

WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BI AND TRANS COMMUNITY SINCE 1985

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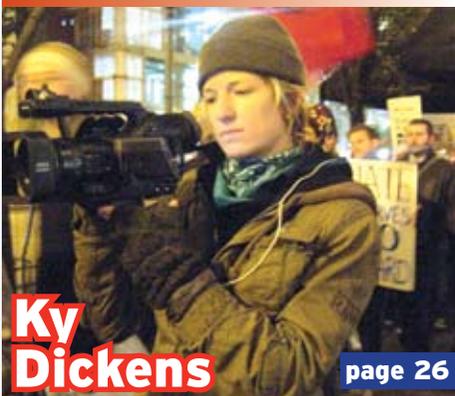
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pick it up
take it home



naughty/nice

Windy City Times' special pullout
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Gay dollars, labor and boycotts

BY YASMIN NAIR

The gay dollar has never been stronger. The passage of the anti-same-sex-marriage initiative Proposition 8 brought protests across the country. Subsequently, gay activists have released the names of prominent businesspeople who donated to the ballot measure, and called for economic boycotts of their corporations.

Such initiatives, while part of gay history, also prompt new questions. What role do boycotts play when many corporations now woo well-off gay consumers, boast of "gay-friendly" policies and sometimes have gays and lesbians at the helm? What do boycotts say about the connection between gays and labor unions, traditionally among the organizations that call for such boycotts?

The city of Evanston saw the first of recent boycotts in Illinois Nov. 22 when picketers gathered outside the Century Theater. They urged theatergoers not to patronize the busi-

ness because Alan Stock, CEO of Cinemark, the corporation that owns Century, gave a personal contribution of \$9,999 to support Proposition 8.

Gay groups in California have been calling for economic boycotts since the summer. Among the most prominent of these calls is the one about the Manchester Hyatt in San Diego. The hotel is owned by Doug Manchester, but operated by Global Hyatt Corporation. It was revealed that Manchester donated \$125,000 to Proposition 8.

In response, Local 30, the San Diego chapter of UNITE HERE, joined a gay group, Californians Against Hate, to demand that Global Hyatt sever its connection with the Manchester Hyatt. UNITE HERE is a union born of the 2004 merger between the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees and HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union). According to Cleve Jones, a gay organizer with the union, UNITE HERE has had its eyes on this particular hotel since 2006, when the hotel's

non-unionized workers protested unfair work practices.

Local 30's political director, Dan Rottenstreich, said that Proposition 8 became the basis for an "unprecedented coalition" between labor and gay organizing. A press release regarding a Nov. 22 protest outside the hotel said that, "Organizers are expected to call for major demonstrations in front of Hyatt hotels throughout the nation."

But will the Hyatt protest translate the same way across the country and in Chicago, where the hotel has a reputation for its support of the gay community? After all, the Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Wacker, was the 2008 host of International Mr. Leather.

In 1977, the activist Harvey Milk led a boycott against Coors Brewing Company for the company's anti-gay policies. Ironically, a current biopic of the gay activist is being released at Cinemark theaters (and at other chains). Both

Turn to page 6

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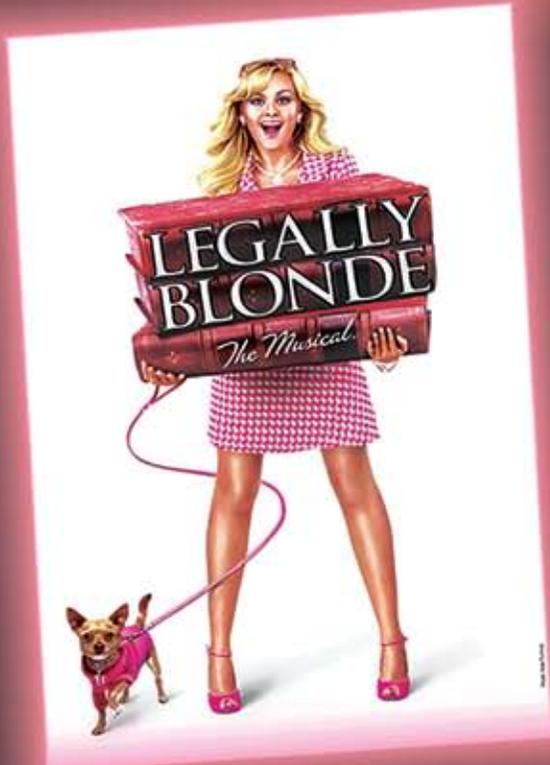
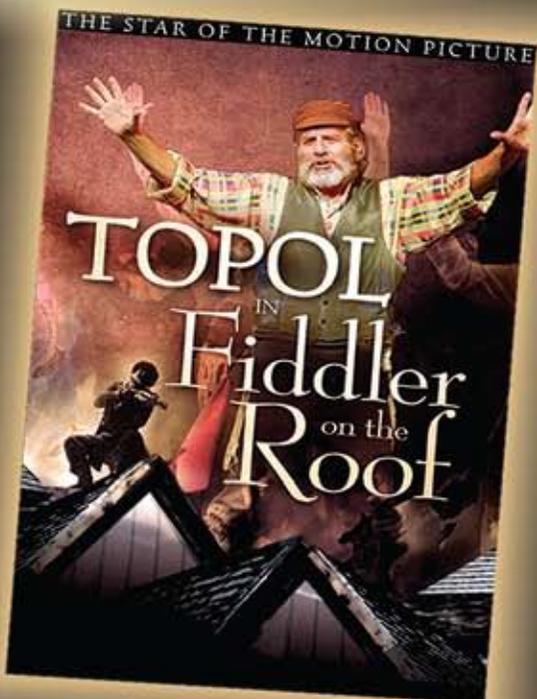
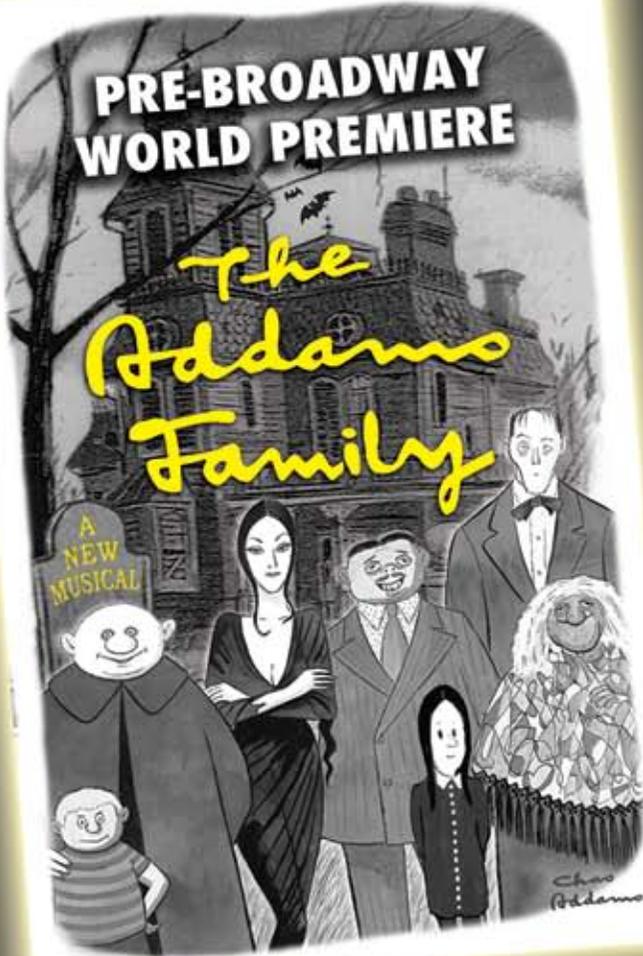
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Doug O'Keeffe (left in above photo) managed to flee the chaos in Mumbai last week. See more on page 6.



Lori Cannon (above) and other Northside Grocery Center volunteers helped clients on Thanksgiving Day. See page 6.

Photo by Andrew Davis

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Lana Turner (right)



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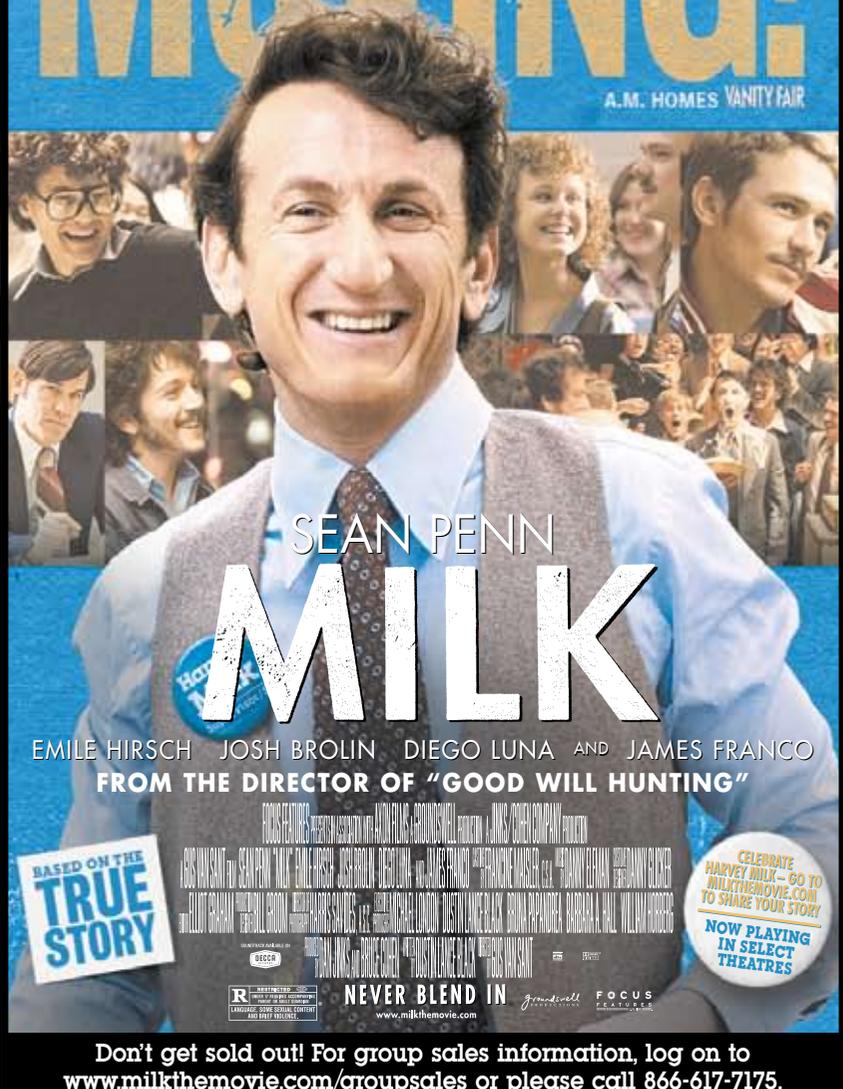
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Tom Daschle.

Obama's team: Good news for LGBTs

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The appointments are rolling out steadily now for Barack Obama's administration. Sometimes, they are actual announced appointments; sometimes, they are leaks about presumably certain appointments. But so far, most sound like good news for the LGBT community.

Seven openly LGBT people are part of the transition team that is helping to prepare the president-elect to take charge of the federal government beginning Jan. 20. Interestingly, five of them are former appointees of President Bill Clinton.

The three appointments of greatest interest during the past week have been for Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Attorney General and the White House domestic policy adviser.

Former U.S. Senator Tom Daschle, a longtime friend to the LGBT community, has been tapped to head HHS, though his appointment has not been formally announced. Daschle represented South Dakota in the U.S. Senate and, while considered friendly to gay causes, did not score well on his last "scorecard" with the Human Rights Campaign. He earned only a 63 (out of a possible 100) in his last two years in the Senate.

Daschle declined a request to co-sponsor the Early Treatment for HIV Act of 2003. According to HRC, the bill would have enabled people with HIV to receive Medicaid and would enabled people with HIV and low incomes with the ability to receive state aid under the category of "categorically needy." He also declined a request to add sexual orientation to his Senate office non-discrimination policy, even though an earlier scorecard showed he did and in the scorecard for the previous two-year session, Daschle earned a 100 percent score.

In recent days, the Obama campaign's transition Web site has stated that, "In the first year of his presidency, Barack Obama will develop and begin to implement a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy that includes all federal agencies." And Daschle, a senior fellow with the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank headed by Obama's transition chief John Podesta, is presumably onboard with that plan.

President-elect Obama is reportedly planning to appoint former Deputy Attorney General (under Bill Clinton) Eric Holder as his U.S. attorney general.

Tracey Conaty, who, for many years headed up a group documenting and seeking to prevent LGBT-related hate crimes in Washington, D.C., said Holder "clearly cared about the issue of hate crimes."

"He was smart and informed about the law," said Conaty. "He was also very respectful, and you got the impression that he took these meetings with community folks seriously."

Though the position gets far less attention than cabinet positions, White House domestic policy adviser is a critical office to the LGBT community. The adviser makes recommendations

to the president on a wide range of domestic issues, including many that can be of specific interest to gays. The position became notorious under former President Ronald Reagan, when he appointed ultraconservative activist Gary Bauer to the spot.

To that position, President-elect Obama has named Melody Barnes, a former top aide to U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy, one of the most pro-gay members of Congress in history.

"She's smart, sharp, solid—she totally gets the gay and HIV issues," said Chai Feldblum, who worked with Kennedy in the drafting of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "I worked with her a lot in Kennedy's office. I'm more excited about this appointment than just about anything."

Transition team

Most familiar among the seven openly LGBT people serving on the transition team is Roberta Achtenberg, who served as assistant secretary in the Department of Housing and Urban Development under Clinton. Achtenberg garnered more attention than most assistant secretaries when then-Sen. Jesse Helms referred to her as "that damn lesbian" and tried to block her confirmation.

Others on the transition team include Michael Guest, former George W. Bush ambassador to Romania; Fred Hochberg, former Small Business Administration leader under Clinton; Elaine Kaplan, who headed Clinton's Office of Special Counsel; Thomas Soto, who was appointed by Clinton to serve on an international commission involved in conservation efforts with Mexico; Rick Stamberger, president of an online gay news-collection Web site called SmartBrief; and Brad Kiley, a deputy assistant for administration at the Clinton White House.

Kiley is one of 13 people listed on the transition's senior staff as one of two directors of operations. He, along with Soto and Stamberger, are among 21 people on the "Executive Office of the President" team.

Achtenberg is one of 12 people on the HHS transition advisory team. Guest is one of 11 people on the Department of State segment of the National Security Team. Kaplan is one of 10 people on the Government Operations Team. Hochberg is one of 20 on the Economics and International Trade Team.

While the others served under Clinton, Stamberger was a White House fellow under then Vice President George H.W. Bush, during the Reagan administration.

The seven openly gay appointees are among about 300 people named to help the Obama administration prepare to take the reins of the government starting Jan. 20.

Gay leaders have taken note of the Obama transition Web site's inclusion of the President-elect commitment's to gay civil-rights issues. The Human Rights Campaign called it an "encouraging sign."

Meanwhile, the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute reports having received more than 1,300 applications from LGBT people interested in seeking an appointment with the Obama administration. Spokesperson Denis Dison says the Institute groups are putting together their own "review teams" to examine the applications and "tease out applicants who are qualified." Dison says the Obama transition team is "aware of the project."

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Obama notes World AIDS Day

President-elect Barack Obama marked World AIDS Day with an official statement. Part of it read, "World AIDS Day is a day of both commemoration and promise for the many millions of people around the world who are affected by HIV/AIDS. This year's theme, Leadership, is a particular reminder to me that World AIDS Day cannot be confined to a single day of the year."



Mike Wilke.

Commercial Closet merges without executive director

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

Last month, Commercial Closet Association (CCA) announced that it would integrate its programs and operations with those of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). The statement also relayed, "As part of the transition, founding executive director Mike Wilke is leaving the organization." That left many wondering what happened to Wilke.

Wilke founded CCA in 2001 in an effort to "work with advertising professionals to advocate for inclusive images of LGBT people in advertising," and, over the years, CCA has compiled an archive of over 4,000 LGBT-themed advertisements on its Web site, which have been utilized by advertising and marketing professionals.

Wilke was terminated from the CCA Nov. 4, after months of mounting tension between himself and board members, and the organization's need to transfer a debt-free organization to GLAAD. Wilke said, "It is a pretty complicated situation. It is partly the result of tension between CCA's board and me that increased as the year wore on."

