern," June 5-8 at Link's Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield. This evening of evocative, humorous, and powerful contemporary dance will include the company premiere of Shirley Mordine's *Thin Ice*, as well as choreography by Zachary Whittenburg, Colleen Halloran, Faye Driscoll and Ashleigh Leite. 773-281-0824; \$12-\$15.

## Measure for Measure

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

With all the theater, opera and dance filling this Spring Theater Preview issue, we can offer only a short edition of *Measure for Measure* to highlight upcoming important musical events.

**Carmen**, Chamber Opera Chicago, March 28 and 30. It's a fully staged yet intimate production of Bizet's sweaty, passionate opera, presented with video imagery and Spanish dance courtesy of Flamenco diva Libby Komaiko. Sung in English with chorus, children's chorus and orchestra. Athenaeum Theatre; 312-902-1500 (Ticketmaster) or 773-935-6860; \$20-\$35.

**Music of the Isles: Songs from Britain and Ireland**, Chicago Chamber Choir, March 30 (Chicago), March 31 (Evanston) and April 4 (Chicago). A celebration of music from across the pond, exploring English choral music of Byrd, Purcell, Finzi and Vaughan Williams plus folk songs, ballads, sea shanties, and pub songs of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Three different locations, call for details; 312-409-6890; \$20.

**The St. Matthew Passion**, Music of the Baroque, March 31. Bach's greatest choral work is performed by one of the nation's premier Baroque ensembles, joined by the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus and soloists. Choral forces and double orchestra's are under Jane Glover's masterful baton. You want the Power and the Glory? This is it. Harris Theater; 312-334-7777; \$30-\$75.

Read the full article at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

## Dead Man's Cell Phone

by Sarah Ruhl  
directed by associate artist Jessica Thebus

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Photo: Carol Rosegg



Avenue Q. Photo by Carol Rosegg

## Stage Door Jonny's Spring Picks

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

We know it hasn't much looked or felt like spring but, nonetheless, it's time to shake off the sluggishness of winter and go out to see a show. Fortunately, the always-busy Chicago theater scene offers a wide variety of choices among plays, musicals and shows of special interest to LGBT audiences. Here, for spring, Windy City Times Theater Editor Jonathan Abarbanel recommends seven plays to applaud, five musicals to sing and five shows that shout "Out!" Shows in each category are listed in order of production.

### Plays

**Candles to the Sun**, Eclipse Theatre at Victory Gardens Greenhouse, through May 4. Before he called himself Tennessee, 26-year-old Thomas Lanier Williams had his first full-length play produced by the semi-professional Mummies Theatre in his hometown, of St. Louis. Good? Bad? Poetic? Gay? Immature? Judge for yourself this Depression Era drama of striking coal miners and social violence.

**A Passage to India**, Vitalist Theatre and Premiere Theatre at Theatre Building Chicago, April 8-May 18. This is the U.S. premiere of an adaptation of E. M. Forster's complex 1924 novel of India and empire. Although Forster and adapter Martin Sherman (Bent) are gay, the novel has no obvious LGBT content. However, the novel's condemnation of British colonialism can be seen to fit many types of social prejudice.

**Around the World in 80 Days**, Lookingglass Theatre, April 16-June 1. The popular Jules Verne novel of whirlwind adventures while circling the globe, circa 1870, should perfectly suit Lookingglass. Expect them to incorporate circus arts in a robust physical and visual style as the tale passes from England to India to Wild West America.

**Not a Game for Boys**, A Red Orchid Theatre, April 18-June 1. This is the U.S. premiere of a play about the world of competition ping-pong. Yes, we said ping-pong, which really separates the men from the boys, according to this reportedly intense and slightly dark comedy reflecting on topics ranging from testosterone-induced conflict to geopolitics.

**10 Virgins**, Chicago Dramatists, April 24-June 1. This world premiere by Laura Jacqmin combines elements of folklore, reality, fantasy and fairy tales in a story of 10 girls who live independently in a rustic swampland. But what happens when they venture into the world outside, and come in contact with Jenny Greenteeth, a witch?

**The Mark of Zorro**, Lifeline Theatre, May 2-June 22. Here it comes, the annual summertime treat from Lifeline—always a costume romance or a thumping-good mystery. This time, it's a world premiere adaptation of the original 1919 Zorro

story, complete with swordfights, Spanish music and—we're told—flying horsemen!

**A Taste of Honey**, Shattered Globe Theatre at Victory Gardens Greenhouse, May 18-July 5. This astonishing character study of a young, pregnant English teenager made a celebrity of its 17-year-old author, Shelagh Delaney, when produced in 1958. Realistic and bittersweet, it's among the first plays with a major gay character portrayed in a positive—if stereotyped—way, the young heroine's only friend, Geoffrey.

### Musicals

**The Drowsy Chaperone**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, April 1-13. Don't fall asleep while listening to old show tunes or the show might come to life—to delightful life—as it does in this Tony Award-winning musical that recalls the romantic flavor of 1920s song-and-dance shows. Presented by Broadway In Chicago for a short stay.

**Nine**, Porchlight Music Theatre at Theatre Building Chicago, April 4-May 18. Federico Fellini's famous film about an Italian film director's mid-life crisis doesn't seem likely material for Broadway but—as adapted by Mario Fratti (translator), Arthur Kopit (book) and Mary Yeston (music and lyrics)—it's been a hit many times over. Now the award-winning Porchlight team gives Nine its own, intimate touch.

**The Lesser Assassins**, Corn Productions at the Conservatory, April 18-May 17. What do we know about this show? Almost nothing. But the idea intrigues us. A musical, by Kitty Morland, that asks the questions "Mistake or murder? What happens when you're just not careful enough?" Expect cheeky and non-PC material from Corn Productions.

**Avenue Q**, Cadillac Palace Theatre, May 21-June 7. At long last, the surprise 2004 Tony Award-winning musical reaches Chicago, with its satire on Sesame Street that includes gay puppets and gay puppeteers. It may seem child-like but this one's for adults.

**Gigi**, Light Opera Works at Cahn Auditorium (Evanston), June 6-15. "The Night They Invented Champagne" and "Thank Heaven for Little Girls" are among the bushel of tuneful songs penned by Lerner & Loewe for this famous movie musical, set in Paris during the *belle époque*. This stage adaptation now gets the Light Opera Works treatment.

### LGBT shows

**The Ville**, Mary's Attic, open run. Season two is off and running for this decidedly LGBT tongue-in-cheek soap opera of life in Andersonville, offering a new episode each month. It's performed Monday nights only. It doesn't matter if you don't know who the characters are: there's sure to be a type you recognize as, well, you!

**Blithe Spirit**, Oak Park Festival, through April 27. This isn't an LGBT play, but it's by the great gay master Noel Coward, so it *should* be. It concerns a man with two wives, one living and one not, and their catfights are queenly clashes, indeed. Add the campy spiritualist Madame Arcati and you've got a classic comedy-of-manners.