Stephanie Blackwood, vice president of the CCA board, explained, "It was a decision that was based on the fact that Mike was not willing to comply with the requirements that the board had to undergo in order to move towards the merger with GLAAD. ... We had a series of requirements to meet and Mike became unwilling to comply. ... There are actual requirements of the attorney general's office for the merging of non-profits."

Blackwood said one of the most important requirements was turning over a debt-free organization, but that Wilke repeatedly would not cooperate in turning the books over to the treasurer, leaving the board without a concrete idea of CCA's financial situation. According to Blackwood, requests for cooperation began in the summer and continued to the point of Wilke's termination.

Wilke had expected to raise needed funds through a fundraiser scheduled for Dec. 4, which the board decided to cancel.

Blackwood said the current economic downturn played a large part in the decision to cancel the fundraiser and the need to terminate Wilke: "We looked at the potential outcome and what we saw was, in the best of all scenarios, we were going to make a modest amount of money and we were going to invest a lot of time and spend a lot of money, so, we made the decision to eliminate our biggest cost on a monthly basis—the executive director's salary—and we reduced the editorial director to half-time."

The termination was a surprise to Wilke, who, from the beginning, had expected that he would be part of GLAAD's new Advertising Media Program. "GLAAD had originally offered me a job to lead the advertising program in 2009, but then they withdrew the offer, it seems, or changed their mind. They haven't clarified exactly what they're doing," he said.

As part of the merger, Wilke and his employee had moved into GLAAD's office several months ago, and Wilke said he had been creating a program plan and a budget for 2009.

When asked to comment on the situation between Wilke and the CCA and whether there is still an opportunity for Wilke at GLAAD, Neil Giuliano, president of GLAAD, responded, "We believe it is best that those conversations take place within professional personnel practices."

With the dissolution of CCA scheduled for Dec. 31 and the launch of GLAAD's new Advertising Media Program set to follow, Wilke is concerned for the future of CCA's work.

CCA board members, however, expect that the merger will lead to much success in impacting the advertising industry. "When GLAAD speaks out about a media situation that does not accurately and fairly portray LGBT people the media listen, and what follows the initial conversation about the need for correction is usually training about how to do it better," Blackwood said. "That's the access and the capacity that CCA will achieve in this relationship."

At this time, no decisions have been made by GLAAD regarding staff, and Giuliano said, "GLAAD's Advertising Media Program has not officially launched and we are still in the process of deciding on specific components of [that] program."

The original statement regarding the merger reported, "The newly integrated GLAAD Advertising Media Program will monitor advertising worldwide and continue to expand CCA's unique online archive of more than 4,000 corporate, brand, nonprofit, and political ads, all evaluated based on their inclusion of LGBT themes and portrayals. The Advertising Media Program will also build on CCA's education and training programs and LGBT-inclusive advertising best practices for Fortune 500 corporations, leading advertising agencies and universities."

Undeniably, Wilke's work has been important to the LGBT community, and CCA board members expect that the Advertising Media Program will attempt to better reach the advertising industry and have a positive impact on inclusive and fair representations of the LGBT community. The question of Wilke's role still remains.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY ANDREW DAVIS

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom criticized President-elect Barack Obama and Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for not being more active in fighting Proposition 8, according to the Washington Blade. In an interview with the Blade, Newsom said that the other two politicians did not do enough to fight the measure, but added that they deserved credit for speaking out against the initiative when they did (this past spring).

National Log Cabin Republicans President Patrick Sammon is leaving his post. The Washington Blade reported. According to a statement Sammon released, he will leave at the end of January 2009—after slightly more than two years—"to tackle new challenges. I'll be doing documentary filmmaking, which is what I did before joining Log Cabin's staff."

On the TV show *The View*, Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee **implied that gays are not entitled to civil rights because they have not suffered enough**, PageOneQ.com reported. In distinguishing the rights of sexual versus racial minorities, Huckabee said, "Bull Connor was hosing people down in the streets of Alabama. John Lewis got his skull cracked on the Selma Bridge," to which *The View* co-host Joy Behar said, "Gay bashing goes on, too." Huckabee also said he does not believe that Arkansas' Proposition 1—which bans unmarried couples from adopting or fostering children—targets gays.

eHarmony will now offer a dating service to gay people to settle a complaint filed against the company, according to the Wall Street Journal. A man originally sued eHarmony in 2005, stating the the dating site violated New Jersey's anti-discrimination statute by not offering op-

tions for gay people. To partially settle the case, the Pasadena, Calif.-based company will develop Compatible Partners, a same-sex dating service, and will let the site's first 10,000 users to register free.

Police are looking into **death threats that have been made against Vermont State Sen. John Campbell** after the said he would introduce a pro-same-sex marriage bill, according to 365Gay.com. An anonymous woman threatened Campbell and his family, saying that she would bomb his home.

In Syracuse, N.Y., Dwight DeLee, 20, **has been charged with second-degree murder regarding the killing of Moses Cannon**, 22, a man who lived his life as a woman, according to WSYR. Police said that DeLee did not like Cannon's sexual preference. In a statement, Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese said that "[t]he senseless killing of Moses 'Teish' Cannon is a clear example of why we need to redouble our efforts on education and awareness to ending hate violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people."

LGBT individuals use statutes banning sexual-orientation discrimination just as often as women and people of color utilize laws related to, respectively, gender and race, according to a release from the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law. The study revealed that five out of 10,000 LGBT people file sexual orientation employment discrimination complaints each year—a figure comparable to the number of sex- and race-related complaints filed annually.

In the Life Media—producer of the long-running LGBT TV show *In the Life*—**will run an innovative Web-based educational video that tells the story of Josh, a young gay man in New York City**, according to InTheLifeTV.org. The video, which centers on HIV awareness and prevention, shows Josh confronting such issues as unprotected sex and online hook-ups. Researchers at New York City-based Public Health Solutions and New York University collaborated

on the project, and gay social networking site Manhunt helped promote it.

On Dec. 10—International Human Rights Day—**LGBT individuals are being urged to call in "gay"** to work during what has been dubbed "Day Without a Gay." Interested persons should see <http://daywithoutagay.org>.

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates—a leading LGBT workplace equality organization—**has launched www.LGBTCareerLink.com**, according to a company press release. CareerLink, which connects LGBT-friendly businesses with job seekers, "is the fastest and most effective way for LGBT candidates to find quality employment," said Out & Equal Executive Director Sessie Berry.

Fla. judge: State's gay-adoption ban unconstitutional

In a landmark decision, Miami Dade (Fla.) Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman ruled Nov. 25 that gay foster father Frank Martin Gill can adopt the two brothers he has fostered for four years, according to U.S. News and World Report.

The ruling flies in the face of Florida's gay-adoption statutory ban, which Lederman ruled has "no rational basis." However, the state allows gays and lesbians to be foster parents.

In a statement, Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese said, "Miami Dade Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman has issued a ruling that protects children and strengthens families. Florida's draconian ban on adoption by lesbian and gay people has for too long deprived children of loving, committed and qualified parents."

This was the first trial-court case involving gay adoption; the Florida Supreme Court may overturn the decision.

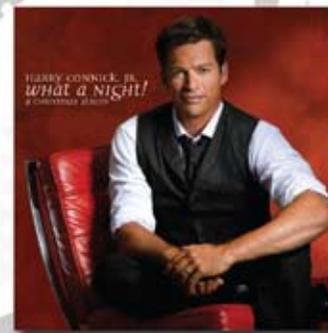
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Doug O'Keeffe.

Chicagoan escapes Mumbai turmoil

BY YASMIN NAIR

Doug O'Keeffe, a Chicago resident and volunteer at the Northside Grocery Center (a food-pantry branch of HIV/AIDS agency Vital Bridges), was caught in the recent attack on the Taj Oberoi hotel in Mumbai, India, but was able to escape.

O'Keeffe was in the city as part of a routine layover for his airline job Nov. 26. Crew members were scheduled to leave that night. They heard the first explosion in the building while waiting for the elevators.

The group made its way into a conference room. After a while, one of the hotel employees discovered them, told them to turn off all their lights and stay quiet. He left and with a group of commandos carrying assault rifles, which escorted the group through the destruction in the

lobby, to outside the building. The people were then told to run to a parking garage on the opposite side of the street. O'Keeffe and the others stayed there until 7 a.m. the next morning when the hotel manager drove them to an airport hotel in a bus.

O'Keeffe, who has visited Mumbai several times in the past, told Windy City Times that the experience was "beyond reality" and that, at the time, he couldn't "believe it was happening." The experience has not changed his feelings about Mumbai, "I've always found it a fascinating and interesting place and have no bad feelings about [it]. I feel very sorry for all the people who were victims."

Some news analyses are comparing the Mumbai attacks to 9/11 in the United States. O'Keeffe himself lost a co-worker in that event: "I find it so astronomically ironic that he should die in a terrorist attack and I should survive one." O'Keeffe was reluctant to make any comparisons, saying that the events occurred in "two completely different societies," and that he didn't want to assume to know "how the Indian people feel about [the attacks]."

Quigley exploring run for Emanuel's seat

Democratic Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley has filed papers to explore his candidacy to represent the 5th Congressional District of Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives. The person chosen for this seat would replace Rahm Emanuel, who is now President-elect Barack Obama's chief of staff.

Part of Quigley's letter stated, "Throughout my career I have fought tirelessly for lower taxes, improved services, and a more efficient, accountable government. ... And I have always stood up for citizens and taxpayers, even if it puts me at odds with some of the most powerful politicians in Illinois."

Quigley is the second person to express interest to supporters about filling this position. Democratic State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz has also announced her intention to run for the seat.

After Emanuel submits his resignation, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich must set the date for a special election within five days, and the election must take place within 115 days.

Gay man to head state regulation department

The office of Gov. Rod Blagojevich has announced that Michael McRaith will take over as Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

McRaith, who is openly gay, is currently the director of the Illinois Division of Insurance. The new position was open because the previous secretary, Dean Martinez, will be the state's newest deputy governor. Martinez has made history by being the first Latino to be named to that position.

Cullerton new state senate prez

State Sen. John Cullerton, who is from Chicago's North Side, has been chosen by fellow

Democrats to become the next president of the Illinois Senate. He will replace Emil Jones, who is retiring.

In a letter, Cullerton said, "I am honored and humbled by the support my fellow senators have shown by selecting me to be the new Senate President. I welcome the opportunity to work closely with Governor [Rod] Blagojevich, Speaker [Mike] Madigan, Senate Minority Leader [Christine] Radogno and House Minority Leader [Tom] Cross to remedy the current legislative logjam we have in our state."

Radogno made history as the first female chosen to be the state's Senate Republican leader.

Fire occurs at dance club

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The building that houses the popular Lakeview gay dance club Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted, was the site of a fire on the afternoon of Nov. 25.

The extent of the fire's damage is unknown. The address has residential units in addition to the club. According to the Chicago Fire Department, the cause of the fire was electrical in nature and originated in the club's dance-floor area.

A sign on the front of the establishment read "Roscoe's is temporarily closed. We're sorry for any inconvenience," but the club reopened in time for the Thanksgiving weekend.



Vital help for Thanksgiving

If it's Thanksgiving Day, people can count on several things, including turkey, football—and Northside Grocery Center (a food-pantry arm of the HIV/AIDS agency Vital Bridges) collaborating with Lakeview restaurant Ann Sather (and owner, 44th Ward Alderman Tom Tunney) to deliver box lunches and/or dinners to clients. Photo of (from left) Lori Cannon, Jay Cook, Randi Levin, Lance Tines, Tunney, Joe Leptkowski and Glenn Sieverson by Andrew Davis

LABOR from cover

the film's director (Gus Van Sant) and screenwriter (Dustin Lance Black) are gay.

But it's not just the growing presence of out gays and lesbians (and their gatherings) that highlights the complexities of, and differences in, economic boycotts today. The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association estimates that gay and lesbian customers spend \$55 billion per year in North America for "leisure and hospitality services," according to one report.

So it makes sense to ask gay consumers to withhold their dollars from anti-gay hotel owners like Doug Manchester. But will the alliance between labor and gay organizing last beyond Manchester and Proposition 8? In Chicago, one such alliance failed to get the desired result. In 2004, the Great Lakes Bears invited its members to book rooms at the Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan, for its annual conference. Queer to the Left (QTL), a now-defunct group, asked the Bears not to patronize the Congress because its workers were on strike. The Bears did not heed the call. [Note: This reporter was, at the time, a member of QTL].

This certainly did not reflect upon individual Bears but it does beg the question: Given a choice between their interests as gay people and their interests as workers, which side will gays and lesbians choose?

Furthermore, the position of some unions on the issue of gay marriage seems to contradict the basic premise of union organizing: to ensure fair wages and economic parity for all workers, regardless of individual factors like marital status. According to Jones, "UNITE HERE 'reject[s] the compromise of domestic partnerships [and is] in favor of full marriage equality.' Yet, many gay (and straight) workers might prefer the flexibility of domestic partnerships over marriage. There is no widespread consensus on gay marriage within the gay community.

Still, there are important pro-gay policies echoed in the day-to-day workings of UNITE HERE or Pride at Work (PAW), the LGBT constituency group of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the largest federation of unions in



Eric Stanley.

the United States. Both UNITE HERE and PAW supported a trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act; PAW also advocates for domestic partnerships on its Web site even as it presses for marriage equality. Local 2, the San Francisco chapter of UNITE HERE, "started a Health and Welfare fund for member hotel workers suffering from HIV and AIDS" in 1989.

Finally, are economic boycotts effective? Eric Stanley, a queer organizer with the prison-abolition group Critical Resistance, says that "the trouble with an economic boycott as a way of working change is that it also argues that everything is 'fine' when not in a time of boycott." For Stanley, economic boycotts "uphold the free market myth of capitalism in 'non-boycott' times." In other words, boycotts don't challenge the systemic inequality that turns some gays into rich consumers and others into ill-paid hotel workers. But Stanley also acknowledges that economic boycotts, as in the case of South Africa, can be a way to put specific pressure on corporations that support state policies like apartheid.

It seems likely that the gay community will press on with economic boycotts and perhaps even work, however evanescently, with labor organizers (many of whom are also gay). The power of the gay dollar will continue unabated, regardless of the fact that some of us, gay or straight, have fewer dollars to spend in the first place.

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World AIDS Day marked at Sidetrack

BY KAITLYN MCAVOY

In honor of World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, Chicagoans gathered in Lakeview for a candle light vigil that included a peaceful walk outside on the ice-covered sidewalk along North Halsted Street.

About 30 people came to the service that started inside Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted. The annual vigil is a "simple way to remember" those living with HIV and AIDS and those who have passed due to the disease, said organizer Robert Hadley, founder and director of Caritas Chicago, a treatment facility for substance abusers.

Hadley welcomed the crowd before handing the microphone to speaker Jeremy Butts who was diagnosed with the disease in 2003. Butts talked about all the advocacy groups here in Chicago saying he was "blessed" by all the support he has received. He also urged others to take advantage of the help offered in the city and to also lend a hand by volunteering at HIV/AIDS organizations.

The candlelight walk began at 7:30 p.m. and ended at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. Participants held their lit candles and they trekked almost half a mile in the 20-degree weather as snow flurries fell.

This is the first year the event also had the walk, said Hadley. Even though the vigil is not a religious ceremony, in previous years it has been held at churches. Since this year it was held at a bar, the walk along Halsted Street gave those under 21 years old a chance to participate, said Hadley.

This was the second year in a row Lance Tines, 44, of Rogers Park, has attended the vigil. Tines said he has been helping people with AIDS for a long time and has lost friends to the disease.

"It is important for me to do something to commemorate them on World AIDS Day," Tines said.

Trans aging program set for Dec. 5

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders (SAGE) and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Institute (SOGI) will present a "Transgender Aging Intensive" Friday, Dec. 5, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

The cost to register is \$100, and will cover lunch, a reference binder and continuing education units. Register at www.forge-forward.org/tan/intensive.php.

FORGE (For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression) and the center are co-sponsoring the program.

Center gets fashionable

The Center on Halsted will present the Red Carpet Walk OUT: A World AIDS Day Fashion Ex-



World of Chocolate 2007. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

travaganza Friday, Dec. 5, at Macy's on State, 111 N. State, 6-9 p.m.

Macy's and the Chicago Department of Public Health are co-sponsoring the event.

The Red Carpet Walk OUT is a fashion show that will raise funds and awareness of HIV/AIDS. The fashion show will feature celebrity models as well as fashion icons. Call 312-781-1000.