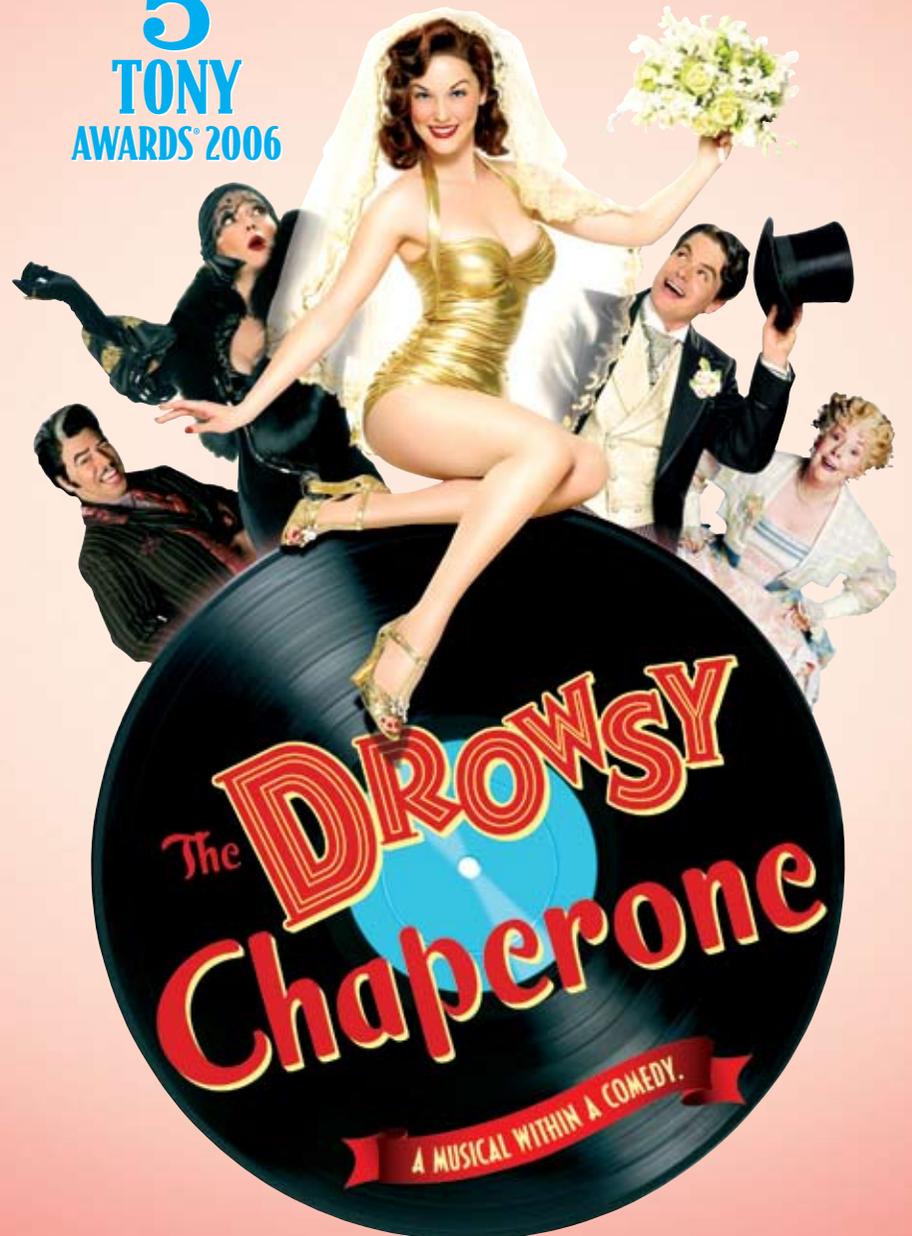
**Die! Mommie, Die!**, Hell in a Handbag Productions at Bailiwick, April 21-June 1. The horrors of family dysfunction are made manifest in this legendary dramatic work by Charles Busch, featuring pretty sons, ugly daughters and mannish mothers, all of them with hairy legs. Let's all go camping!

**Durango**, Silk Road Theatre Project at Chicago Temple, May 8-June 15. This world premiere by Julia Cho was developed by Silk Road last year and now receives a full staging. It's an unexpected look at Asian-American life featuring a father on the road with his sons, one of whom has got a secret ... and one that will take you by surprise.

**Math and Aftermath**, Ludicrous Theatre Company at Heartland Studio, June 13-21. This is a short, Pride Month run of a 1988 fantasy play by out novelist and playwright Jim Grimsley (Dream Boy) in which a gay porn film crew visits Bikini Atoll at the time (the 1950s) it was used for atomic bomb tests—of course, a social and temporal impossibility.

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## Chicago Opera Theater: Something Old, Something New

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Chicago Opera Theater (COT) used to overlap its season slightly with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. But that changed as COT had to contend with a scheduling logjam of other groups and presenters clamoring to get into the Harris Theater for Music and Dance at Millennium Park, 205 E. Randolph.

Now, COT's season runs from late April through May, giving opera buffs from Chicago and out of town a breather from the end of the Lyric's season before indulging again in the opera-going

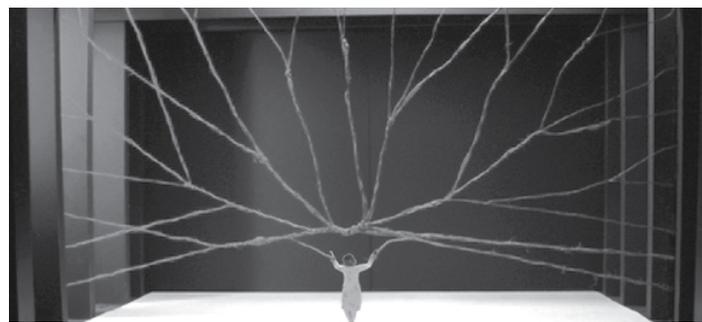
habit.

The 2008 season certainly looks like it's one of COT's most promising: Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, John Adams' *A Flowering Tree* and Handel's *Orlando*. "Don Giovanni is going to be a great kick off to the season," said COT General Director Brian Dickie. "Especially with such a well-known title."

As regular COT fans know, many of Mozart's works written with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte have been brilliantly updated by director Diane Paulus and conductor Jane Glover to modern locales: *Così Fan Tutti* looked for love in a swank singles bar while *The Marriage of Figaro* was celebrated in South Beach, Fla.

Paulus' approach to *Don Giovanni*, the 1787 opera where Don Juan gets his comeuppance, is to transfer him to a high-end night club in New York.

"The proprietor is Don Giovanni," Dickie said.



A Flowering Tree model by production designer George Souglides.

"I don't think I can reveal the actual club it's based upon because Diane is friends with the man who runs it."

COT's next offering is something of an artistic coup for the company: the American stage premiere of John Adams' 2006 opera *A Flowering Tree*.

Adams has openly acknowledged that *A Flowering Tree* is his operatic response to Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. It's a South Indian folktale about a woman who transforms herself into a flowering tree to provide her poor family with something to sell. Of course, trouble ensues when a prince gets mixed up in the tale.

Originally performed in Vienna as a semi-staged concert by director and co-librettist Peter Sellars, *A Flowering Tree* grows as fully staged opera by director Nicola Raab (who staged last season's *Beatrice et Benedict*). Dickie assured that George Souglides' production design is very Indian-flavored.

"I think [John Adams] was very impressed about our whole attitude to him," Dickie hypothesized following COT's 2006 production of Adams 1987 landmark opera *Nixon in China*. "[Adams] is conducting the first two performances, and you can't demonstrate your commitment more than that." (Joana Carneiro conducts the final three performances).

More updating is in store for COT's final production, Handel's *Orlando*. Australian director Justin Way uses the paranoia of 1940s *film noir* to tie into this 1773 opera of a valiant soldier who goes slightly off the deep end when he discovers the woman he loves longs for someone else.

Dickie is particularly excited to have British countertenor Tim Mead make his Chicago debut after he saw him go on for gay countertenor star David Daniels at the Glyndebourne Festival's 2006 revival of *Giulio Cesare* (Julius Caesar).

"[Mead] was going to audition for me the next day," Dickie said. "He sang the performance which turned out to be a four-and-half-hour audition. Needless to say, I hired him on the spot without any question to do *Orlando* for us."

Designers Andrew Hays and Kimm Kovac team for the sometimes surrealist look of the production, while Raymond Leppard conducts.

As for COT's future, the company has already announced big plans for its 35th anniversary in 2009. That's when the company moves to a "spring festival" with a rotating repertory of its premieres of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Peter Brook's adaptation of *La tragedie de Carmen* and Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. That now makes it possible to catch two COT operas in one weekend.

COT has also generated buzz for its 2010 season with its "People's Opera" initiative, where the audience gets to vote on one of the three operas in the repertory. By contributing a dollar to COT, a person can cast one vote for one of three operas chosen by Dickie. If one wants to get overly political, that person can court the gay vote for Britten and W.H. Auden's *Paul Bunyan* (creators who were, more or less, out during their lifetimes), religious conservatives for Rossini's *Moses in Egypt* (subject matter alone) or the youth vote for Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* (written when he was only 18).

*Don Giovanni*, *A Flowering Tree* and *Orlando* each play five performances at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Millennium Park, 205 E. Randolph. For more details on Chicago Opera Theater's season and future planning, visit [www.chicagooperatheater.org](http://www.chicagooperatheater.org) or call 312-704-8420.

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Carousel.