AFC holding 'World of Chocolate'

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago will hold its sumptuous annual event, "World of Chocolate" on Wed., Dec. 3, 6-10 p.m., at the Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan.

There will be creations from more than 30 of Chicagoland's finest restaurants, caterers, and chocolatiers in an effort to raise awareness, while celebrating the world's achievements, in the fight against HIV/AIDS. There will also be a light buffet, holiday bazaar and open bar.

Tickets start at \$75 apiece. See www.aidschicago.org.

Vital Bridges to celebrate 20 years

Vital Bridges, which helps provide food and other services to those living with HIV/AIDS, will celebrate its 20th anniversary during its Annual Holiday Brunch on Sunday, Dec. 7.

The event will take place at the Four Seasons Hotel, and will include music, live and silent auctions and more.

Tickets are \$250 per person. Call 312-948-2785 or see www.vitalbridges.org for more information.

'Don We Now...30!' at Center Dec. 6-7

Windy City Gay Chorus and Aria: Windy City Women's Ensemble will present their 2008 holiday concert, "Don We Now...30!," under the direction of Alan Wellman, Saturday, Dec. 6, at 5 and 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m. in the Hoover-Leppen Theatre at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

Tickets are \$20 each. They are available online at www.windycitysings.org or at the door one hour prior to the performance.

Entry limited to 40 at 'Champagne Wrapture'

Chicago House returns with its glamorous Champagne Wrapture Tuesday, Dec. 9, at The James Hotel, 55 E. Ontario. The VIP reception is 5:30-6:30 p.m., with the premium reception taking place 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Attendees will sample champagne from Veuve Clicquot, specialty martinis by Belvedere Vodka, desserts by Sweet Miss Giving's, and hors d'oeuvres. Guests will also be able to bid on bottles of Clicquot artfully dressed by Chicago's premier designers.

Only 40 people will be allowed to attend. Tickets start at \$65; call 773-248-5200 x303 or see www.ChicagoHouse.org.

UW-Madison showing exhibit on Nazi persecution of gays

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Memorial Library, 728 State, Madison, is presenting "Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945" (from the United States Holocaust Museum) through Wed., Dec. 10.

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools is hosting the exhibition, which consists of more than 200 reproductions of photographs, documents and artwork that analyze the Nazi regime's efforts to eradicate homosexuality, and the devastating effects the regime had on the gay community.

See www.gsaforsafeschools.org.

PASSAGES

Clissold 'Budd' Hill

Clissold "Budd" Hill, died peacefully at home Nov. 20 with his partner of 34 years, J. Robert "Bob" Caldwell, at his side.

A 1949 graduate of Oak Park High School, Budd was honored with that school's Tradition of Excellence Award in 1997. From Oak Park, Budd attended the University of Colorado and went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts in Design from Yale School of Drama.

His freelance career as a designer progressed through New York costume shops toward assisting in major Broadway and film productions. His costume designs on Broadway included: Thistle in my Bed; The Merchant of Venice; The Policemen; Oedipus Rex; and Pygmalion. He also worked for Joseph Papp's Shakespeare in the Park Productions, the first Broadway production of Camelot and the Children's Television workshop. Later, Budd branched into television, including games shows and soap operas (All My Children).

In 1978 Budd returned to the Midwest, where he served as a costume designer for 15 years at American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wis., while also working occasionally on designs in Chicago.

Budd lived a rich and wonderful life, and will be sorely missed by family and friends. There

Artist offers 'healing dreamscapes'

Nancy Gershman, an artist who has worked with such LGBT groups as PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), has pioneered an art form called "healing dreamscapes," which are photomontages using family photographs that tell stories intended to help families reconcile, send positive messages to loved ones and heal relationships.

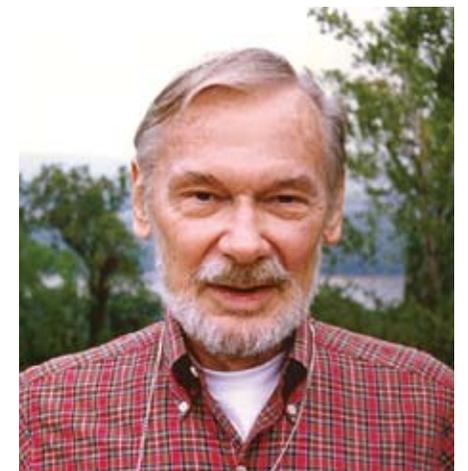
Her latest work, "Dreamscaping: The Therapeutic Photomontages of Nancy Gershman" is showing at The Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan through Sunday, Jan. 4, 2009. See www.luc.edu/luma/.

Gershman is offering to create "healing dreamscapes" for anyone in the LGBT community for free, as she is solely supported by grants and donations. Individuals each get an 8" x 10" print of his or her "dreamscape" and a CD. E-mail nancy@artforyoursake.com or call 773-255-4677.

Children's AIDS group on North Side Dec. 7

The Awassa Children's Project (ACP)—which supports two children's AIDS organizations in Awassa, Ethiopia—will hold its 7th Annual World AIDS Day event Sunday, Dec. 7, at The Wild Hare, 3530 N. Clark, 7-11 p.m.

There is a voluntary tax-deductible admission fee of \$25. See www.awassachildrensproject.org.



Clissold "Budd" Hill.

will be a private memorial dinner in December where his close friends can remember his spirit and regale his theatrical history.

To Caldwell, Hill "was my North, my South, my East and West."

Donations in Hill's memory may be made to The American Players Theatre, P.O. Box 819, 5950 Golf Course Road, Spring Green, WI 53588.

For further information, please contact the Cremation Society of Illinois at 773-281-5058.

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CHICAGO GAY HISTORY

BY JOHN D'EMILIO



Every kick is a boost

As the campaign to repeal Dade County's gay rights law headed into its final weeks, Chicago unexpectedly faced its own "Save Our Children" campaign. In mid-May, the Tribune began a four-part, front-page series on child pornography. The headlines seemed designed to agitate readers. "Child Pornography: Sickness for Sale," the Sunday paper announced to homes and families across Chicagoland. "Chicago is center of national child porno ring," it told readers heading to work on Monday morning.

The reporters, Michael Sneed and George Bliss, painted a terrifying picture of the dangers facing children. Up to 100,000 were involved, they claimed. The industry not only photographed and filmed children, but also sold their sexual services to adult men. The menace was near at hand. "Chicago is the headquarters of a nationwide ring trafficking in young boys," they wrote. "A nationwide homosexual ring with headquarters in Chicago has been trafficking in young boys, sending them across the nation to serve clients willing to pay hundreds of dollars for their services."

Law enforcement officials used extreme language to portray the danger. The Cook County state attorney called the industry "one of the most sordid rackets I've ever encountered." A detective compared it to "spider webs strung out all over the nation." Another described what happened as "a crime worse than murder."

The series put the gay community in a difficult spot. To attack the Tribune risked sounding like a defender of child sex abuse. Yet the reporting was irresponsible and unbalanced, and the claims stretched credibility. The paper purported to expose the sexual exploitation of children, yet in the whole series only five short paragraphs mentioned young girls. The writers claimed to have spent three months investigating an industry that exploited tens of thousands; they said Chicago was a major center of it; and they cooperated closely with police. Why then could the police only find two fourteen year old "victims"?

Over and over, the series fingered the city's gay

men as the source of the danger. Major evidence for the existence of the ring of child abusers came from "an informant in the area of Clark and Diversey," which was then identified as "a center of homosexual activities in Chicago." The commander of the youth division of the Chicago Police charged that the north side office of Children and Family Services was "a center of homosexuality," colluding with the sexual abuse of its young clients.

Some details were downright bizarre. A detective claimed he had seized from a national ring leader 30,000 index cards with the names of clients, but the State Department was said to have destroyed all the cards! The mastermind of the biggest network of child porn lovers was supposed to be a convict in an Illinois state prison. How did he manage all this, one wondered?

But sex panics don't require believability. The Tribune had set hysteria in motion. Alderman Ed Burke conducted public hearings. Governor Thompson appointed a state task force on child pornography. The U.S. Attorney opened an investigation and the Cook County state attorney convened a grand jury. Police and building inspectors descended on 34 adult bookstores and shut them down. Legislators in Springfield introduced eight bills to control the menace. Police stepped up their harassment of gay male cruising areas. And the Tribune editorialized about "the plague" that was thriving right here in Chicago.

The expose provoked a rapid response from gay and lesbian activists. Even before the series ended, representatives from several organizations held a press conference to denounce the reporting as an "indictment by insinuation of the entire gay community." Demonstrators chanted "Stop the witch hunt now!" as they picketed City Hall. Bill Kelley and Paul Goldman spoke at Alderman Burke's city council hearings. At a march in New Town, according to one report, "the gay community's anger at the Tribune series boiled over."

A week after the series began, over 4,000 men and women arrived at Uptown's Aragon for the Orange Ball, a fundraiser to help fight the referendum in Dade County, Fla. The one-two punch of antigay crusades in Florida and Chicago made the event the largest queer benefit in the city's history. Businesses displayed posters; bars contributed door prizes; and organizations provided volunteers.

Even the harassing presence of police failed to dampen the crowd's enthusiasm. Chuck Renslow, who produced the event, told the audience they were living through "a time of war"; he called for "unity of purpose ... as one family." Bob Basker, from the Dade County gay coalition, worked the crowd up by reading from ads that "Save Our Children" had placed in the Miami Herald. Bryant had allegedly recently declared that "God hates homosexuals because they eat sperm."

On June 7, as nearly everyone predicted, an overwhelming majority of voters in Dade County cast ballots to repeal the anti-discrimination statute. Anita Bryant danced a jig when she heard the news, and announced that she was preparing to transform "Save Our Children" into a national campaign to repeal ordinances in other cities. Chicago's editorial pages added to the pain of the vote. "Miami sends a message," said the Daily News. "The people simply aren't ready to accept homosexuality as a constitutional or human 'right,'" in defiance of "moral codes in effect for millennia." The Tribune editorial board told readers that "we share the concern of parents ... who see [homosexuality] as a latent threat to society." It advised gays and lesbians to practice "discretion."

For Chicagoans, however, the story wasn't over. Bryant was coming to Chicago the following week to perform at a Flag Day benefit concert for the Shriner's Children's Hospital. Gay men and lesbians descended on the Medinah Temple, located at Wabash and Ohio, to protest the singer's appearance. Marchers six abreast circled the building, as a large contingent of police looked on. "Anita is McCarthy in drag," one placard proclaimed. "God drinks wine, not orange juice," said another. Afterward, a large contingent marched over to Pioneer Court and the Tribune building, to chants of "Boycott the Tribune."

Claims about the size of the demonstration varied, from a conservative police count of 2,000 to one participant's estimate of ten to fifteen thousand. But no one disputed that it was a unique event in the city's queer history. "Exhilarating," recalled Linda Rodgers, a bartender who was there. "One of the biggest things that ever hit Chicago for the gay community," Grant Ford, the publisher of Gay Life, remembered. "There was just this feeling in the air that we could accomplish something," said Rich Pfeiffer, who organized Chicago's annual Pride parade. "It was an incredible feeling ... a feeling of empowerment."

Gays and lesbians in Dade County in 1977 lost an anti-discrimination law, but the months of headlines, fundraisers, rallies, and demonstrations—across the nation and here in Chicago—had accomplished something profound. Renee Hanover, an activist lawyer in Chicago who had participated in movements for social justice for decades, expressed it well. Bryant and Dade County had "unified and strengthened us as a national movement. Never before has one fight stirred the national gay and lesbian community to such fervor." Or, as one anonymous demonstrator told a Tribune reporter after the Dade County votes were tallied: "I don't think people should be disheartened ... Every kick is a boost."

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Benefit with 'Flair' at Martyr's

Chicago Flair—an event showcasing Chicago's diversity in entertainment—will take place Tuesday, Dec. 16, at Martyr's, 3855 N. Lincoln, at 8 p.m.

Among the scheduled highlights are burlesque performances by Viva La Muerte and Ms. Bea Haven; a spoken-word performance by the Miss Vine; and a fashion show of hard-to-find and exquisitely sexy latex clothes created by Chicago latex fashion's House of Bias.

The show is a benefit for Maria the Purple Goddess, a Chicago burlesque and fetish performer who had brain surgery earlier this year. Tickets are \$15; call 773-404-9494.

2009 LGBT college confab in Indiana

The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) will hold its 17th annual conference Feb. 13-15, 2009, at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind.

The theme is "Living Out Loud: Examining the Past to Enhance Our Future." Among the scheduled events are a career/vendor fair and various workshops.

The registration fee is \$60. See www.mblgtacc.org.

Chicago Pride Fest and Market Days dates set

Mark your calendars. Northalsted Area Merchants Association has announced that Chicago Pride Fest will run Saturday, June 27, 2009 and that Northalsted Market Days will occur Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 1-2, 2009.

Pride Fest™ runs from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. on Halsted Street between Waveland Avenue and Grace Street. Market Days, the largest two-day outdoor street festival in the Midwest, runs 11 a.m.-10 p.m. both days and has a gate entrance fee donation of \$7 per person.

See www.chicagoevents.com or www.northalsted.com.

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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

British Columbia pride parade canceled after threats

A gay pride parade planned for Nov. 15 in Abbotsford, British Columbia, was canceled after threats it would be attacked, the Vancouver Sun reported Nov. 23.

The parade, organized by high-school students using Facebook, was scheduled for the same day as the 300-city protests against California's Proposition 8, the ballot measure that re-banned same-sex marriage in the state.

The march was called off after a rival Facebook group formed with more than 300 members quoting the Bible, condemning homosexuality and proposing a straight-pride march.

Gay organizers say they also received threats that their march would be "egged."

Following the kerfuffle, the University of the Fraser Valley Pride Network stepped forward and is helping the high-school students organize a Dec. 6 "social justice rally" at Abbotsford Community Services, the Sun said.

Abbotsford, population 129,000, is located 46 miles (74 km) southeast of Vancouver on the border with Washington state.

80% of South Africans think gay sex is wrong

Despite a constitutional ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation and its being one of only six nations where same-sex couples can marry, South Africa remains deeply homophobic, a new survey has found.

The Human Sciences Research Council's annual South African Social Attitudes Survey, released Nov. 24, found that 80 percent of respondents think gay sex is wrong.

Whites, city dwellers and highly educated people polled less anti-gay than blacks, "coloureds" (mixed-race people), people with less education and those living in rural areas, the Sunday Times reported.

Euro MPs' gay leader blasts Burundi

The president of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights, Michael Cashman, on Nov. 26 condemned new legislation in the Central African nation of Burundi that specifically criminalizes gay sex.

Cashman discussed the matter with the European commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, Louis Michael, and called on the European Commission to raise the issue with Burundi's government.

"The commissioner expressed that he was shocked to learn of this law," Cashman said. "He (said) he will travel to Burundi and discuss his concerns with the government."

Burundi's National Assembly passed the explicit ban Nov. 21 as part of a package of more than 600 legal changes that included abolition of the death penalty. The measure punishes consensual adult gay sex with a large fine and a jail term of between three months and two years.

According to Amnesty International, male-male sex previously was targeted via laws governing "immoral acts."

The vote on the package was 90 to 0 with 10 abstentions. The legislation now advances to the Senate, then goes to President Pierre Nkurunziza. Neither is expected to oppose it.

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and the local Association pour le Respect des Droits des Homosexuels

(ARDHO) have written to each senator and to Nkurunziza in an attempt to stop the sex ban from becoming law.

"These laws are meant to silence and terrorize our community," said IGLHRC Executive Director Paula Ettelbrick.

A spokesman for ARDHO said, "The government has moved this bill quickly and unjustly through the legislative process ... over the course of a weekend, with no input from civil society or general discussion about the issue of homosexuality and freedom of expression within Burundi."

The small, landlocked nation has a population of 8.7 million, a life expectancy of less than 52 years, and a per capita gross domestic product at purchasing-power parity of \$300. The comparable figure for the U.S. is \$45,800. Norway's is \$53,300, Mexico's is \$12,400 and Vietnam's is \$2,600.

About two-thirds of African nations ban consensual sex between adults of the same sex.

Irish gay choir may sue festival

"Glória: Ireland's Lesbian & Gay Choir" is considering filing a Circuit Court lawsuit because the "lesbian & gay" part of its name was not included on posters advertising the 2004 Cork International Choral Festival.