## THEATER REVIEW Carousel

**Playwright:** Rodgers & Hammerstein, after Ferenc Molnar

**At:** Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis  
**Phone:** 773-753-4472; \$32-\$54  
**Runs through:** April 13

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Musical compositions can be analyzed intellectually, but in performance their combinations of melody, rhythm and tonality are overwhelmingly emotional. Music affects audiences in visceral, non-verbal ways. We don't decide to tap our toes; we just do. A melody signals a love song before the lyrics tell us. The essence of music is emotion. If you don't accept that, don't do musical theater. For six years, Court Theatre Artistic Director Charles Newell has staged musicals in ways that tell me he doesn't understand, or worse doesn't trust, the power of music.

My musical disagreement with Newell may continue in the future, but I lay it aside to praise his achievement with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*. He and musical director Doug Peck don't go as far as I wish, but more than ever before Newell finds a balance of ideas and feeling and vigorous staging to illuminate the work as he wants, but also to allow its inherent musical emotionalism to sweep the house.

Freely adapted from a European play, *Carousel* is set on the 1880's Maine seacoast where handsome and self-centered carnival barker Billy Bigelow meets self-possessed and determined mill worker Julie Jordan. Their love and marriage is meteoric and brief, and ends with a ghostly Billy learning lessons in death he didn't grasp in life. The perfection of Hammerstein's script and lyrics—superb craftsmanship disguised as folksiness—is matched by Rodgers' most symphonic score, which at times achieves Mozartian rapture and profundity.

Perhaps *Carousel* is so perfect and powerful that even Charlie can't tamp it down, try as he might. But I'd rather think he's learned things about music and musical theater he didn't understand even two years ago, because Newell is an engaging guy and a smart director.

His cast astonishes, from Nicholas Belton's handsome and dangerous Billy to Johanna McKenzie Miller's sedate but simmering Julie, from Rob Lindley's lanky Mr. Snow to the pitch-perfect Carrie Pipperidge of Jessie Mueller (a young and prettier Carol Burnett). The entire ensemble acts with intimate, often gentle conviction and sings (unamplified) with dignified passion. Unlike his previous shows, Newell allows them to sing vs. speak most of the lyrics, finish songs with musical buttons as written and selectively sing full-voice. One can't deny a big finish to Billy's "Soliloquy."

Still, Newell restricts applause at the end of numbers, not seeming to understand that it signals an audience's investment in the show and is vital to the emotional—even cathartic—exchange between viewers and performers. Several songs are sung in less-than-full voices to limit the distinction between speech and song, which suggests that Newell still doesn't fully trust the score.

His players are almost constantly in motion in savvy, complex staging and tableaux that sweep the wide Court stage. Similar to other recent

interpretations Newell emphasizes Billy's bully side, and the New England work ethic vs. the rise of leisure. Newell cuts most of the dance music as have many directors before him. Peck's string-and-woodwind orchestrations—and his players—are delicately superb.

I have reservations, but this *Carousel* is beautiful. It works and you'll cry. Go see it.

## THEATER REVIEW M. Butterfly

**Playwright:** David Henry Hwang  
**At:** Bohemian Theatre Ensemble  
at Heartland Studio, 7016 N. Glenwood  
**Phone:** 773-791-2393; \$20  
**Through April 20**

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

*M. Butterfly* remains a landmark in the annals of American theater. Not only is it a based-upon-a-true-story drama that made David Henry Hwang the first Asian American to win the Tony Award for Best Play, *M. Butterfly* is also a scathing third-wave feminist critique of Western imperialist biases toward those submissive folks found in "the Orient."

But aside from Hwang's sarcastic flipping of

the bird to Asian stereotypes, *M. Butterfly* is a ripping good story with an overpowering queer element woven throughout.

Back in 1988 when *M. Butterfly* premiered on Broadway, it launched the career of B.D. Wong (Oz, *Law and Order: SVU*). Ever wondered why Wong went by his first two initials? That way the audience would constantly guess whether the character of Song Liling, the masterful Peking Opera star/spy, was a man or a woman (that "M." in the title dares you to question if it stands for Monsieur or not).

For Bohemian Theatre Ensemble's wonderfully imagined *M. Butterfly*, that mystery is answered in the program when you see that Song is played by David Rhee. But if you continue reading Rhee's bio, it's impressive to see that he also starred on Broadway (albeit as a stereotypical white slavery dealer in the musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*).

You can do even more third-wave pondering as to the employment opportunities for Asian-American actors if they're willing to perform in a claustrophobic storefront space because the role is good (or far too rare in American theater). But that's being a little too political.

What's impressive is how effective and creatively director P. Marston Sullivan and designers John Zuiker (sets), Michelle Julazadeh

(costumes) and Christine Ferriter (lighting) each aggrandize this tiny storefront space. Aided by a hard-working cast, Sullivan thrillingly tells the tale of a French diplomat named Rene Gallimard (Jeremy Young in a confused spot-on performance), who spends decades in a relationship thinking that Song is actually a woman.

Oh, and there's plenty of nudity of both sexes, if all of this cultural-politico talk was scaring you away from going. Yes, it's all very lovely to look at, though it brings on more third-wave feminist questions.

Does having a really attractive and muscular Asian-American man drop trousers empower the actor who must play a submissive woman, or is it just a blatant attempt to get that group of gay men who are derogatorily known as "rice queens?" Or, is Hwang such a genius that he knows the lure of Asian male nudity will give him the exact audience he wants to lecture about lingering imperialist attitudes toward people from the East? I'll leave that one for you to decide.

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## Windy City Gay Idol: A 'Mary' Good Time

The third contest in the Windy City Gay Idol series took place Wed., March 19, at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark. When the dust settled, Cori and Mike were victorious; they now move on the semifinals that take place Sat., May 31, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted. Photos by Kirk Williamson



"I got to work with a monkey, too, so between a monkey and Dolly Parton, I was like, 'This is a fantasy!'" —Amy Sedaris  
 Catch Amy Sedaris' interview on [www.WindyCityQueercast.com](http://www.WindyCityQueercast.com) this week and in Windy City Times next week.



The Original Off-Broadway Cast: (from left to right) Erica Schroeder, Julie Dingman-Evans, Denise Sumnerford, Erin Orosby, Marie-France Acclia. Photo © Ben Strehmann

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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



## Stop-Loss

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Boys Don't Cry writer-director Kimberly Peirce roars back onto the screen with her first movie since that LGBT classic broke through the mainstream. Her new movie, the long-awaited **Stop-Loss**, is no less riveting and again explores a difficult subject—the war in Iraq—from a very humanistic viewpoint. In the last year, Iraq war movies have not fared well with the public—Rendition, Lions for Lambs, In the Valley of Elah, Grace Is Gone, and a host of documentaries have all failed to shake the public out of their torpor and none has done well at the box office. But maybe now the time is ripe—we're actually in the election year, not the one before it, and we've just passed the five year mark in this war that no one seems able to define. Perhaps **Stop-Loss**, which deals with yet another terribly unjust U.S. policy, will finally spearhead a Stop the Insanity movement aimed at what has, upon reflection, seemed like so much smoke and mirrors. If nothing else, by the time the credits roll, audiences will at least have been enlightened about this grossly unfair practice while being

enthralled by Peirce's searing, gritty drama.

Peirce plunks us down in Tikrit, Iraq in what is labeled "Episode 312." When they're not trying to ferret out suspected terrorists from real terrorists, going on maneuvers, manning check points, etc., many of the soldiers in Sgt. Brandon King's (Ryan Phillippe) outfit—which includes his best friends Steve (Channing Tatum), Tommy (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), Rico (Victor Rodriguez) and many others—have used their digital camcorders and cell phones to document the war and the downtime of which "Episode 312" is just the latest. Almost as soon as we get our bearings, Peirce tosses us into the terrible incident that will overshadow the rest of the movie—and Brandon's life. He and a group of his soldiers are ambushed after following terrorists down an alley and as they pursue them through a civilian apartment building. The sequence is cut like dozens of action films we've seen and enjoyed in other movies. (Peirce would direct one helluva blockbuster.) But this time the good vs. bad guys stuff isn't quite so cut and dried, and Peirce shows us the messy, one-on-one, hideous kind of war that is being fought in Iraq, and the almost unbearable tension of fighting an enemy often hiding in plain sight. Though Brandon comes out of the skirmish a decorated hero, the episode is to have long-lasting psychological effects on him and his friends.

Returning to their small Texas town, Brandon is given a hero's welcome. Family, friends and



Kimberly Peirce directs Ryan Phillippe in **Stop-Loss**.

even a senator (Josef Sommer) are there to greet him. But when he's called on to speak the words of his superior officer, Lt. Col. Boot Miller (Timothy Olyphant), "Sign 'em up sergeant," ring in his head and he falters. Though he's done what he felt was his duty, Brandon's reached a point where he can't, in good conscience, exhort others to follow in his footsteps. But the worst is yet to come: On the day that he is to get his discharge papers Brandon finds that he has been "stop-lossed," a term that essentially means a backdoor draft, and he is being sent back to Iraq. But for Brandon, the policy is not just wrong—it's criminal. So he refuses the order and decides to travel to Washington, D.C., to see if the senator will help him with his cause, and Steve's fiancée, Michelle (Abbie Cornish) agrees to drive him there.

As the movie moves into its second half—an outlaw picture on the order of Thelma & Louise and The Last Detail—Brandon's and his friends' loyalties and beliefs will be tested. Peirce gives us a series of heartbreaking and eye-opening sequences that vividly show the toll of life after war for many of our soldiers: the forgotten, the permanently emotionally and physically damaged, the cost to the families, the neglect. A sequence in a VA hospital is particularly heart-wrenching. The film is helped by excellent performances by its young cast headed by Phillippe, and Peirce's firm grasp on the actors and the material. (She researched the film for years before writing the script with Mark Richard.)

Like *Grace Is Gone* and *The Valley of Elah*, two Iraq War pictures that deserved to connect with audiences (and might still on DVD), **Stop-Loss** gets at you because it examines and challenges a lot of deeply cherished beliefs about patriotism and war. It's a great war picture in the way that *The Best Years of Our Lives* and *Coming Home* were great war pictures. These movies vividly illustrate the long-term effects of war on the soldiers who do the fighting and their families but don't insult them in the process. It honors their service but also questions (sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly) why that service was asked for to begin with. There will be complaints that the movie presents the men and women characters in stereotypical ways—and they are valid. We see no female soldiers (or closeted ones of either sex) and the female characters mostly react to the actions of their "men folk" and there are some unnecessary melodramatic twists but, even with these quibbles, Peirce's movie is very powerful.

For a lot of the American public, the war in Iraq (which just turned five years old) has itself become the realization of the shameful "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. (It's not just gays and lesbians that are being told to look the other way.) **Stop-Loss** reveals just one ugly aspect of such insidiousness.

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

## Kimberly Peirce: 'Loss' in Translation

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Almost ten years after her stunning 1999 feature debut, *Boys Don't Cry*, writer-director Kimberly Peirce has returned with **Stop-Loss**, a powerful, thought-provoking film that focuses on a little-known policy that forces soldiers to return to duty in Iraq after fulfilling their commitment. Peirce spent years researching the film and collecting actual footage from soldiers documenting their experiences in Iraq. The film stars a crew of young hunks (Ryan Phillippe, Channing Tatum, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, etc.) who enact a story revolving around the stop-loss issue. Peirce has also set up a Web site, [www.stoplossmovie.com/SoundOff](http://www.stoplossmovie.com/SoundOff), where actual victims of the practice can post their own stories.

In person, Peirce has enormous vitality, and speaks quickly in a no-nonsense manner in a torrent of words.

**Windy City Times: I know [Stop-Loss] started from a personal place for you. Could you talk about that?**

Kimberly Peirce: Sure, sure. Shortly after the war started, my younger brother told us he was enlisting—so ... shocking. It wasn't so much that we took a position on whether it was right or wrong to fight the war; it was that I'd brought him home from the hospital when he was born and he represents innocence to me. My mother, obviously very upset, wouldn't come home at night because she knows that if you're home they can come to the door. A lot of women do that.

**WCT: I didn't know that.**

KP: They just stay at work because they have to give you the news that your soldier has died in person so they're just like, "I'm not answering the door and I'm not going to be around." They've had women just say when they're knocking, "You can't come in." They don't want the news. So it's very intense when you have that personal connection. So not only was I IMing with him every day and hearing his side of it, which was an important element as a sister, ... but I was interviewing soldiers throughout America and that was really important to me. I really wanted to understand like generally speaking where were the soldiers coming from. I wanted to tell an emblematic story.

**WCT: This research has taken you years and been your main focus for a long time. In all your research did you find examples of gays and lesbians that had been stop-lossed?**

KP: Yes.

**WCT: Did you find some people who said, "Okay, I'm going to go back even though I'm a gay or lesbian?"**

KP: Yes. But those are the people in the military, anyway.

**WCT: With such a punitive policy I can't help wondering what makes a gay or lesbian person want to go see a movie like Stop-Loss? I can't serve my country...**

KP: Well, you can serve your country.

**WCT: I can't openly serve my country.**

KP: Right. But there are a lot of people who still have these values that were raised in these military towns—that were raised with this as a value system so they don't see their gayness. ... It's not mutually exclusive with their desire to serve their country in this way. They still want to.

Read the entire interview with Kimberly Peirce at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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## Lakeside Pride in Concert: Ten Years of Beautiful Music

BY JORJET HARPER

Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles will culminate its 10th anniversary season with a special concert, "For Friends & Family ... Through the Years," on Sat., March 29, at 7 p.m. at Northside College Prep, 5501 N. Kedzie. The evening features the Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band, with a special appearance by the Lakeside Pride Wind Ensemble. With this concert, Lakeside Pride (LP) will celebrate 10 years of growth and music-making, and will initiate its second decade of serving the Chicago LGBT community.

Lakeside Pride "was started by Jon Dallas in 1997. There were five people at its first meeting—a very modest beginning," recalled Rhonda Tullis, who has been with the group since its founding. "Our first performance was that December. We played a selection of holiday music outside the Ann Sather restaurant on West Belmont Avenue. By early 1999 there were 15 musicians involved." Today, the organization has grown to a total active roster of more than 100 musicians in a variety of musical groups. The Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles is the umbrella organization of these groups, including not only the symphonic band and the wind ensemble, but also the marching band Lakeside Pride Freedom Band, Lakeside Pride Orchestra, the jazz ensemble Shout!, a clarinet choir, a saxophone ensemble, a women's ensemble and the holiday-season Lakeside Pride Toyland Band.

Compared to other LGBT bands, Chicago's has the benefit of the community's diversity, said Tullis: "All of the bands around the country are in major metropolitan areas, but some have difficulty getting people of color and women to join. Here, everyone can meet and socialize with people outside their usual social circles. We are a member-centered organization, and have more younger people and a more lively repertoire; our structure is designed to be flexible and do what the members want to do. This flexibility and openness is what has made us grow."

Over the years, Lakeside Pride has marched with gay veterans in Chicago's Memorial Day Parade, and has been in Evanston's Fourth of July Parade. Other Midwest appearances have included Madison, Wis.; Lansing, Mich.; and Cincinnati, Ohio, where the enthusiasm of Lakeside Pride encouraged the LGBT community there to start its own Queen City Rainbow Band. Lakeside Pride was also key in helping Indianapolis form its band.

"People find Lakeside Pride a comfortable place to develop skills and grow, because we're a group that's open and encouraging" said Tullis. "Looking back, it's had a real impact on people's lives."

Tom Kowalczyk is an example of that. He was an award-winning band director at a school in Michigan who was fired for being gay. "He got another job, then his old school called the new school and he was fired again. He came to Chicago thinking he was done with music, that he'd never get to do this again," Tullis said. Kowalczyk joined Lakeside Pride in 2000 as the concert band director. "He's developed the symphonic band from a group of 25 to 65 plus, with wonderful quality, due to his planning and preparation. He enrolled in a master's conducting program and now works as a music teacher again. His life is an example of healing, developing and growing through the band."

Tullis, who plays saxophone and trombone, has served the group in many capacities. She has managed some of the ensembles, and is now board chair. "Lakeside Pride has definitely changed me," she said. "I was voted most shy in my high school, and now I'm up in front of folks making presentations and meeting all kinds of



Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band in a 2006 concert.

people. So much of what I've accomplished over the last ten years has, in some way, to do with Lakeside Pride."

Because of her involvement with Lakeside Pride, Christy Zurcher, the band's marching director, had the opportunity to lead the Lesbian and Gay Band Association's entire group of assembled marching bands on Soldier Field at the opening ceremony of the Gay Games in Chicago. Tullis also has praise for orchestra director Kim Diehnelt. "Being so community oriented sometimes we forget about the music. She's brought

more respect for music as artistic expression, and encourages people when they perform well," says Tullis. "She has brought a professionalism to the whole organization."