According to The Sunday Tribune, a complaint the choir filed over the matter with the nation's Equality Tribunal was recently rejected because it had been filed by the group rather than an individual.

The choir's former musical director told the paper that the choir had insisted the festival use the group's full name in advertising and on posters but, upon arrival in Cork, choir members discovered that the festival had not done so.

"We sing and want to do it openly as gays and lesbians," said Bernadette Manning.

Transgender ex-MP wins Italian reality show

Transgender former Italian Member of Parliament Vladimir Luxuria won the Italian TV reality show *Celebrity Island (L'Isola dei Famosi)* Nov. 24.

Viewers selected Luxuria, 43, winner of the program after seeing the contestants live for six weeks on Honduran beaches.

Luxuria, who has not had sex-change surgery and whose real name is Wladimiro Guadagno, won 200,000 euros (\$260,000), half of which will be donated to UNICEF.

Luxuria served in the Chamber of Deputies from 2006 to 2008, representing a district of Rome for the Communist Refoundation Party.

Sweden to strike six sexual diagnoses from list

Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare will strike six sexual diagnoses from the nation's official list of medical diagnoses on Jan. 1, Stockholm's *The Local* newspaper reported.

The agency will remove transvestism, fetishism, fetishistic transvestism, sadomasochism, gender-identity disorder in youth and multiple disorders of sexual preferences from the list.

"We don't want to contribute to certain sexual behaviors being thought of as diseases," said board director Lars-Erik Holm. "These diagnoses are rooted in a time when everything other than the heterosexual missionary position was seen as sexual perversions."

Homosexuality was removed from the list 30 years ago.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"WATCHING THE RETURNS ON ELECTION NIGHT WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE. Barack Obama is our new president. Change is here. I, like millions of Americans, felt like we had taken a giant step towards equality. We were watching history. This morning, when it was clear that Proposition 8 had passed in California, I can't explain the feeling I had. I was saddened beyond belief. Here we just had a giant step toward equality and then on the very next day, we took a giant step away. I believe one day a 'ban on gay marriage' will sound totally ridiculous. In the meantime, I will continue to speak out for equality for all of us." — *Ellen DeGeneres on her Web site, Nov. 5.*

"OKAY. SO PROP 8 PASSED. ALRIGHT, I GET IT. 51% OF YOU THINK THAT I AM A SECOND CLASS CITIZEN. Alright then. So my wife, uh I mean, roommate? Girlfriend? Special lady friend? You are gonna have to help me here because I am not sure what to call her now. Anyways, she and I are not allowed the same right under the state constitution as any other citizen. Okay, so I am taking that to mean I do not have to pay my state taxes because I am not a full citizen. I mean that would just be wrong, to make someone pay taxes and not give them the same rights, sounds sort of like that taxation without representation thing from the history books." — *Melissa Etheridge writing at The Daily Beast, Nov. 6.*

"(R)IGHT-WING FORCES LED BY THE MORMON CHURCH Poured TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO THE CAMPAIGN FOR PROPOSITION 8—a measure to enshrine bigotry in the state's Constitution by preventing people of the same sex from marrying. The measure was designed to overturn May's State Supreme Court decision, which made California the second state to end that exclusion of same-sex couples. ... Apart from creating legal uncertainty about the thousands of same-sex marriages that have been performed in California and giving rise to lawsuits challenging whether the rules governing ballot measures were properly followed, the immediate impact of Tuesday's rights-shredding exercise is to underscore the danger of allowing the ballot box to be used to take away people's fundamental rights." — *New York Times editorial, Nov. 6.*

"THEY HAD A VERY, VERY STRONG CAMPAIGN, THE PRO-PROPOSITION 8 PEOPLE, and I think that the people that tried to defeat it did not have, maybe, as good a campaign or had as much money behind it, whatever. I think it is unfortunate, obviously, but it's not the end, because I think this will go back into the courts, this will go back to the Supreme Court because the Supreme Court very clearly in California has declared this unconstitutional. It's the same as in the 1948 case when blacks and whites were not allowed to marry. This falls into the same category. So, I think that we will again, you know, maybe undo that, if the court is willing to do that, and then move forward from there and again lead in that area. ... Because of the big turnout amongst African-Americans and Latinos, that had an effect also, which they did not expect, so there's all kinds of other things there. And

I think the religious groups have done a really big campaign, a lot of them, to support Proposition 8, and so on, and so it's a very, very difficult thing. ... (Y)ou should never ever give up. ... They (gays) should never give up. They should be on it and on it until they get it done." — *California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to CNN, Nov. 9.*

"WE'RE (DAVID FURNISH AND I) NOT MARRIED. Let's get that right. We have a civil partnership. What is wrong with Proposition 8 is that they went for marriage. Marriage is going to put a lot of people off, the word marriage. I don't want to be married. I'm very happy with a civil partnership. If gay people want to get married, or get together, they should have a civil partnership. The word marriage, I think, puts a lot of people off. You get the same equal rights that we do when we have a civil partnership. Heterosexual people get married. We can have civil partnerships." — *Elton John to USA Today, Nov. 12.*



Marriage is going to put a lot of people off.

—Elton John

"THE NO (ON PROP 8) SIDE (WAS) AHEAD BY DOUBLE-DIGIT MARGINS THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE PRE-TELEVISION CAMPAIGN STAGES. However, as the TV advertising hit in mid to late September, the Yes campaign ads proved to be more effective, and the polls showed the No side advantage slipping. The movement continued into and through the final weekend of the election when the churches and various religious groups made a concerted effort to win over the support of their congregations. The evidence shows that they were successful." — *Mark DiCamillo, director of California's The Field Poll, writing at Pollster.com, Nov. 7.*

"I'M A BIG LESBIAN WHO LOOKS LIKE A MAN. I am not, like, Anchor Babe, and I'm never gonna be." — *MSNBC talk show host Rachel Maddow as quoted by Out.com, Nov. 4.*

"IT'S OFTEN SAID THAT TOM (OF FINLAND'S) greatest achievement was in drawing gay men who were masculine, happy and proud at a time when they were supposed to be effeminate, neurotic and shameful. This is certainly the reason why so many gay men are Tom devotees, wittingly or not. Today's gay porn is merely footnotes to Tom, endlessly replaying the narrative of 'regular guys' with very irregular-sized penises and pectorals having spontaneous, shameless sex at the drop of a monkey wrench." — *Martin Simpson, writing in The Times of London, Nov. 3.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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JAMAR OSBORNE

Gay marriage overturned by mob rule

Imagine that in this past election, there were state initiatives to ban interracial marriages because children might learn about them in school. Now imagine that there were racially discriminatory state initiatives designed to preserve the "sanctity" of white neighborhoods. I would like to think that most Americans would be outraged. Some might respond that this could never happen because America has a legal system to ensure equal protection of all its citizens. Does equal protection really apply to all Americans or does it apply to all Americans except gays?

In May of this year, the California Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage. The moderately conservative, Republican-dominated court ruled that citizens have a fundamental "right to marry" the person of their choice and that gender restrictions violate the state Constitution's equal protection guarantee.

Religious and conservative groups slammed the decision as judges legislating from the bench and vowed to have the decision overturned by a vote of the people in the November election. They began campaigning for Proposition 8, an initiative to ban gay marriage in the state of California. Over \$73 million was spent on the initiative and by a narrow margin, the ban was ultimately passed with a 52-48 percent vote.

In *Marbury v. Madison*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "An act of the legislature repugnant to the Constitution is void. The court went on

to say, "It is emphatically the province of the judicial department to say what the law is. If two laws conflict with each other, the courts must decide on the operation of each." The Court reasoned that "those who apply the rule to particular cases, must of necessity expound and interpret that rule."

The decision reached by the California Supreme Court that the state's original ban on gay marriage violated the state constitution's guarantee to equal protection was not the result of activist judges pushing a liberal agenda. This was a Republican-dominated court and under the court's interpretation, the state's ban on gay marriage violated the state's Constitution. Courts have a huge responsibility to protect minorities and ensure equal protection under the law. For those who believe that the court's decision was judicial activism, I would like to point out that America has never had a purely codified system of government. Since its inception, America adopted common-law principles from England. America has a mixed legal system; our system is part common law and part codified law. It was well within the California Supreme Court's authority, duty and responsibility to rule on the issue.

Article Four of the U.S. Constitution states that "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government..." Contrary to popular opinion, America is a republic and not a democracy.

John Adams distinguished a democracy from a republic by affirming that a republic is a "government of laws and not of men." The founding fathers were cautious about how a democratic form of government would lead to the intrusion of individual liberties. James Madison wrote that the greatest danger to liberty lies not in the executive or legislative branches of government, but "in the body of people, operating by the majority against the minority." Madison forewarned that a "pure democracy is unwieldy, dangerous in its passion, and subject to mob rule thereby lending itself to instability and violence." The founders believed that the best way to safeguard individual rights from the impulsive will of the majority was to have a government of fixed laws,

created by elected representatives (as opposed to laws created by the people directly).

One of the problems with democracy is that voters tend to be irrational. Voter irrationality stems from the fact that voters have strong biases and are often uninformed on the issues. In California, voters were misguided into believing that allowing gay marriages would mean that churches would be required to perform same-sex marriages and that schools would be forced to teach children about same-sex marriages.

In America, we have a government of laws, not a government of men. We have elected officials to create the laws and courts to interpret them. It's perfectly fine for voters to decide whether or not to raise taxes to build bridges or schools, but complex issues pertaining to individual liberties should be decided by public officials who can be held accountable for their public policy decisions. There is no accountability for anonymous voters and considerable questions could be raised about their objectivity and familiarity with the issues. The fact that California's ban on gay marriage came from a vote of the people adds neither to its credibility nor its legitimacy. It is completely un-American for people to randomly target a class of people, form mobs and then raise millions of dollars to disenfranchise that particular group.

While there are many Americans who are uncomfortable with the idea of gays having the right to marry, marriage is a fundamental right and should not be decided by a whimsical tyranny of the majority. Madison warned that "If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure." Today, gay rights are insecure in California because of mob rule. The founders were wise enough to realize that corruption would follow from mob rule. For supporters of Proposition 8 and other state bans on gay marriage to ignore the wisdom of the founders is reckless and sets a dangerous precedent for the sake of political expedience.

Jamar Osborne is a nationally published columnist and human-rights activist. He has a J.D. from the University of Oklahoma and a bachelor's degree from Cameron University.



TOM FOSTER

Civil rights threatened by referendums

The recent decision of California voters to take away the right of gays and lesbians to marry highlights the danger of exposing civil-rights protection to popular vote.

Earlier this year, the Superior Court of California ruled that under the California constitution gays and lesbians had the same right as heterosexuals to be married by the state. The decision in no way infringed upon the privilege of churches to sanctify marriages as they saw fit.

The issue is, of course, not limited to California. In last week's election, voters in Arizona and Florida decided to deny gays and lesbians the right to marry, with Florida also choosing to deny both heterosexual and homosexual couples the option of civil unions. In Arkansas, voters decided that gay and lesbian parents should not be allowed to adopt or act as foster parents by restricting those activities to married couples.

Marriage in this country (as it was in even Puritan New England) is a civil contract. Thus, superior courts in California, Massachusetts and Connecticut weighing the issue against their constitutions found its denial violates the civil rights of gays and lesbians. This is precisely why

opponents of gay marriage place the issue on a referendum in the hopes that voters will change their constitutions to be more restrictive.

Civil marriage and church marriage are two concepts that should be kept separate. This separation is as old as the U.S. Constitution. In states that allow gay marriages, as it could have been in California if Proposition 8 had failed, churches maintain their right to permit or deny their religious ceremonies of marriage.

The founding fathers purposefully avoided writing into the Constitution any sanctioning of religion by the state. They had learned lessons from their own history—in Europe and the American colonies.

Puritan New England famously founded its colonial enterprise with some official divisions between state and church, not allowing ministers to hold office, for example. But the Puritans also cited the Bible to support capital punishment and other laws. Thus, adultery, then defined as sex between a married woman with either a single or married man (and not a married man with a single woman) was punishable by death.

Today, the West criticizes regimes that enforce religious faith by state government, such as Iran's death penalty against homosexual sex, for example.

When supporters of defining marriage as between one man and one woman argue that allowing gay and lesbians to marry offends their religious faith, they are invoking a long and troubled history of faith and sexuality in this country alone.

Because the Bible is most frequently invoked in such arguments, presumably that faith is limited to Christianity.

But given this logic the problem quickly arises of whose faith the law should follow given that we are a diverse nation.

Few would argue that the law should derive from Catholicism, for example, with its prohibition on birth control. Does legal birth control not offend a Catholic's faith?

Fewer still would argue that the law should be designed to avoid offending those sects of Mormonism today, who claim that prohibitions against polygamy violate their faith.

Even fewer would argue that sex be altogether illegal, lest we violate those who identify as Shakers today and embrace celibacy.

California's legal battles surrounding gay marriage have yet to be settled. Still in question are the legal challenges in response to the Californians' recent vote. The United States Supreme Court may down the road be called upon to rule on the matter. Still in legal limbo is the status of the 18,000 gays and lesbians who married when California provided that right to them.

In all such cases, spurious arguments about gay and lesbian marriages invoke selective readings of the Bible, faulty interpretations of the Founding Fathers, and lessons not learned from American history or from current religiously intolerant regimes in the world today.

The outcome of the recent referendum in California shows us that unless Americans can recognize that their own individual religious beliefs should not be the basis for the legal structure of the country, civil rights should no longer be put to public vote.

Tom Foster is an associate professor of history at DePaul University; editor of the award-winning Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America; and author of Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America (Beacon, 2006). He writes op-eds on gay and lesbian issues and the history of sexuality for History News Service.

naughty/nice

Windy City Times' special pullout
Holiday Gift Guide
 week **one**: naughty

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Windy City Times' **naughty/nice** Holiday Gift Guide

week **one**: **naughty**

BY ANDREW DAVIS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM JEAN ALBRIGHT

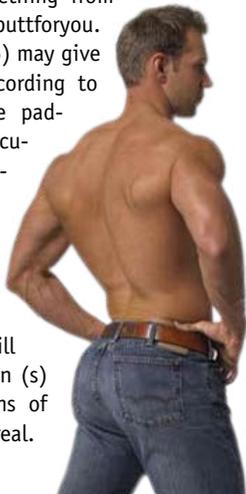


Derm limits

Not all relationships allow suggestions about grooming and **Crystalift's Vacuum Microdermabrasion System** (www.crystalift.com; \$199) is a bit too costly to risk having it thrown at the wall or your head. But for those who understand the value of vacuum microdermabrasion, this personal, counter-top machine is a find. Convenience and control make it a first-class addition to anyone's personal routine.

Butt seriously

You may say you're helping out someone, but anyone who gets something from **Butt For You** (www.buttforyou.com; starting at \$39.95) may give you the stink-eye. According to its press release, "the padded briefs are meticulously tailored to accommodate the body shaping pads, giving a healthy, youthful, natural and virile appearance." Hopefully, your one-night stand will keep that in mind when (s) he sees that your buns of steel are not quite for real.



Got wood?

The second series of the captivating pansexual British sci-fi series **Torchwood** (headed by dreamy out actor John Barrowman, who plays Captain Jack Harkness) is now out on DVD (www.amazon.com; \$79.98). The five-disc set includes all 13 episodes as well as "Torchwood Declassified," a special feature that delves behind the scenes of each episode—and believe me when I say that the season ends on a shocking note (or two).



Power trip

If money is no limit, how about making a power statement (and getting jealous stares) while working out (or pretending to)? The **Morgan Grays Power Gym Bag** (www.junoandjove.com; \$1,530) is black with yellow piping, and comes in buffalo leather with suede leather lining. However, for that price, some might argue that you should get a free personal trainer with it.

Dome if you want to

It might look extravagant, but the trick regarding the eye-catching **14K Yellow Gold Over Silver Dome Ring** (www.overstock.com; \$39.99) will be on anyone who thinks this piece costs an arm and a leg; this bauble will hardly make a dent in your purse or wallet.



Gleaming the lube

K-Y Brand YOURS+MINE™ (www.ky.com or www.drugstore.com; \$16) aims to "provide a unique and fun new way for couples to communicate on an intimate level," as there is a package of two vials. (You can even leave the vials in light for a few minutes, and then they glow in the dark.) The *really* interesting thing is that one vial is usually geared for men and the other for women—meaning that they provide two different sensations. However, depending on where you fall within the sexual spectrum (and your penchant for experimentation), this trait may not present a problem at all.