More than 300 musicians have played in the group over the years. Some who have moved to other cities have joined LGBT bands there, like trumpet player Kevin Nield. "There's something about playing music with others that really does something for you. Gay and lesbian people really need an outlet like this," he said. "When I began, I had given up on my dreams. Being in Lakeside Pride made me see that it wasn't too late, that I could pursue the things I'd given up on over the years. It combines the best of the art world and the best of the type of teamwork you experience in sports. It helps build up people in every way—because it's just nurturing." Nield says that the support he got from his band experience inspired him to go back to art college for his masters degree. Now living in Houston, Nield has fulfilled his dream to work as an animator, and has become a member of Houston's LGBT band.

Now that it is solidly established, Lakeside Pride is "starting to look outward," said Tullis. "Public school has cut money for music, and we want to support band and orchestra in Chicago. So we're beginning to look at partnering with

either the Chicago public schools or park district to provide music education for children." Lakeside Pride groups have also begun working with other Chicago groups—for example, participating in monthly concerts every third Monday through June at the Center on Halsted. And they continue to build their core of musicians. "We always welcome new members," Tullis said.

The March 29 concert's musical selections are wide-ranging and include some longtime favorites. The Symphonic Band will perform Bernstein's West Side Story, the Children's March by Percy Aldridge Grainger, Selections from Chicago by John Kander, Claude T. Smith's Emperata Overture, Ravel's Bolero, Sousa's Stars and Stripes Forever and David Holsinger's On A Hymnsong of Philip Bliss, a tribute to band members who have passed away. The Wind Ensemble selections will include Danza Final from Estancia by Alberto Ginastera, Copeland's Buckaroo Holiday and the Fifth Movement of the William Byrd Suite by Gordon Jacob.

Tickets for "For Friends & Family ... Through the Years" are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. For more information on Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles, see [www.lakesidepride.org](http://www.lakesidepride.org) or call 773-381-6693.

Read the entire article at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

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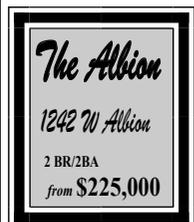
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## LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,** pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. File no. D07109203 on the OCT 05 2007 under the assumed name of Destiny Boutique with the business located at 4827 N. Sheridan Rd #1007 Chicago, IL 60640. The true name and residence address of the owner is: Morliat Reed, 4827 N. Sheridan Rd #1007 Chicago, IL 60640. (4/02/08-3)

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## Christopher Rice: Having a 'Fall'

BY YASMIN NAIR

Christopher Rice is best known for being Anne Rice's gay son, but he's also the author of suspense thrillers, the fourth of which, *Blind Fall* (\$26; Scribner), is out this month.

**Windy City Times:** You said in a 2000 interview, "I think I've said all I can about being gay for the time being." [Rice laughs.] You also said, in 2002, that you were ready to shrug off the label "gay author." And yet *Blind Fall* overtly concerns gay characters and gay themes—what changed for you?

Christopher Rice: What I meant at the time was that the painful journey of a young gay man out of the closet—I felt I'd gotten all the juice out of that creatively that I probably could. I couldn't continue to write novels that all featured characters [like] Steven Conlin [the gay character in Rice's first novel, *A Density of Souls*], who's largely defined by his sense of rejection and his anger. And if I were going to write about characters in that situation, they would assume a different role. [In] *Blind Fall*, the major character is a straight battle-scarred Force Recon Marine and the gay character in it is not, in my opinion, the sympathetic character; he's not the hero. And he's certainly not the victim. While I didn't phase [gay themes/characters] out of my work, I think [the] placement began to change.

I got a lot of interesting responses from readers when I began to cast the gay characters in different roles. ... The gay character in *The Snow Garden* hovers just above villainy. He's duplicitous, he's manipulative, he's created a



Christopher Rice. Photo by Toky Photography

completely fake identity for himself. He's lied to everyone in his freshman class about just who he really is. So I was afraid of making that shift just because so many young gay readers reacted so strongly to the character, Stephen.

**WCT:** You've always embraced being a suspense thriller writer. Do you see *Blind Fall* as somehow redefining what the war novel can be?

CR: I don't. I don't see it falling into that. I think that's a very prestigious category and mostly one occupied by writers who've experienced the war directly. I think what we are seeing now is a lot of thriller writers using popular modes of story telling to address what's happening to some of the men and women who're coming back. That's what this book does. But I'll tell you, honestly, if anything, the Iraq war almost

scared me to out of writing this novel because I didn't want to write a political novel about the Iraq War. I think there's a message laced through the book that John Houck needs to go help someone who actually wants to be helped. I think that's certainly something that can be said about the Iraq War: We're over there trying to save people who didn't ask us to be there and who didn't want to be saved by us. And that's something he's attuned to, and something a lot of military people are attuned to.

I wanted it to be a story about self-acceptance. I wanted the suspense of the story to come entirely from whether these two characters were going to accept one another. This novel

was a departure for me because I tell you who the killer is so early on. The revelation in the novel was not going to be the revelation of a concealed fact. It was going to be about what this character was going to do in response to the facts that were presented to along the way.

**Christopher Rice will be at Barnes and Noble in Skokie's Old Orchard Mall Sat., March 29, at 3 p.m. For more info, see [www.christopherricebooks.com](http://www.christopherricebooks.com).**

**Read much more of the interview at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).**

### BOOK REVIEW

## Blind Fall

Written by Christopher Rice

\$26; Scribner; 288 pages

REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR

Christopher Rice is best known for being Anne Rice's gay son, but he's also the author of suspense thrillers, the fourth of which, *Blind Fall*, appears this month.

Set in California, the novel centers around John Houck, a returning Iraq war veteran trying to locate his former captain Mike Bowers, who nearly died saving his life. Houck finally finds Bowers, but murdered in his own bed. The man he thinks is the murderer turns out to be Bowers's lover, Alex Martin. The two find themselves linked in their attempt to find the killer. To make matters even more complicated, Alex turns out to be the son of wealthy parents, and there are skeletons in the family closet. Hovering above all this is the fact that Alex must fight to claim Mike's body, a right denied

to him.

Rice's prose is supple and unsentimental, with lucid and searing details about wartime and California's lesser-known world of trailer parks and dry impoverishment. Despite the fact that it takes on large issues, *Blind Fall* isn't preachy about Iraq or gay Marines, but sections where Alex tells John about growing up gay are trite and didactic. A running thread about John's brother adds texture, but the last third of the book lurches into climactic scenes that are overdone and overspoken by characters. Alex's mother spews lines and emotions more in keeping with an afternoon soap opera and events rush by in bewildering speed and implausibility: weapons are drawn; mayhem ensues; dead bodies proliferate. The result is that a promising novel ends up with a too- neat conclusion that turns it into something resembling a screenplay for the Gay Movie of the Week. In the end, *Blind Fall* stumbles from the burden of having to be a novel about gay issues, rather than the more satisfying thriller it could have been.



BY SANDI SCHIFFMAN

I am a lowly kennel worker at Animal Haven ([www.animalhavenshelter.org](http://www.animalhavenshelter.org)), a no-kill shelter with locations in New York State. My main tasks are walking and feeding the animals; doing laundry; and cleaning up urine and poop. I love my job.

My job starts before the shelter opens. I open the lock box and raise the security gate in front of the boutique and go downstairs to the dog corrals. The first thing I see just melts my heart—four 8-week-old rottie/shepherd/lab faces and (eight paws sticking) out from under the corral door, desperately trying to see who just came in to give them their freedom.

The first order of business is to walk the housebroken dogs. Then I can go free the rottie pups. They blast out of the corral, falling over each other, racing through the basement, jumping on me and on each other and driving the other dogs crazy.

I mop up their corral and put clean bedding and toys down and get their food. By the time I put the food down, the clean bedding is already soiled. I feed the other two litters: 7-week-old Chihuahuas and 8-week-old Westies. It's the equivalent of the running of the miniature bulls.



Some of the residents of Animal Haven.

They race into the corral where all the donated towels, sheets and bedding are piled high—but not for long. The game is King of the Hill. I almost have to clean up after myself from laughing so hard!

Let me say up front: I am not a cat person. That is not to say I don't like cats—I just don't understand them. As I clean the litter boxes, I hear a siren-like sound coming from behind me. I don't dare look to see which cat the noise is coming from, but I do wonder, "Should I be worried?" Whoever told me cats are neat hasn't seen the amount of cat litter scattered around outside the litter boxes.

I live in a small NYC apartment with a seven-pound dachshund. That is my reality. My Walter Mitty life is in a huge house with lots of land. The shelter is a fair substitute. With no one else there in the morning, the four-story place is mine. I imagine myself living here with several of the big dogs.

As I clean the lounge, the dogs use the couches as trampolines. They fly from couch to couch, eventually landing together and sharing

the same one, limbs all over each other. I honestly see them smiling.

From the lounge, we head to the enormous training room. The dogs let loose as I vacuum. I love watching them. Every so often they bound back to me for a pet or a kiss. When I finish vacuuming, we go back downstairs. They know the destination is their corrals, so they get as far as the boutique and they plop on the dog bed behind the counter. Who am I to move a rottie and lab looking so adorable sharing a bed together? I then restock the shelves in the boutique until my shift ends and the manager arrives.

I know some people think working at a shelter must be very depressing. This was the case a few days ago when a tall man with a box rang the buzzer early in the morning. Being alone, I had to make a quick decision about whether he was an axe murderer or a delivery man. I opened the door, only to find out that the "delivery"

was his own cat. He said he couldn't keep her. We are not set up to do intake so I told him I couldn't take the cat. And this big strong man started crying. He could barely speak. I said "OK, OK," and between sobs, got some information about the cat. As his sobs intensified, I assured him we would find a great home for his cat and it would be loved.

Fortunately, that was an isolated incident. Working at the shelter is uplifting. The dogs almost always bring a smile to my face and I know that even though they must go to new homes, we will find good homes where they will be really wanted.

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## JONES from page 11

me, race and gender aside, was better educated than my generation was. They were people who actually had gone to many dance departments around the country, coming out with degrees, expecting that they were going to—well, I don't know what they expect to do. Quite frankly, I'm often disappointed. I don't think [schools] prepare students for real life. What does it mean to have a bachelor's in performance? Can you find a job?

**WCT: You also mentioned questioning ideas. What concepts do you question now—either through your works or just in general?**

BTJ: I question my own identity as an artist—what does that mean? I'm a child of people who were basically field workers, and who taught that the American Dream was an almost Ebony magazine notion of what a Black person should be—you should do better than [the preceding generation] had done.

No, I didn't want to work with my hands, *per se*, but I did feel like I had to pay my way. I chose to do it with models like James Baldwin—the idea of entering into an arena of creativity and intellectual elite [individuals], but I wanted to do it through modern dance.

The ideas I question [involve] who consumes the work I make. Am I in the same continuum of the entertainment industry as something like *Dancing with the Stars* or Hollywood movies? One has to reconcile that if one expects people to spend their discretionary cash on entertainment. What are we offering them in return? What makes the work we do different from popular art or the "high art" you would see in the opera houses? Are we extending some dialogue about democracy? Are we extending some inspiration about formal beauty and what is worth doing on stage? That's a big one for me.

Also, what is worth doing in terms of a lifestyle? Keeping a dance company is very, very difficult in a world where you have to fight every year to justify yourself. Is it worth doing? I have

to answer that question *through* doing.

And the piece coming to Chicago is something I'm very proud of because I think, in that work, many of those questions are answered—at least, for the time being. It's a work that has a rigorous formal structure; it's uncompromising on that level—you have to be really alert to read what's going on. It's a work that demands a great deal of skill in the execution of the dances, skill in the way the movement is created, skill in the actual beauty of the space and skill in manipulating very tough content. So I feel validated in it; it's the type of art I would actually like to watch—and, yet, it's quite humanist in its heart. [The work] has the potential to perhaps—and I use this word advisedly—teach people something. If nothing else, it should teach them how to look at their complacency.

**WCT: The reviews of Chapel/Chapter call the work "riveting," "disturbing," and "compassionate," to name a few terms. When you hear those words, do you feel like you've accomplished what you set out to do?**

BTJ: My demons are abated, temporarily—and the demons come with the questions that come constantly. The work almost, by accident, hit a home run, maybe. It was supposed to have been [a work] for an uptown Harlem-based organization I've been associated with for some years now. They gave us space to rehearse; I was obliged to give a performance.

I had been trying to put my roots in the Harlem community, and get my downtown audience to come uptown. So I thought to do something easy but something designed for a brand-new space called The Gatehouse, a renovated water-pumping station from [the late 19th century]. The "Chapel" comes from the [venue] almost appearing like a sacred space; the "Chapter" part comes from me thinking about stories. I'm always thinking in terms of stories and anecdotes, and I was reading a newspaper and you read some of these horrible crimes. I wanted to find three or four stories that were archetypal.

So when I read people saying positive things



Bill T. Jones' Chapel/Chapter. Photo by Paul B. Goode

about it, I think that this is pointed in the direction that my company should develop towards: acting; text; interesting, constantly evolving notion of movement, which is my legacy from the post-modern dance world; and a type of forum or clearinghouse where ideas can be exchanged.

**WCT: I've never spoken with a Tony Award winner, so I have to congratulate you.**

BTJ: Thank you. I'm still trying to understand what that means. Someone asked me what [the win] means, and I said, "For a person in their middle age, it means that life is still capable of delivering surprises."

I didn't anticipate winning that way. I didn't think I'd be rewarded for being a newcomer and for making such an atypical contribution to the season.

**WCT: Is there anything you would like to add?**

BTJ: I think that gay people should understand that modern dance is something that should be supported and taken seriously, as gay men and gay women have been major architects of this most American art form. It's a place in which the ideas that are dear to us, as gay people, are lived daily—ideas about power, the body, the connection between fashion and art, individuality, community building. All of those things are in modern dance, and I would encourage [the gay community] to support modern dance in their community.

**Tickets for the April 9 Chapel/Chapter gala are \$300-\$500. For more information or to purchase tickets to the gala, e-mail [rsvp@mcchicago.org](mailto:rsvp@mcchicago.org) or call 312-397-3868. For tickets to the April 10-12 performances (with tickets costing \$28-\$40), call 312-397-4010 or visit [www.mcchicago.org](http://www.mcchicago.org).**

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# WHAT TO DO?

## Wednesday, March 26

**CALOR HAH:** Hombres Apoyendo Hombres. For gay/bi men with HIV/AIDS, in Spanish. 7-9 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 223

**Center on Halsted V-Day Chicago 2008,** celebrating ten years of stopping violence against woman and girls with a performance of all the LGB Vagina Monologues. 6 p.m. pre-reception, 7-8:30 p.m. performance, \$50-\$100, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org for tickets

**Chicago Prime Timers/Center on Halsted Book Group.** This month: Point to Point Navigation: A Memoir by Gore Vidal. 7:30-9 p.m., free, 3656 N. Halsted St.

**Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC** LGBT Pathways to Parenting Presentation. 6-7 p.m., Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., call 877-881-2685, consultant@lotusblossomconsulting.com

## Thursday, March 27

**CALOR** Nonclinical Mental Health Support Group for men and women. Bilingual. 6-8 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 232

**Chicago History Museum** Out at CHM series presents "Queer Exclusions: Sexuality and U.S. Citizenship" with cultural historian Siobhan Somerville. Cocktail hour 5:30 p.m., program starts 6:30 p.m., \$12/\$10 museum members, Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., www.chicagohistory.org

**Lakeshore Theater** Amy & Freddy: Women Who Rock. 8 p.m., \$20-\$25, 3175 N. Broadway, tickets at 773-472-3492 or www.lakeshoretheater.com

**Spin** Twisted Girl Party, benefit for Lambda Legal, DJs Noir, Momma Kitty & Easy E., '80s/'90s, new wave and more, 900 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

**Windy City Gay Naturists** Men Nurturing Men talk/support group. 6:30 p.m., \$5, meets for eight weeks, email WCGN60660@aol.com for info

**Women & Children First Bookstore** Jo-

seph Parisi and Kathleen Welton, editors, Lisel Mueller, poet: 100 Essential Modern Poems by Women. 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Friday, March 28

**Arie Crown Theater** Patti LaBelle and Jeffrey Osborne in concert. Tickets at all Ticketmaster outlets, The Arie Crown Theater Box Office, 312-559-1212 or www.ticketmaster.com

**CALOR** Conexiones: Social support group for gay/bi Latino men 25 and older. Bilingual. 8-10 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 237