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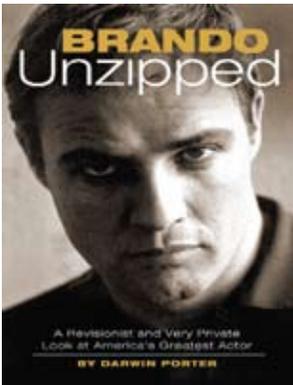
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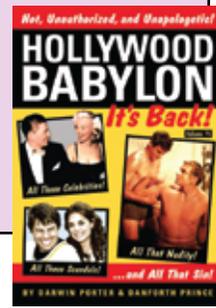
Windy City Times' **naughty/nice** Holiday Gift Guide

week one: **naughty**



Hollywood swingin'

Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Sir John Gielgud, Burt Lancaster—these are just a few of the stars Marlon Brando allegedly had his way with. This and so much more are covered in the book **Brando Unzipped** (www.BloodMoonProductions.com; \$26.95). However, if you crave more—and who wouldn't?—there's **Hollywood Babylon; It's Back** (www.BloodMoonProductions.com; \$24.95), which details everything from sexuality to murder to penis size, and covers everyone from Clark Gable to Daniel Radcliffe. No body part is left unturned.



Heads and tails

Some naughty items need little or no explanation—which is precisely why the **BriefTales** bits (and models) are here. The local company started peddling its titillating wares over a decade ago, and offers such delectables as leather jockstraps, bong clip thongs and the Moonshine (which, again, needs no explanation). See www.BriefTales.com.



I'll drink to that

You and your friends can get sloshed (at approximately the same time), thanks to the **Shotstick** (www.shotsticks.com; \$29.95), which is a contraption that lets several people take simultaneous shots. And they say necessity is the mother of invention...



Chocolate rain

DeBrand Chocolates (www.debrand.com; various prices) offers some incredibly delicious items, and that's no lie. For those who want just a little, there are the tasting bars, with pieces divided into nibbles, bites and chunks. However, there's a huge variety of other items, such as the DeBrand Chocolate Connoisseur Collection (including Aphrodite, Aphrodite, a mix of dark chocolate ganache, pomegranate and plum juice with hints of cloves, star anise, cinnamon and peppers) and even membership in the exclusive Beverly Hills Cigar Club.



Hard drive

Now you can be a fashionista and a computer genius at the same time. This **Swarovski USB Memory Key** (www.swarovski.com; \$180) is disguised as a stainless-steel heart pendant on a silver silk cord. The key has a 1 GB capacity that holds up to 250 songs or up to 1,000 images—pornographic and otherwise.

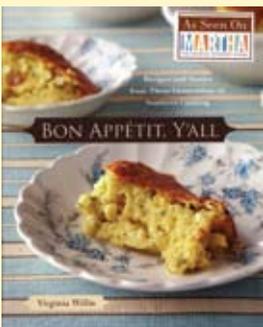


Self promotion

Talk about leaving your DNA in the bedroom: Adrian Salamunovic's **DNA portraits** (www.dna11.com; starting at \$169), uh, come in 25 color combinations. The DNA collection process is harmless and involves swabs; how you want to collect is up to you. (Fingerprint and lip-print portraits, as well as DNA mini-portraits, are also available.)

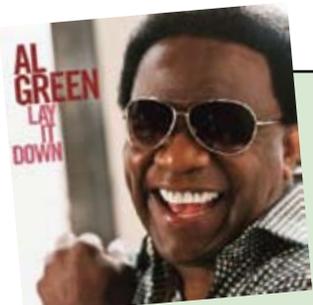
French twist

You might become a little gluttonous after eyeing the recipes in **Bon Appétit, Y'all** (www.virginiawillis.com; \$32.50), in which lesbian chef Virginia Willis relies on classic French technique to let dishes shine through in a style she calls "refined Southern cuisine." Envision items such as quail with red-wine sauce, mixed buttermilk mash and Nathalie's oyster casserole—and master the possibilities.



A hard 'Rabbit' to break

Down the Rabbit Hole (www.amazon.com; \$97), Justin Monroe's sexy photographic take on Alice in Wonderland and other tales, will pique anyone's interest. Readers will explore a world of surreal fantasy, and Janice Dickinson, Amanda Lepore and porn star Erik Rhodes will lead the way. Uh, oh...



Green day

He's classic, and his latest album will get anyone in the mood. Al Green's **Lay It Down** (www.amazon.com; \$18.98) features the soul icon singing by himself as well engaging in duets with Corinne Bailey Rae, John Legend and Anthony Hamilton. A little champagne and a little Al Green provide about as seductive a setting as possible.

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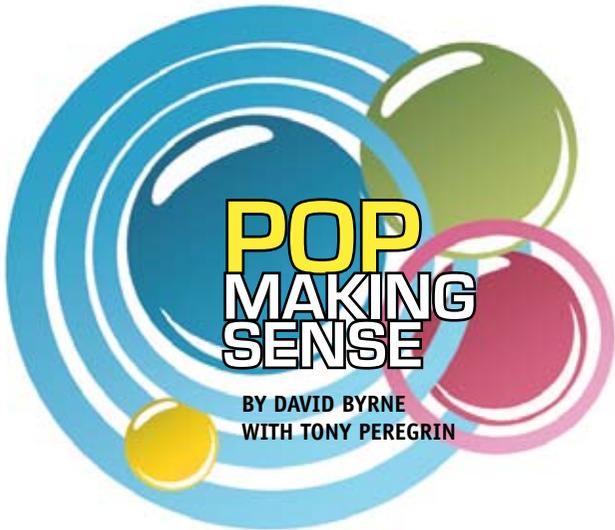
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POP MAKING SENSE

BY DAVID BYRNE
WITH TONY PEREGRIN

This holiday season, there are many tunes out there that can have the same effect as mistletoe. Need something to make your playlist more passionate? There are options beyond the newly released ballad-focused retrospectives from Mariah Carey and Celine Dion.

On the title track from her debut *Worrisome Heart*, **Melody Gardot's** tempting purr can melt any frosted window. The sultry jazz accompaniment takes it to another level, recalling the steamy cabaret scenes from *The Fabulous Baker Boys*. Throughout her bow on Verve, Gardot comes across as Norah Jones with a tinkering for smoky jazz. The Philadelphia native was hospitalized after being hit by a car while on her bicycle. The singer-songwriter's doctor recommended music therapy to the bedridden Gardot, which got her to start recording music. Gardot's *Sweet Memory* has been heard on ABC's *Samantha Who?*, and *Worrisome Heart* was featured on NBC's *Lipstick Jungle*.

Adele makes quite an impression with her debut outing, *19*. Drawing comparisons to big-voiced veterans such as Etta James and Alyson Moyet, the British newcomer excels at tackling slower numbers like *Daydreamer*, her breakout single *Chasing Pavements* and *Melt My Heart to Stone*. Adele is a graduate of the BRIT School of Performing Arts, where fellow standout singers Amy Winehouse and Leona Lewis have studied. A limited edition of *19* is available with a second disc containing live tracks, including a pairing with Jack White's band *The Raconteurs* to redo *Many Shades of Black*. After her sold-out state-side tour earlier this year, Adele returns to Chicago with a date at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage, Jan. 19.

Few can deliver a tragic love song quite like **George Michael**. His recent retrospective, *Twenty Five*, shows off his history of favoring down-and-out ballads like *Careless Whisper*, *One More Try* and *Jesus to a Child*. New material like the cover of *The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face* and *This Is Not Real Love* are welcome additions to his repertoire. Michael's multiple run-in's with the law can be briefly overlooked as he pours out his heart's woes here.

Missing the suave approach of Marvin Gaye? On *The Way I See It*, **Raphael Saadiq** unearths some "sexual healing" with his knack for the old-school sound. Calling, *Oh Girl* and *Just One Kiss* (his duet with Joss

Stone) summon the soul grooves of yesteryear. Also, the former member of *Toni! Toni! Toni!* contributes *Let's Take a Walk to the Cadillac Records* soundtrack.

Seventies soul is the focus on **Seal's** covers project, aptly titled *Soul*. His unique voice delivers true renditions of *A Change Is Gonna Come* and *If You Don't Know Me by Now*. *Soul* is a much-overdue project to show off Seal's distinctive chops matched with the Motown sound. In 2004, Seal did a remake of *Lips Like Sugar* by *Echo & the Bunnymen* for the soundtrack to the Drew Barrymore romantic comedy *50 First Dates*.

On *Just a Little Lovin'*, **Shelby Lynne** puts her spin on nine *Dusty Springfield* favorites, including *I Only Want to Be with You*, *The Look of Love* and *Breakfast in Bed*. In this honest homage, Lynne remakes these on her own terms by turning down the notch some on Springfield's signature takes, making subtlety go a long way. The superb *Just a Little Lovin'* is produced by Phil Ramone and makes for a great harbinger as *Nicole Kidman* is set to star in a biopic on Springfield.

Both **kd lang** and **Tracy Chapman** return this year with albums laden with love songs, although both have been known to sing of the maladies of the heart. On lang's *Watershed* and Chapman's *Our Bright Future*, these Grammy winners favor intimacy. lang's *I Dream of Spring* and *Close Your Eyes* and Chapman's *Sing for You* and *Thinking of You* expose a certain loving tenderness these two talents tend to shy away from.

Matt Alber's *Hide Nothing* and **Sarah McLachlan's** hits package, *Closer*, are absolutely ethereal. If Alber's stubble and boyish smile do not seduce you, just be prepared to be uplifted by his songs *The Slow Club* and *End of the World*. Ever the romantic, Alber freely sings of man-on-man love with stars in his eyes. McLachlan's *Possession* may seem a bit too stalker-esque, but the Canadian crooner makes it all right to end up on the naughty list sometimes.

Med Sud I Eyrum Vid Spilum Endalaust marks the first album that **Sigur Ros** recorded outside of its native Iceland. *Godan Daginn* and *Med Sud I Eyrum* are purely magical, as is the band's first stab at a song entirely in English titled *All Right*. The instrumentation and out singer's Jonsi Birgisson's booming falsetto allow for plenty of room for imagination. The works of Sigur Ros have been used in *Queer As Folk*, *Vanilla Sky* and *Mysterious Skin*.

If you prefer electronica to spark warmth, give *The Logic of Pleasure* by **Blank and Jones** a try. Guest vocalist Vanessa Daou certainly knows what it takes to get "two to tango" as she returns in top form on the alluring *Consequences*. Even the pulsating beats on the instrumental pieces *California Sunset* and *Breakout* can make the heart go aflutter.

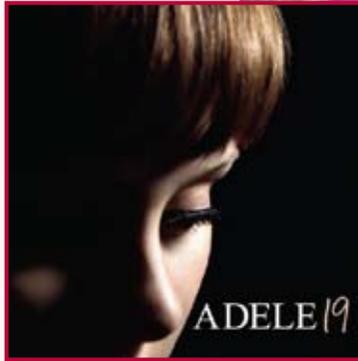
Congratulations are in order for **Sophie B. Hawkins** (probably best known for the song *Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover*) for the birth of her son, Dashiell, born Nov. 17.



Melody Gardot's *Worrisome Heart*.



Sigur Ros' *Med Sud I Eyrum Vid Spilum Endalaust*.



Adele's *19*.



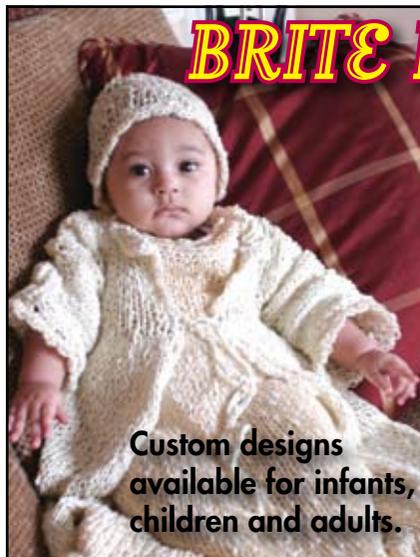
Tracy Chapman's *Our Bright Future*.



Raphael Saadiq's *The Way I See It*.



Seal's *Soul*.



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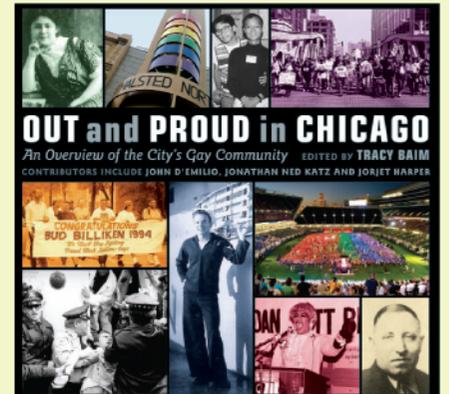
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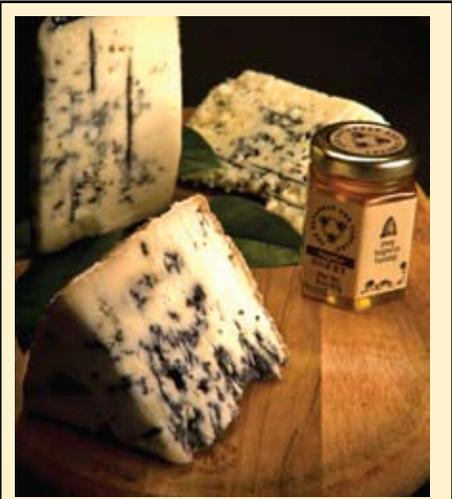
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Windy City Times' **naughty/nice**
 Holiday Gift Guide
 week **one**: **naughty**

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I see you

To indulge the stalker in you, there are the **Galileo 8x22 Digital Camera Binoculars** (www.joessports.com; \$39.99). They let you get close to the action (or object of your desire) and capture images with fully-coated optics and an integrated megapixel digital camera.

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Windy City Times' naughty/nice Holiday Gift Guide

week one: naughty

Holiday spirits

Yes, alcohol usually makes a lovely gift—but think outside the box. There's the Brazilian spirit **Cabana Cachaça** (available at Binny's, 213 W. Grand, and Gold Standard, 3000 N. Clark); **Rubi Rey Rum** (www.rubirey.com), which is single barrel-finished; **Nuvo** (www.sparklingnuvo.com), which is a combination of French ultra-premium vodka, sparkling French wine and natural fruit nectar; and **Tullamore Dew 10-Year Old Irish Whiskey** (www.tullamoredew.com), which has only 900 cases allotted for 2008.



'Never?' More!

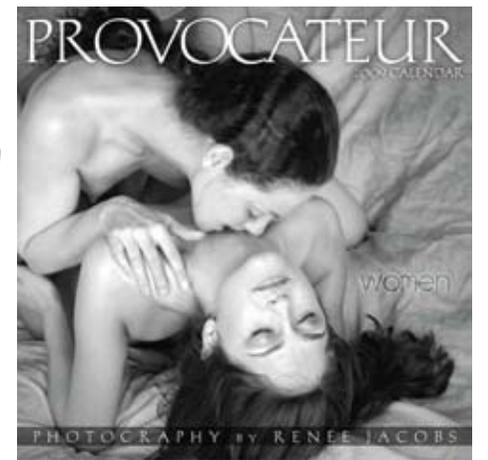
Find out what level of hell you're going to end up in by playing **I've Never** (www.ivenevergame.com; \$19.99), which is based on the popular drinking game. As you may or may not know, you're given statements such as "I've never bought edible underwear"; if you have done such a thing, you take a drink. Just hope your collegiate shenanigans aren't brought to light.



Skin game

Two insanely popular calendars are back for their 2009 editions. The **Dieux du Stade** calendar (www.tlavideo.com; \$44.99) features 39 photos of buff European men, including the famous Italian Rugby player Sergio Parisse.

Meanwhile, the **Provocateur Women 2009** calendar (www.amazon.com or www.tlavideo.com; \$15.95) explores female sensuality in all its alluring aspects.



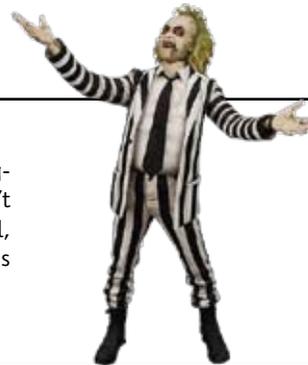
Cutting edge

Looking for an edgy twist on the cufflink? Look no further than the **Chef's Knife cufflinks** (www.uncommongoods.com; \$88). Besides looking hot, these items can tip others off about your professions, hobbies—or Basic Instinct-like proclivities. There are also Phillips Head Screw cufflinks (\$85) at the same site that can tip others off about ... oh, never mind.



Doll Face

You know you're in a different world when you see the phrase "John Lennon Action Figure." However, **Rock-n-Roll-Action-Figures.com** (<http://rock-n-roll-action-figures.com/>) doesn't just have figurines based on rock deities; TV and film collectibles are at this Web site as well, including Beetlejuice and characters from the show Family Guy. What you choose to do with Elvis and Jon Bon Jovi in the privacy of your home is your business.



The Flame game

The stage is set: smooth music, a homemade (or, in my case, catered) meal and candles. Now, instead of possibly stumbling over said candles and causing a three-alarm fire, you can use the **Zippo Candle Lighter** (www.zippocasemuseum.com; \$14.95) to elegantly—and romantically—help the evening sail along. Moreover, the lighters come in a variety of colors, including pearl, cabernet, sea foam and pink.

Shubi do

Sarah Jessica Parker and Alicia Keys are among the celebrities who own **Shubi bags** (www.shubilove.com). Most people use these fashionable bags to carry shoes, but they can also everything else from a bottle of chardonnay to your latest acquisition from the adult-novelty store.



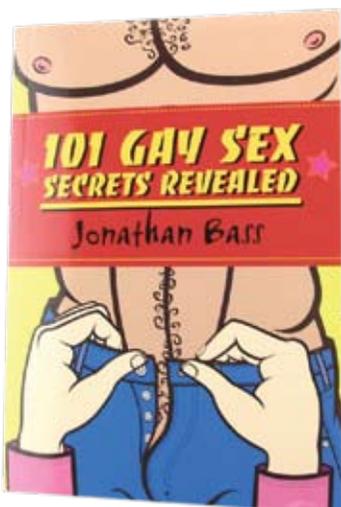
Toast of all

The morning after, you might want to impress your brand-new lover with your cooking skills—and it can start with the **Dualit Toaster** (www.williams-sonoma.com; \$239.95). Features include one-side bagel toasting, a defrost setting, wider slots and electronic controls that operate each slot independently. The result is more efficient toasting—which means that you and your new friend can resume things that much more quickly.



Let's talk about sex

We like it when book titles are to the point, and if you don't get **101 Gay Sex Secrets Revealed** (www.romanticgifts.com/101gaysexser.html; \$13.95) you probably shouldn't be out in public. Whether you are (or your partner is) a novice or a master (and you can take that term how you want), you'll still want to practice a thing or two from this guide. And you know what they say: Practice makes perfect.



Soap springs eternal

You may be clean but you'll be ready to do something dirty thanks to **The Zirh Cocktail Bar Collection** (www.sephora.com; \$15 each). The bars come in scents such as Long Island Iced Tea, Hurricane, Sake Bomb, Cucumber Martini and Screwdriver. Don't be surprised if people want to taste bar while you're bar-hopping.



Thong enough:

ADEA, creators of the Italian line of lingerie and layering pieces, is celebrating the holidays by offering a special price on three of their luxurious **camisole and thong sets** (www.myadea.com; camisole-\$48; thong-\$21). Adea's collection of layering tops, bottoms, and lingerie are created from a luxurious and light-weight micro fiber—and are most alluring. (Note: If readers type in the code "DEC08," they can get 20 percent off the entire single purchase. Free shipping applies to orders over \$100.)



Age against the machine

After subjecting yourself to stress during the day and clubs at night, your hair may need a little help looking and staying healthy. Each **Ookisa's Follicle Anti-Aging Dietary Supplement** (www.ookisa.com; \$29.95) softgel capsule releases herbal and botanical extracts that successfully resists DHT, the hormone responsible for balding.



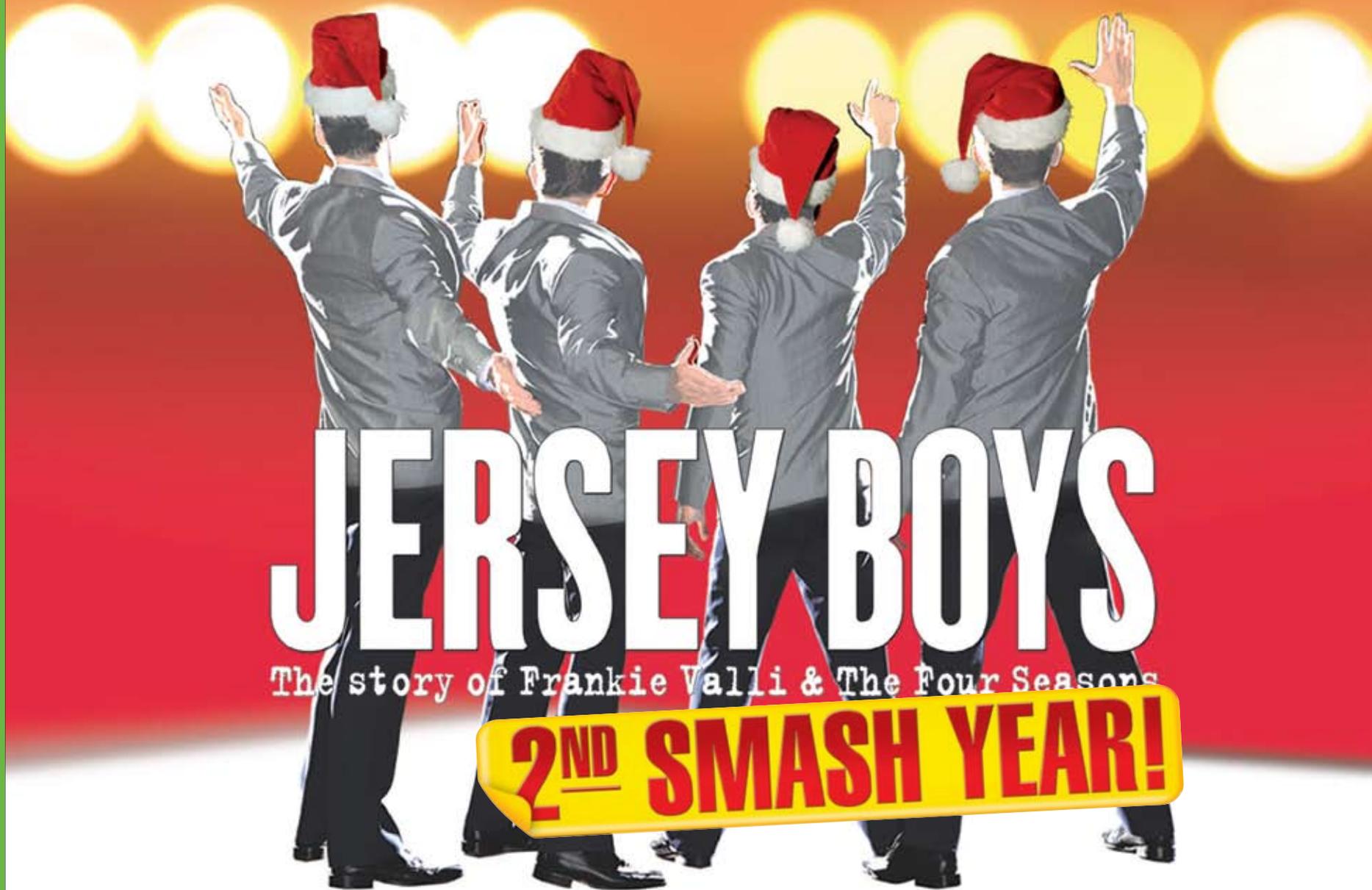
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Photo: Chris Callis



GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Chris Blakeley

The burlesque show *Land of the Sweets* (above, with human snowflakes) is one of many local holiday-themed offerings. See below.

THEATER

Going to the well.
page 20

Photo by Michael Brosilow



BOOKS

Down to a 'Tea.'
page 23



SPORTS

Flag reel.
page 26

Photo by Mel Ferrand



Scottish Play Scott

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Kids are constantly bribed to be nice each December to curry favor with Santa. But as grown-ups, we can cut out the pretense of phony niceties and give into the naughtiness of sin, sarcasm and satire for the holidays.

Instead of traditionally forced Christmas cheer à la *A Christmas Carol* or *The Nutcracker*, consider these alphabetically listed non-traditional holiday shows to liven up the season with a brisk splash of irony mixed with ignominy (Watch out for long titles!) Items are in Chicago unless indicated otherwise:

—ARFTCo's **Almost-Has-A-Witty-Title (We Really Mean It This Time!)** *Chicago Christmas Spectacular!* is A Reasonable Facsimile Theatre Company's second long-titled comedy revue that massacres the squeaky clean image of sacred holiday icons and situations. You'd better watch out for a gun-toting Santa Claus in this year's edition at the Conservatory, 4210 N. Lincoln, through Dec. 27; 312-409-6435.

—**Bing Faithful's Nondenominational Holiday Special** features improviser and actor Bob Kulhan taking on the persona of a pop crooner trying to dream of a white Christmas while facing two horrific "the-show-must-go-on" incidents of live broadcasting. See if Bing Faithful can hold it all together (including his liquor) at the Annoyance Theatre, 4830 N. Broadway, through Jan. 2; 773-561-4665.

—**Cold** is Jeremy Menekseoglu's adults-only Christmas tale of two lonely souls who find each other amid disappointments, prescription-drug abuse and lots of eggnog. See if their love will keep them warm at Dream Theatre Company, 556 W. 18th, through Dec. 21; 773-552-8616.

—**The David Bowie Hepzikat Funky Velvet Flarney Solstice Spectacular, Live... From Space!** (David Bowie's Christmas Special 1977



Almost-Has-A-Witty-Title (We Really Mean It This Time!) *Chicago Christmas Spectacular!* Photo by Tina Haglund

network edit) is New Millennium Theatre Company's fantasy of what a holiday special hosted by David Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust" persona would have been like. Get spaced out at the National Pastime Theater, 4139 N. Broadway, through Dec. 27; 312-458-9083.

—**Drinking and Writing Vol. IV: The 12 Steps of Xmas** celebrates famed authors' creative alcoholic lubricants of choice. See this return engagement at the Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, through Dec. 19; 773-871-3000.

—**Faith** is not a reference to 1980s pop by George Michael, but Nathaniel Wright's semi-autobiographical black comedy about six Midwesterners of different races, faiths, classes and sexual orientations who are all forced to confront each other for the Christmas holiday. See this Chicago premiere courtesy of Sandhill Theatre Company at the fairly new Stage 33 Chicago, 3655 N. Kedzie, through Jan. 4; 773-648-0583.

—**500 Clown Christmas** is 500 Clown's acclaimed three-clown deconstruction of Charles Dickens' tale of a misers redemption, placed in context of our own seasonal joys and angst. And

yes, Virginia, there is a suburban berth for 500 Clown at North Central College's Meiley-Swallow Hall, 31 S. Ellsworth, Naperville, from Dec. 18-23; 630-637-7469.

—**Land of the Sweets: The Burlesque Nutcracker** is the nation's first and only full-blown professional production of the holiday classic rendered in 1930s burlesque cabaret style. It will premiere in Chicago at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage, Tuesday-Wed., Dec. 9-10. It will run at 7 and 10 p.m. each night; 312-553-1212.

—**Late Nite Catechism** and its hit spin-offs *Put the Nuns in Charge* and *Sunday School Cinema* always get spruced up in Christmas finery. But the ever-stern Sister has a special guest star this season for her celluloid edition: Dick O'Day's Big Lovely Holiday Bingo (featuring the wacky film-o-phile persona of Windy City Times critic Richard Knight, Jr.). Be as Catholic as you can be at the Royal George Theatre Center, 1641 N. Halsted. Sister is in an open run, but Dick O'Day's guest spot is only through Dec. 21; 312-988-9000 or 312-902-1500.

—**Northern Foreclosure: All I Want For Christmas are my Front Door Keys** is Shantz

Theatre's attempt to find humor in the toxic sub-prime mortgage-backed securities that are freezing up the world's credit markets. Get some holiday stimulus packages at the Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee, through Dec. 20. \$12; 773-598-4549.

—**Robinson Crusoe** is Piccolo Theatre's entry for its annual British Christmas pantomime. Why is this theatrical holiday tradition included in such a pessimistic listing? Obviously those adult innuendo-laden jokes have been going over your innocent head. Shout out, "It's behind you!" at the Evanston Arts Depot, 600 Main, Evanston, through Dec. 20.; 847-424-0089.

—**The Santaland Diaries** is back again to allow us to revel in David Sedaris' humiliation from working as a Macy's Santaland elf. The Theater Wit! revival plays Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont, through Jan. 3; 773-327-5252.

—**The Second City's Exceedingly Dysfunctional Holiday Revue** returns to stake its suburban claim on holiday silliness at the Metropolitan Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell, Arlington Heights, through Dec. 31; 847-577-2121.

—**Sexy Santa's Spectacular! Spectacular!**—**Burlesque's Naughty List** heats up the holidays with plenty of scantily clad Santaland denizens at the Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee; through Dec. 20; 773-598-4549.

—**Silent Night of the Lambs** is Hell in a Handbag Productions' holiday spoof that allows you to combine your yens for Christmas cheer and Hannibal Lecter's cannibalism at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark, through Jan. 3; 800-838-3006.

—**A Very Neo-Futurist Christmas Carol** uses Charles Dickens' classic tale to riff on topics ranging from commercialism to Jewish holiday resentment at the Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland, through Dec. 23; 773-275-5255.

—**Xtreme Holiday Make Over** is New World Repertory Theatre's entry for poking fun at the Christmas season. But be forewarned: this sketch comedy show is acceptable for family audiences! See it at the Masonic Temple, 923 Curtiss, Downers Grove, through Dec. 28; 630-663-1489.

THEATER REVIEW

Don't Dress for Dinner

Playwright: Marc Camoletti, adapted by Robin Hawdon

At: British Stage Company at the Royal George, 1641 N. Halsted
Phone: 312-988-9000; \$49.50-\$50.50
Runs through: Jan. 11, 2009

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The foundation of *Bedroom Farce* is a reverence for discretion, acknowledged at all levels of society, manifested by a willingness to turn a blind eye to license, duplicity and vice as long as an appearance of decorum is preserved. This dubious moral code is more often observed in European cultures with a history of authoritarian governments than in the United States, where money is more likely to fuel the deception necessary to the genre. That said, Marc Camoletti's 1991 take on the venerable formula, currently playing at the Royal George, nevertheless brings some welcome changes to the old double-D cup of tea.

To be sure, the plot is rooted in the traditional assumptions of male fraternity, female gullibility and eccentric architecture: The setting is a country house in France, where Bernard plans to entertain his pampered mistress while his wife Jacqueline is away. The unexpected arrival of their American friend Robert, with whom Jacqueline is having a clandestine affair, brings an abrupt halt to this order of business, however—especially after the chef/cateress hired by Bernard to prepare dinner for his proposed tryst turns out to be a savvy Gallic gamine with mercenary inclinations and a name very similar to that of his paramour.

But what most distinguishes the array of physical gags—such as stalks, sneaks, stamps,

stumbles, chases, surprise entrances and wrestling matches with telephone cords—from their pre-1965 counterparts is the heightened recognition of a sororal allegiance as unswerving as that practiced by the straying menfolk (nowhere more vividly demonstrated than in the delightful moose-and-squirrel brawl, courtesy of fight choreographer David Woolley, where the rampage of the cook's jealous husband is curtailed by the three women together overpowering their bear-like adversary.) Playgoers recalling earlier productions of Camoletti's play will also find much of the humorous wordplay tweaked with an ear to Yankee vernacular (though the aural puns on the former status of the converted farmhouse's various rooms should be jettisoned).

The coast-to-coast cast acquits itself with verbal agility and athletic stamina under the direction of John Tillinger, assisted by dialect instructor Alan Wilder's razor-sharp French accent for the chipmunk-voiced Spencer Kayden, costume designer Virgil C. Johnson's breakaway server's uniform that magically transforms to a chic Parisian cocktail gown, and a technical team that keeps the madcap action progressing as swiftly and precision-timed as a Road Runner cartoon.

THEATER REVIEW

Well

Playwright: Lisa Kron
At: Next Theatre, 927 Noyes, Evanston
Phone: 847-475-1875; \$23-\$38
Runs through: Dec. 14

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Lisa Kron's *Well* is clever. But for many seeing this play in its Chicago-area debut at Next Theatre, *Well* will come off as being too clever for its own good.