**Crew** Fratboy Friday Hot Jock Contest, \$300 cash 1st prize, \$3 Goose Island pints, sponsored by Nightspots, 4804 N. Broadway, 773-784-CREW, worlds-greatestbar.com

**Gerber/Hart Library** Cinema Lesbiana, a women's film screening group. 7:30 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.gerberhart.org

**Hydrate** DJ Ron Geronimo, 3458 N. Halsted St., hydratechicago.com

**Scarlet** Guest DJ Michael Serafini joins DJ AJ Dubbz, 3320 N. Halsted St., 773-348-1053

**Spin** Shower Contest with Frida Lay, sign up at 11 p.m., contest at midnight, 900 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

## Saturday, March 29

**Artreach Educational Theatre** Benefit concert featuring Broadway's hit showtunes. Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St., www.artreachspotlite.com

**Center on Halsted** Legal programming: Trans "Documents" Workshop. Learn how to change your name, update driver's license, etc. 1-4 p.m., free, 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

**CMSA** Hall of Fame Class of 2008. Honorees: Rich Essig, Art Johnston, Bobby Nicholson, Doug Malm and Sidetrack. 7-9 p.m., CMSA members free, \$10 non-members, Spyners Pub, 4623 N.

Western Ave.

**i2i** This Asian & Pacific Islander Pride group holds Roll into Spring!, a free women's event that involves a creative project. 12-3 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.chicagoi2i.org

**Lakeside Pride Symphonic Band** Spring concert, "For Friends and Family... Through the Years." 7 p.m., \$12 advance, \$15 at door, Northside College Prep High School, 5501 N. Kedzie, www.lakesidepride.org for tickets, info

**Nitro** Under the Sea, music by Junior Vasquez, with DJ Hugo, Sal-E, Miss Foozie and more, \$30, \$20 in advance, Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St., www.n2-nitro.com

**Spin** Ear-Rotic hip-hop/reggae party, DJs Stoney & sp1, \$5, 900 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

**Touché** Leather Eye for the Preppy Guy, leather makeover contest, winner receives gear from sheLDON Leathers, 2 IML contest tickets and more, to benefit Vital Bridges, sponsored by Nightspots, 11 p.m., 6412 N. Clark St.

**Vital Bridges** Strike Out Hunger 2008, 11th annual bowling benefit for Vital Bridges. 7-10 p.m., \$30 for individual, \$150 for team of six, River Rand Bowl, 191 S. River Rd., Des Plaines, tickets by calling 773-665-1000 or see www.vitalbridges.org

**West Suburban Gay Association** Dance the Night Away party at member's home. 8 p.m., see www.wsga.com for more info.

## Sunday, March 30

**Berlin** Prince Night with DJ Samnation, 954 W. Belmont Ave., berlin-chicago.com

**Hubbard Street Dance Chicago** "Celebrity Cast Party," a gay community party. Follows a 3 p.m. performance at the Harris Theater (205 E. Randolph Dr.), The Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus Dr., \$100, 312-850-9744, www.hubbardstreetdance.com

**Women & Children First Bookstore** Terese Svoboda: Black Glasses Like Clark Kent: A GI's Secret from Postwar Japan. 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299, www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

## Monday, March 31

**CALOR UNIDad:** Social support group for young gay/bi men 14-24. 7-9 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 0

**Columbia College Chicago Institute for the Study of Women & Gender in the Arts & Media** Concert celebrating International Women's Month with Chicago Sinfonietta; pre-concert discussion with guest artists. 6:30 p.m., Orchestra Hall, 220 S. Michigan Ave., 312-236-3681 ext. 2, www.chicagosinfonietta.org

**Crew** Cubs opener, open at 11 a.m., 4804 N. Broadway, 773-784-CREW, worlds-greatestbar.com

## Tuesday, April 1

**CALOR** Proyecto Unidad. Group for young gay/bi men 14-24 conducted in Spanish. 7-9 p.m., 3220 W. Armitage, 773-235-3161 ext. 232

**Funky Buddha Lounge** Outdanced: Riot in Belgium (Australia). 10 p.m.-2 a.m., 728 W. Grand Ave., www.funkybuddha.com

**Homolatte** Robert McDonald, Carrie Lydon and Kate Rickenbacker. 7:30 p.m., free, Big Chicks/Tweet, 5124 N. Sheridan, www.homolatte.com

**Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders** Coffee and Conversation. Tuesdays. 12-3 p.m., free, John Baran Senior Center, 3656 N. Halsted St., 773-472-6469 ext. 444

**Windy City Gay Idol 2008** Fourth event of 6th annual talent search contest. 7 p.m. signup/8 p.m. start, Crew, 4804 N. Broadway, www.windycitymedia-group.com for rules/regulations, www.myspace.com/2007windycitygayidol

## Wed., March 26



### PARENTAL RITES

Mindy Berkson will present "LGBT Pathways to Parenting" at Howard Brown, 4025 N. Sheridan.

## Thurs., March 27



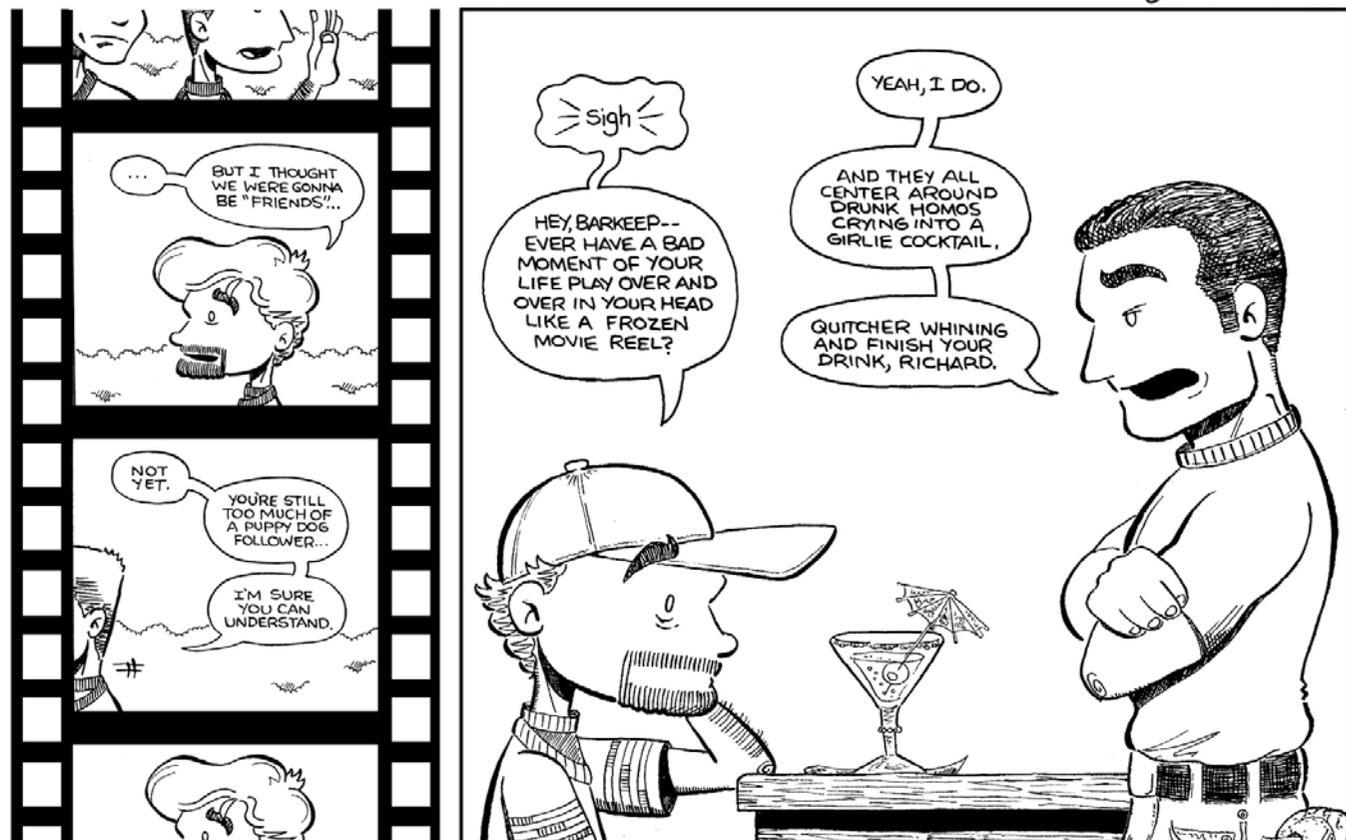
### 'ROCK' STARS

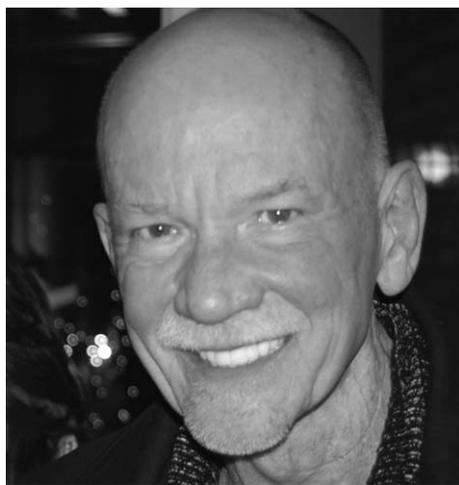
Amy and Freddy will get your feet moving when they present "Women Who Rock" at Lakeshore Theater, 3175 N. Broadway.

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Art Johnston (above) will be one of five inductees into the CMSA Hall of Fame. Photo by Suzanne Kraus

## SPORTS CMSA's Hall of Fame Welcomes Five

BY ROSS FORMAN

His legacy goes back to the GAA, the Gay Athletic Association, in 1978, when Art Johnston became a board member. The group had about 60 members, but became the Metropolitan Sports Association (MSA) and, ultimately, the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA)—which currently has more than 3,000 members who play eight sports that cover 19 sports seasons.

Johnston has, for almost 30 years, been a key part in the gay sports scene—and the same is true for the bar he co-owns, Sidetrack.

For his contributions, Johnston and Side-

track—and three other Chicagoans—are getting inducted into the CMSA Hall of Fame.

This year's class also features Rich Essig, Doug Malm and Bobby Nicholson. The ceremony is set for Sat., March 29, 7 p.m., at Spyners Pub, 4623 N. Western.

"This year's inductees follow the guidelines set up of honoring those individuals/sponsors who have gone above and beyond with their time and effort spent on making sure CMSA was successful and helping the organization to grow," said CMSA President Marcia Hill, who was inducted in last year's inaugural class.

"Rich and Arthur served on the CMSA board in the 1980s; Doug served on the CMSA board in the 1990s; and Bobby has been here all 30 years as a player, coach, bar owner and umpire. Arthur also was very instrumental in getting CMSA into NAGAAA," Hill said. "And Sidetrack has been a (CMSA) sponsor for both men's and women's teams for 26 years."

Johnston's legacy is long tied to softball, but he's also supported—as has Sidetrack—numerous other sports.

Essig is a former board president who has been a key fund-raiser for the organization. He has played softball since 1991.

Malm also has long-standing ties to CMSA softball. From 1997-2002, he was on the Softball Committee and was also an umpire, and instrumental in the annual Senior Cup. From 2002-06, he was the commissioner for softball's Open League, which ballooned to 43 teams. In 2006, Malm was a founding member of the CMSA badminton league. He was a beach volleyball commissioner during the years 2002-05. Malm won the James R. Brody sportsmanship award for softball in 2007.

Nicholson joined GAA in 1980 and, in 1997, became the president and umpire-in-chief. He is the co-owner of Lakeview's North End bar, which sponsors multiple CMSA teams in numerous sports. He won the James R. Brody award in 1995.

Sidetrack has been a launching pad for sport-

ing events as well as social, cultural and political events, said Rob Terranova, CMSA Hall of Fame Committee chairman. "With the success of the bar, it has been able to basically leverage liquor companies to support the LGBT community,

thus helping to raise more than \$1 million," he said.

"All four of the [individuals], plus Sidetrack, have been key to the growth, development and expansion of GAA to MSA to CMSA."



Chicago Force QB Sami Grisafe. Photo courtesy of Grisafe

## SPORTS NEWS Chicago Force Announces Schedule

The Chicago Force, a local women's tackle-football team, has announced its 2008 schedule.

The IWFL (Independent Women's Football League) has adopted a two-tier system for the Eastern and Western conferences, with the Force competing in Tier One Midwest of the Eastern Conference. In addition, three new teams have joined the division: the Wisconsin Wolves, the Wisconsin Warriors and the Columbus Phantoms.

The regular season will feature eight games—four at home and four away. Home games will

be played at Holmgren Athletic Complex, 3225 W. Foster, on the campus of North Park University. The season starts Sat., April 12, when they travel to the Wolves' home field.

See [www.chicagoforcefootball.com](http://www.chicagoforcefootball.com).

## Coady Classic April 5-6

Chicago will host the 18th annual Coady Roundball Classic (CRC) Sat.-Sun., April 5-6, at the University of Illinois-Chicago Gymnasium, 901 W. Roosevelt.

This year's event is expected to feature more than 25 teams, with players and teams representing cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, Miami, Philadelphia, Chicago and many others.

Male and female players of all levels are encouraged to participate in this year's event. Teams and individuals can register through Mon., March 21.

For more information, visit [www.wcaa.net/basketball/crc17](http://www.wcaa.net/basketball/crc17) or contact tournament organizers at [chicagobasketball@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chicagobasketball@sbcglobal.net).

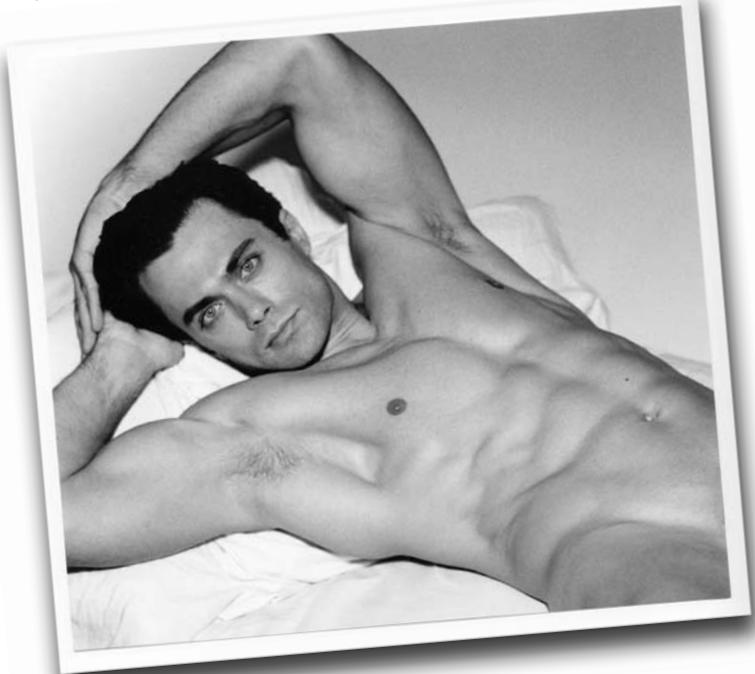
## Bowling - CMSA Mixed Standings

Division A	W	L	5 Pins 10 Balls	31	53	Wells Fargo ONYX 5	56	28
Cornelia's	64	20	Bowleros	30	54	Juana Bees	51	33
Hamburger Mary's	55	29	Gutter Fluffers	30	54	Rough Trade	49	35
Funky Five	50	34	REMAX Edge	30	54	Windy City Sweets	44	40
GYOF	50	34	Marty's	17	67	Wicked	41	43
Second to None	48	36				Castaways	40	44
FVB Interiors	43	41	Division B	W	L	Looney Tunes	37	47
Jury's	36	48	Bobby Love's	74	10	Scot Shotz	33	51
North End	33	51	Great Scots	60	24	Extremely Striking	29	55
Bowlers-A-GO-GO	33	51	Halsted Bar & Grill	58	26	Lady & Her Tramps	27	57
Crew's Ball Busters	33	51	Salon Michael	56	28	Done More 5 Less	20	64

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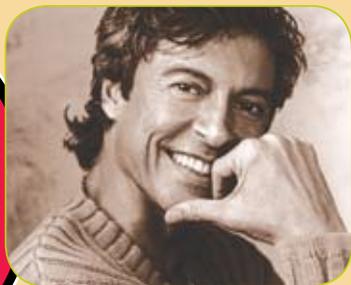
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