Kron is an openly lesbian writer and performer best known for her one-woman monologues. With *Well*, Kron shook up her routine by playing



Well. Photo by Michael Brosilow

herself in a play of sorts featuring other actors and her mother (or at least an actress as her mother).

As befits the play's title, *Well* is Kron's attempt to show how people as individuals and in society can heal and get better. Kron's two examples are her mother's community organizing efforts to help foster integration in 1960s Lansing, Mich., and her own experiences in the allergy unit of a Chicago hospital.

But the problem is that Kron's acting company (particularly her sleepy mother in a La-Z-Boy recliner) hijack her attempts to tell the story—going so far as to question the play's haphazard structure and information gaps.

Laurels of critical praise greeted *Well*'s two productions off-Broadway in 2004 and on Broadway in 2006, particularly for the two leading ladies (Kron herself and Jayne Houdyshell were nominated for Tony Awards). The play's unconventional storytelling, which was likened at times

to Pirandello of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*-fame, was also praised for constantly going off the rails to break down the "fourth wall" between audiences watching actors reinterpreting past events.

For Next's production under Damon Kiely's direction, we unfortunately have a stand-in playing the "role" of author Lisa Kron. Lia Mortensen does her best, but having an actorly interloper takes away Kron's truly "personal" agony of wondering why her mother can't get well from her debilitating life-long fatigue.

The general acting company of Lily Mojekwu, Andre Teamer, James Krag and Kat McDonnell all are meant to look uncomfortable by the weird shifts between the two stories. But the company at the performance I attended seemed more perplexed by the audience's general refusal to buy into the play, despite the actors' best attempts to get extra laughs by affecting funny voices and doing contorted facial expressions.

One element that truly succeeds in Next's *Well* is veteran actor Mary Ann Thebus, who fits comfortably into Kron's mother's shoes as wonderfully as Jack Magaw's homey set design of a wood-paneled suburban living room. Thebus rightfully comes off an everyday mother strangely trapped in someone's flailing attempt of a thought-provoking theatrical experience.

Though theater fans may enjoy *Well* as a non-conformist play/monologue, it's more likely to try the patience of audiences who don't care for self-important deconstructionism—especially if all that clever self-awareness gets in the way of telling a good story.

SPOTLIGHT**Corpus Christi**

Ten years ago, Terrence McNally's drama *Corpus Christi* was met with protests, cancellation concerns and death threats in New York—all because McNally re-imagined the life of Christ amid a group of modern-day homosexuals. See if all the fuss was worth it in Ludicrous Theatre Company's new intimate production. *Corpus Christi* plays 8 p.m. Fridays through Sundays with 2 p.m. matinees Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 13 at the Heartland Studio Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood. Tickets are \$15; 630-988-0768 or ludicroustheatre.com. Photo courtesy of Ludicrous Theatre Company

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THEATER REVIEW

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Playwright: William Shakespeare
 At: Chicago Shakespeare
 Theater, 800 E. Grand
 Phone: 312-595-5600; \$60-\$75
 Runs through: Dec. 7

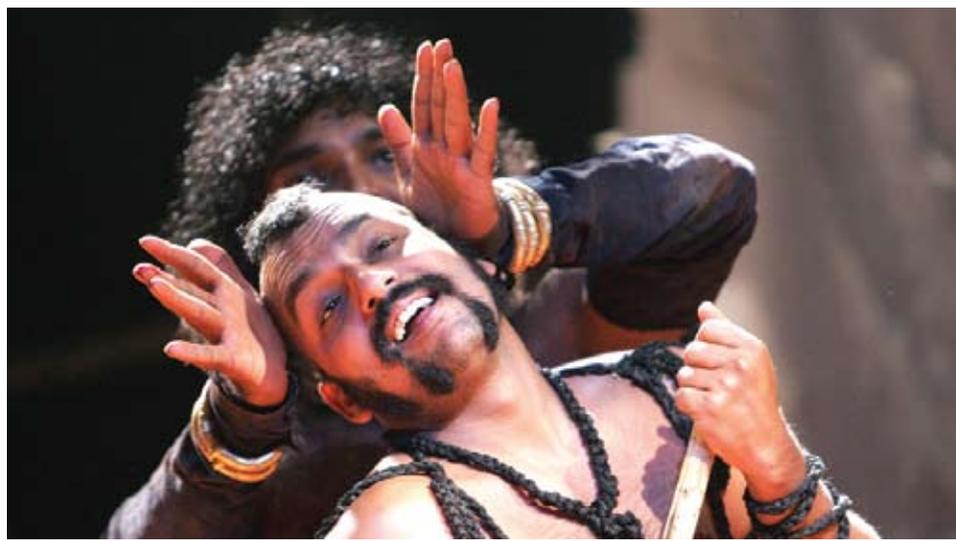
BY CATEY SULLIVAN

If you aren't familiar with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* going into Tim Supple's adaptation of the Bard's ripe, sensual comedy, odds are you'll be bewildered before the first scene plays out. Performed half in English and half in a pastiche of Southeast Asian languages including Hindi, Bengali and Sanskrit, this *Midsummer* transforms Shakespeare's poetry—and his clear narrative—into beautiful cacophony and staggering physicality.

The cast—a raucous mix of nearly two dozen singers, dancers, street musicians and formally trained actors—performs acrobatics, circus-style tumbling, aerial ballet and dance numbers that wouldn't be out of place in a Bollywood extravaganza. It all makes for a *Midsummer* blazing with kinetic energy, a force that is shimmering, extravagant and wholly distracting from text.

As an elaborate piece of performance art grounded in the many guises of sexuality, *Midsummer* is terrific. As a Shakespearean comedy, it stumbles. Moreover, opening night the production suffered from maddeningly muffled acoustics. In English or Hindi, the actors were often unintelligible.

There's no denying that Supple's cast is a vibrant, passionate and fearless group. They clamber and swing from massive, bamboo-like scaffolding three stories high and spread across the width of the stage. They dangle by their heels from streamers of silk that spins crazily from the rafters. They wrestle like gladiators in the



A Midsummer Night's Dream. Photo by Tristram Kenton

dirt flooring that covers the stage (Reminiscent of a Zamboni operator, a fellow operating a giant roller appears at intermission to tamp and smooth the playing field) and propel themselves into backflips and handsprings through *Midsummer's* fairy-infested forest.

Amid all this activity, the text takes a backseat. And while there is sonic musicality inherent to the stunning array of languages on display, it obscures both Shakespeare's sublime poetry and confuses his bewitching narrative.

The storyline might be fuzzy at best, but Supple does capture the roiling sexuality that runs like a riptide through *Midsummer*. Good for him. All too often, *Midsummer* is all pixie dust and precious, the chaos-inducing, life-threatening lust at its throbbing heart neutered into something sparkly and cute. It's worth remembering heroine Hermes risks death by refusing to marry as the tyrannical King Theseus father demands. Meanwhile, her best friend Helena is willing to put up horrendous degradation and abuse ("I am your spaniel. ... The more you beat me, I will

fawn on you,") to be with a man who despises her.

Supple heightens the themes of sexual submission and domination with refreshing abandon. The mischievous imp Puck, displaying a bare chest worthy of a bear bar, is decked out in fetish gear worthy of Chicago's annual International Mister Leather pageant. When Nick Bottom is transformed into an ass, he sprouts a giant, gourd-shaped dildo—which Fairy Queen Titania rides with wild abandon. For Helena and Hermes and their love interests, aggressive tussles on the forest floor quickly border on rape. As for Queen Hippolyta and King Theseus (and their fairy-world counterparts Titania and Oberon), they are lovers defined by a core of carnal joy that beams like a heat lamp off the stage.

But for all its joyfully unbridled physicality and poly-linguistic ardor, the heart of *Midsummer* is lost in the woods as surely as the lovers who propel its story. It's a tale rich with sound, fury and sex—but in the end, signifying little of what Shakespeare's narrative contains.

CRITICS' PICS

Dublin Carol, Steppenwolf Theatre, through Jan. 4. Heroes in Christmas Eve tales of redemption and rebirth range from Victorian financiers to Chicago cabbies. So why shouldn't an Irish undertaker (played by the legendary and long-absent William Peterson) also find his salvation on this auspicious day? MSB

Grey Gardens, Northlight Theatre, through Dec. 28. Hollis Resnik is a both hilarious and touching as both guises of Edith Bouvier Beale in this clever and quirky musical adaptation of the 1975 cult documentary. The rest of the cast in this handsome production is no slouch either. SCM

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol, Theatre Wit at Theatre Building Chicago, through Jan. 3. Remarkable actor and author Tom Mula performs a stage version of his magical Xmas tale of the afterlife and redemption of Scrooge's "dead as a doornail" partner. JA

Jared: A Hoodoo Comedy, Teatro Luna, through Dec. 14. Based on interviews with women who use folk magic to help with everything from their careers to their sex lives, Tanya Saracho's play about a woman casting spells to bring back her wayward boyfriend is funny, provocative and just a little bit scary. CS

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

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THEATER REVIEW

The Autumn Garden

Playwright: Lillian Hellman
At: Eclipse Theatre at the Greenhouse,
 2257 N. Lincoln
Phone: 773-404-7336; \$25
Runs through: Dec. 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Oh, what would authors do without inns, airports, bus stations, hotel lobbies and other refuges for transients? What more reliable formula for intrigue than a bunch of strangers thrown together—preferably strangers in a state of material or psychological upheaval and letting them just be themselves? And when the times, or the places, of their encounters are also in flux, how can something interesting *not* happen?

The personnel gathered in Miss Constance Tuckerman's Guest House (analogous to a B&B, for you kids) cannot really be called strangers, having for several years summered together on the Louisiana Gulf Coast. But as the title of the play hints, all are approaching midlife crises—even the young (and in one case, gay) sons and daughters, who must soon determine a way to avoid their elders' sorry fates. What their goals have in common is that each involves breaking with their former lifestyles—through divorce, marriage, relocation. Gradually, however, we see their plans succumb to spiritual torpor. In the end, the only contentment lies in acceptance of their enervation and their allegiance to the status quo.

What this rootless band of bourgeoisie also has in common is Lillian Hellman's unflinching insight as she recounts their stories. Herself a native of the Deep South, she knows well the propensity of its denizens to dramatize, romanticize and elegize the slightest frissons in their placid existence, regional traits thrown into stark contrast by the inclusion in the assembly of a stoical Bostonian, a cynical New Yorker and two unsentimental Europeans, who regard their companions' histrionics with bemusement as they plot their escapes.

Comparisons to Chekhov are inevitable, but the troubles of a once-vital but now waning ersatz aristocracy take on a new immediacy when occurring in our own backyards only half a century ago. Under Nathaniel Swift's direction, the cast for this Eclipse Theatre Company production approach their roles with reverence and compassion. Granted, the stamina of the actors with extensive experience at old-fashioned three-act plays—Chuck Spencer, Millicent Hurley and Judith Hoppe among them—enable them to inhabit their characters, rather than merely im-



The Autumn Garden. Photo by Scott Cooper

personate them. But even if three hours (with two intermissions) seem, likewise, a long haul for modern audiences, the empathy generated by relationships still evident in our society today evokes suspense sufficient to make waiting for the succession of irony-steeped resolutions worthwhile.

THEATER REVIEW

The Marriage of Figaro

Author: Pierre-Augustin de Beaumarchais
At: Remy Bumppo Theatre, Greenhouse
 Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln
Phone: 773-404-7336; \$40-\$55
Runs through: Jan. 4

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Director Jonathan Berry has assembled a highly skilled and attractive cast for this fast farce rendition of Beaumarchais's famous comedy, first produced in 1784 and basis for the even more famous Mozart-Da Ponte opera. However, the original play was more comedy of manners than farce and, unlike its predecessor, *The Barber of Seville*, it also had a significant political edge which this adaptation by Ranjit Bolt dulls. Bolt eliminates significant characters and a major subplot satirizing the French legal system.

In *The Barber of Seville*, the clever factotum Figaro helps the dashing young Count of Almaviva woo and wed Rosina. In the sequel, the count is chasing everything in skirts except the countess, and now intends to seduce Suzanne, the countess's maid who is engaged to Figaro. Although disinterested in the countess, Almaviva nonetheless is insanely jealous of his adolescent page, Cherubin, who's infatuated with her. A series of plots and counterplots ends with the count shamed and chastened, and even Figaro

is taken by surprise. Powerful stuff on the brink of the French Revolution, the play shows commoners Figaro and Suzanne outsmarting a nobleman of inherited privileges and rank (albeit with the help of his wife), while Figaro—in a famous monologue—says the aristocracy is superior only by accident of birth, rather than by merit.

Beaumarchais himself was a shrewd, witty and ambitious scoundrel who rose from the artisan middle class to the aristocracy through talent, craft, marriages to powerful older widows, spying, war profiteering, financial speculation and the slashing power of his words. Seemingly egalitarian—he supported the American Revolution, legally challenged French vested interests and created an author's union—he nonetheless curried favor with kings Louis XV and XVI and barely survived the French Revolution in one piece. Little of this is apparent in the play, although the basic Beaumarchais political message remains intact if watered down.

The Remy Bumppo production is a frothy 90 minutes performed by an ensemble of superior comic skill: the impeccable comic actor Joe Dempsey as Almaviva, the refined and well-groomed Nick Sandys as Figaro, multi-layered Mary Beth Fisher as the Countess and Kate Cares as a sparkling Suzanne. Greg Matthew Anderson's scene-stealing turn as Cherubin rivals them all.

Setting the play near Paris in 1952—vs. 1780s Seville, Spain—allows costume designer Alison Siple to display exquisite Eisenhower-era designer gowns, as director Berry choreographs delightful scene changes to period jazz (post-1952 but close enough). However, the time choice is arbitrary as is Nick Sandys's use of a London working-class accent. Admittedly well-executed, they nonetheless are anomalies that don't illuminate the play. But take it as is, for *The Marriage of Figaro* rarely is produced in the United States in any version, let alone one as stylish as this.

Bailiwick bidding 'Farewell' to home

Bailiwick Repertory's artists and friends will gather at the Bailiwick Arts Center, 1229 W. Belmont, Monday, Dec. 29, with "Farewell to 1229: Fifteen Years of Great Musicals from Pope Joan to Hunchback."

A 6 p.m. reception will feature food and a cash bar; at 7:15 p.m., attendees will move into the mainstage area for an 80-minute program; and, at 9 p.m., people will go across the street to Joey's Brickhouse for an open mic of backstage stories.

General admission is \$50; VIP tickets are \$75 each; and tickets for industry professionals are \$25 each. Call 773-883-1090, visit www.bailiwick.org or e-mail Bailiwick-Sales@gmail.com.

Richard Chamberlain part of 'Spamalot'

Legendary entertainer Richard Chamberlain will star as King Arthur when Monty Python's *Spamalot*, the Tony Award-winning Best Musical of 2005, plays Chicago's Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress, for a limited engagement Jan. 20-Feb. 1, 2009.

Chamberlain, who is openly gay, has acted in some of television's most acclaimed miniseries, including *The Thorn Birds* and *Shogun*. He has also appeared on shows such as *Will & Grace* and *Nip/Tuck*.

Tickets are \$25-\$90, with premium seats going for \$125-\$150. Call 312-902-1400 or visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com.

Broadway in Chicago subscriptions

The 2009 Broadway In Chicago Season Series package subscriptions are on sale.

Subscription packages include tickets to the world premiere of *The Addams Family*; previously announced productions *Legally Blonde* and *Spring Awakening*; and the new addition *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Season ticket packages are \$83-\$405. Visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com or call the hotline at 312-977-1717.

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BOOKS

E. Patrick Johnson: Southern exposure

BY YASMIN NAIR

E. Patrick Johnson is the author of *Sweet Tea: An Oral History of Black Gay Men of the South*, which consists largely of transcribed oral narratives. Johnson, the department chair of performance studies and a professor of African-American studies at Northwestern University, began researching the book in 2004. In October 2006, he began enacting solo performances and recreations of the narratives. The performances (called "Pouring Tea") are now part of his current book tour. Windy City Times spoke to Johnson about his book; the accompanying performances; and the lure of the South.

Windy City Times: In your introduction, you emphasize the fact that you didn't approach this as a historian. How would you characterize the difference between your work and that of historians like John Howard [author of *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History, about Mississippi gay history*]?

EPJ: My book was meant to be a living archive of narratives of African-American gay men born and raised in the South. For me, it was important that it be an oral history, that it be about people essentially theorizing their own lives in the telling. In that way my approach was a little different from a historian's approach. I wasn't necessarily interested in it from a scholarly perspective, in analyzing what they said or imposing a certain theoretical frame onto what they said as much as I was interested in documenting narratives and letting the theories speak through what was said. The other difference between mine and other such histories of the South is that I do the entire South.

WCT: What were those theories?

EPJ: For instance, in the narrative of Chaz/Chastity (a transgender person in Hickory, N.C.): The ways in which Chaz narrates her life is a theorizing about the performativity of gender in a way that's understandable and based on life experience, and in a way that Judith Butler [the feminist theorist who's written on the performativity of gender] can't explain it [*Laughs*]. We don't have to go to post-structuralist theory; we can go to Chaz. That's not to belittle Judith Butler's work, but just to say that it's a different way of accessing the performativity of gender—in a way that my mother could understand, for instance.

WCT: In your discussions about the cultural norms of the South, you write about how the South has a way of holding on to secrets. As you put it, that's a part of "Southern gentility." But is it also about maintaining power structures?

EPJ: Absolutely, it's about hostility as much as gentility. [*Laughs*] The phrase "governing with a steel fist in a velvet glove" [comes to mind]. The dominant discourse in much of the South is a religious discourse; it pervades every aspect of Southern life. So if one's intention is to have it both ways—to maintain the veneer of religious piety yet be able to partake of the flesh—then one must not speak of those things that might go against the grain of the predominant religious discourse. So that's why you have, particularly in the church—and not just the Black church of the South—all kinds of transgressions, all kinds of hypocrisy that transcend sexual orientation. There are just as many heterosexuals participating in that [kind of hypocrisy].

WCT: The performances that are now a part of your book tour started in October 2006. Did you think about performing these narratives when you conceived the book?

EPJ: No. When I got deep into the research and started conducting the interviews, I realized: This has to be a play. [*Laughs*] Sitting down with these folks and hearing them tell their stories in their unique ways suggested to me that the immediacy of the telling had to be recaptured in



E. Patrick Johnson.

a way that reading it on a page would not. So I decided, after I'd done more than half of these interviews, that I would put together a performance based on these narratives.

What I didn't know [at the time] was whether I would cast the show or if I would do it [as a solo performance]. It became a [set of] intellectual questions for me: What would it be like for the researcher to stage his ethnographic material? What are the politics around that? So, I began to think about how to frame this performance in a way that also staged this encounter. I'm still thinking through the politics of all this, but one of the things I decided that I didn't want the show to be was a kind of Anna Deavere Smith show, to "become" these people. But I also didn't want it to be a bland reading.

WCT: How have the book and the performance shifted for you since the publication of the book?

EPJ: The book is what it is. But the performance is its own thing; it continues to morph; [it] gives the audience a three-dimensional perspective on the men in a way that the book doesn't. The book is heavily edited. ...There are certain freedoms that I can have with the performances that I can't have with the book. The performance keeps morphing and narrators are coming in and out; I don't do all the same ones every time. Both the book and the performance have a life of their own.

WCT: *Sweet Tea* is mostly about men who don't want to leave the South, but there are some who do leave. What pushes them to leave?

EPJ: I write about my own journey out of the South in the introduction: That even though I may leave it, it will never leave me. [*Laughs*] and I think that's true for even those who reject the 'South and leave it behind. The South doesn't leave them.

[And] then you have people who left because they felt too confined, wanted to experience queer culture with a capital "Q." ... There are some who feel, "I will never go back there because I don't feel free." They don't want to participate in that passive aggression. They want to be in a place that allows them to be explicitly gay and not have to get shrouded in codes.

Read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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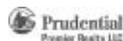
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HOLIDAYS GOT YOU DOWN?: Counseling services for LGBTQ, friends and family. Northwest Suburbs in Chicago. **847-824-9590 or www.lslevi.com** (5/20/09-26)

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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. D08115637 on the Nov 13 2008 under the assumed name of Events in the Making with the business located at 4750 N. Washtenaw #2 Chicago, IL 60625. The true name and residence address of the owner is: Julie Hilgendorf 4750 N. Washtenaw #2 Chicago, IL 60625. (12/10/08-3)

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WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Dec. 3

AIDS Foundation of Chicago World of Chocolate 2008. Chocolate creations prepared by 30 of Chicago's top restaurants, hotels, caterers and chocolatiers. 6 p.m., general admission \$75, International Ballroom at the Hilton Chicago, tickets at 312-334-0935 or www.aidschicago.org

Borders, Randy Jackson, music industry veteran, Grammy Award-winning rock bassist and one-third of the judging panel of American Idol, presents Body With Soul 7p.m. 830 N. Michigan, 312 573-0564

Center on Halsted Women on Wednesdays. Staff of Tulip shares ideas for holiday gifts. 6-9 p.m., \$20 (\$10 students/seniors), 3656 N. Halsted, RSVP to Courtney Reid at creid@centeron-halsted.org

Uncommon Ground's 4 Women Only - Hosted by Kat Fitzgerald (Folk/Rock), \$10 donation, 9 p.m. 1401 W. Devon, 60660 773-465-9801

Thursday, Dec. 4

American Veterans for Equal Rights Monthly meeting. 7 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted

BEHIV Open Mic Event 6-8 p.m., Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Avenue

Jeannie Tanner Quartet, music from the newly released Promise Me the Moon, Andy's Jazz Club in Chicago 8:30pm-1am, reservations suggested, Andy's Jazz Club, 11 E. Hubbard (312) 642-6805 www.andysjazzclub.com

Neo-Futurists special benefit performance of A Very Neo-Futurist Christmas Carol. Tickets \$50, benefits The Neo-Futurists. Reception 7p.m., performance 8p.m.. www.neofuturists.org or 773-275-5255

Windy City Media Group Gays Got Talent contest (dance, comedy, magic, impersonation, drag, burlesque, music and more). 7 p.m. sign up, 8 p.m. start, \$5 cover, \$10 sign up for talent, \$100 to winner with most votes at each bar, Crew, 4804 N. Broadway

Friday, Dec. 5

Denis Leary, Signing Why We Suck, 7 p.m., Borders, 830 N. Michigan,

312-573-0564

The Flesh Hungry Dog Show, second annual "Christmas with the Crawfords" queer, alternative, rock 'n roll cabaret, 9p.m.. Tix \$8 at door, or at www.flesh-hungrydog.com Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St. 773-743-5772

Holly Trolley City Light Tour, 6:30p.m., buffet reception at North End, trolleys take off at 7:45p.m., Includes Lincoln Park Zoo lights www.linonparklagooners.org/trolley

Transgender Aging Intensive for service providers and advocates, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$100 includes lunch, reference binder, CEUs, Center on Halsted. Register at www.forge-forard.org/tan/intensive.php

Women & Children First Books, Make/Shift Magazine Reading. Make/Shift creates, critiques, celebrates and documents contemporary feminist culture from antiracist, transnational, and queer perspectives. 7:30 p.m. 5233 N. Clark St. www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Women & Children First Books "Late Night Andersonville" store open until 10 p.m. Hot cider and cookies, holiday shopping. Shops throughout Andersonville will offer special deals during their late hours and streets will be filled with seasonal entertainment. 5233 N. Clark St. www.andersonville.org.

Saturday, Dec. 6

Macy's Jessica Simpson in the fragrance department with The Fancy Jessica Simpson Fragrance Gift Collection, noon, State Street, 312-781-5445

Northalsted Area Merchants Association Holiday on Halsted. Trolleys, carolers, wine-tastings, passport to stamp at member retailers for prize drawing. Can donations for Lakeview Food Pantry accepted. 1-5 p.m. Register in 7-11 lot at 3407 N. Halsted. \$10. 773 883-0500

Wicker Park Choral Singers, not your average holiday concert, 3 p.m. historic Wicker Park Lutheran Church, 1502 N. Hoyne Ave. 815-499-6294 Mark Tomasino wickerparkchoralsingers@gmail.com

Windy City Gay Chorus Don We Now...30! Holiday Concert. And Dec. 7

(at 2 p.m.). 5 and 8 p.m., \$20, Center on Halsted Hoover-Leppen Theatre, tickets at www.windycitysings.org

Sunday, Dec. 7

Vital Bridges Annual Holiday Brunch celebrating Vital Bridges' 20th Anniversary. Four Seasons Hotel, \$250 per person, 312-948-2785 or www.vital-bridges.org

Monday, Dec. 8

Clinton Kelly of TLC's What Not to Wear discussion, signing for "Freakin' Fabulous" 7 p.m., Borders, 830 N. Michigan, 312 573-0564

Tuesday, Dec. 9

Chicago House Champagne Wrapture, VIP reception is 5:30-6:30p.m., premium reception 6:30-9:30 p.m.. \$65 per person, limited to 40 people. James Hotel, 55 E. Ontario. 773-248-5200 x303 or www.ChicagoHouse.org.

Gerber/Hart Library Lesbian Book Group: Read Aloud Night (women bring in and read from their favorite passages). 7:30-9 p.m., 1127 W. Granville Ave., www.gerberhart.org

Park West Land of the Sweets: The Burlesque Nutcracker, features all-star cast from Seattle's Burlesque A-list. And Dec. 10. 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., 322 W. Armitage Ave., tickets at www.ticketmaster.com or 312-553-1212, www.landofthesweets.com

Wednesday, Dec. 10

Windy City Media Group Gays Got Talent contest (dance, comedy, magic, impersonation, drag, burlesque, music and more). 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start, \$5 cover, \$10 sign up for talent, \$100 to winner with most votes at each bar, @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Friday, Dec. 12

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus "Revolt of the Elves" holiday show. And Dec. 13, Athenaeum Theater, tickets and info at 773-296-0541 or www.cgmc.org

Congregation Or Chadash Shabbat Services every Friday at Chicago's GLBT synagogue. 8 p.m., 5959 N. Sheridan

Rd. (Emanuel Congregation building), 773-271-2148 or office@OrChadash.org or www.OrChadash.org for details and other programs.

SPIN Nightclub "Miss Chicago" pageant 800 W Belmont Ave 773 327-7711 www.spin-nightclub.com

Saturday, Dec. 13

Over the Rainbow Association 19th Anniversary Celebration Concert, featuring opera star Denyce Graves. 7:30 p.m., Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 1977 Sheridan Rd. in Evanston, tickets at 847-328-1607 or www.otrasn.com/celebrate/2order.html

"A Child Brings Justice: An Advent Celebration of GLBT Gifts" and Shower of Stoles exhibit. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 611 E Randolph St, Oak Park 708-848-7471, www.goodshepherdlc.org.

Sunday, Dec. 14

Windy City Gay Naturists M2M group massage 4:30 p.m. \$10 members; \$15 guests. BYOT, RSVP 312-494-2654 by Dec. 13

Sunday, Dec. 15

Center on Halsted OutFront and Center: Lakeside Pride Ensemble plays Holiday Classics. 7 p.m., \$10 (\$5 students/seniors), 3656 N. Halsted St., www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, Dec. 16

Chicago Flair, showcase of the hippest, edgiest and sexiest performers plus a fashion show of hard-to-find and exquisitely sexy latex clothes by House of Bias. Benefits Maria The Purple Goddess. \$15, 8 p.m. Martyr's, 3855 N. Lincoln Ave. Tix: 773 404 9494.

Wednesday, Dec. 17

David Bowie Christmas Special 1977 (Network Edit), Last night 10:30 p.m., \$15, National Pastime Theater, 4139 N. Broadway 312-458-9083. www.nmtchicago.org/news.htm#3, 1/2 Price Tickets Available At www.goldstar.com

Sunday, Dec. 7



VITAL SIGNS

Vital Bridges will hold its annual holiday brunch at the Four Season Hotel, 120 E. Delaware.

Photo from 2007 event by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com)

Tuesday-Wed., Dec. 9-10



'SWEETS' SENSATION

The holiday burlesque extravaganza **Land of the Sweets** will take place at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage.

See our online calendar: www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar



In 'Fashion'

Project Runway alumnus Daniel Vosovic stopped by boutique clothing store Jake, 939 N. Rush, on Nov. 12 and Borders, 830 N. Michigan, on Nov. 13 to promote the release of his book, Fashion Inside Out. Here, Vosovic (left) poses with Jim Wetzel, co-owner of Jake. Photo by Andrew Davis



Getting down and 'Dirty'

Former Windy City Times "30 Under 30" honoree Simon Strikeback celebrated his 30th birthday Nov. 28 with a show at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark. Headlined by Strikeback's band, Actor Slash Model, "Dirty Thirty" was a fundraiser for the film Me Neither, which highlights the art and experiences of trans and gender variant musicians. Actor Slash Model was supported by queer musical acts Congress of Starlings, Brother Truck, and Division & Honore. A dance party with DJ SKY followed the live music.

The feature-length documentary Me Neither is filmed and directed by Strikeback and bandmate Madsen Minax (also a former "30 Under 30" honoree), and will feature interviews and performances from trans musicians across the country. The money raised at the benefit will fund a final round of interviews later this month with artists in California. From there, according to Strikeback, the film goes into post-production and is expected to be released at the end of summer 2009. Text and photo of Strikeback (left) and Minax by Samuel Worley



Ky Dickens filming the recent anti-Prop 8 rally in Chicago.

Chicago filmmaker focuses on gays and the Bible

BY ANNIE KENNEDY

Religion is a complicated topic. Add in homosexuality, and get ready for an onslaught of people saying, "You're wrong," "That's sinful" and "We'll never see eye to eye."

With her new documentary, *Fish Out of Water*, Chicago filmmaker Ky Dickens tackles both sides with an arsenal of honesty, passion and a little yellow bird.

Windy City Times recently caught up with Dickens to gain some insight into this ambitious process.

Windy City Times: When and why did you decide to become a filmmaker?

Ky Dickens: My parents got me a camcorder for my 12th birthday, and I carried it around with me everywhere. I really enjoyed capturing the simple nuances that make people and places unique. Suddenly, with my new camcorder, I could capture the aspects of moments that often are forgotten when those moments turn into a memory: the tapping of someone's foot, the way someone cuts their food, they way someone stutters or blinks. I was instantly addicted, and from the time I was 12 to the time I was 18 I constantly had a camera around my neck. I would edit footage together by using two VCRs—one to play my tapes and the other to record the edited version.

WCT: Where did the idea for *Fish Out of Water* come from?

KD: I went to school in the South ... right in the middle of the Bible belt at Vanderbilt University [in Nashville, Tenn.]. When I came out my senior year in college, a lot of my friends were deeply affected and offended. Their grievances centered around religion. They were completely certain that I was hellbound and that the devil had hold of my heart and that I had fallen out of grace and was a different, tainted person than the one they had loved for three years. They were able to quote what seemed like a hundred different Bible verses to prove to me that I was a sinner who needed to change.

I was incapable of defending myself so I decided to go talk to a few ministers about the things they were saying to me and if they were true in the eyes of Christian doctrine. I felt that the only way to keep my friendships was to debate them on their playing field. And that playing field was the Bible. I was shocked by what I heard from some Nashville-area ministers because *most* of them told me that the verses used to condemn homosexuality were totally taken out of context, and that being gay is an identity to be celebrated along with other God-given identities.

By the time I had acquired all the information needed from the ministers, we had all graduated. But I decided to write a letter to my best friend, the one that I wanted to lose the least. The letter was about six pages long and, in it, I outlined an argument to every spoonful of Bible abuse she ever fed me. I discussed the seven

verses used to condemn homosexuality. I delved into theories surrounding identity, forgiveness, love and the tenets of Jesus' message. I didn't think the letter would make a difference. It is almost impossible to change someone's ideology, especially in regards to faith and ideas around family. However, about five weeks later she called me. She wanted to apologize. She told me I was *right* and that she wanted to start rebuilding our friendship. I was shocked. Shocked. Letters like that never work. They aren't supposed to ever work. They're basically written just to make the sender feel enabled. But this letter worked. My mind was blown. And with that, I decided to make a film outlining all the aspects of my letter.

WCT: Were there any issues you faced while interviewing people on a controversial topic like this?

KD: I interviewed a lot of anti-gay folks as well as pro-gay folks. The film took us to every corner of the country—to small towns in South Texas to the clamoring streets of New York City to truck stops in Kansas and to beaches in Florida. I met hundreds of folks who are very different from me. However, if you find common ground with a person, if you treat them with respect and look them in the eye, if you ask them questions about their life and sit down with them for a cup of coffee, suddenly everything become disarming. I learned that lesson quickly and, thus, had no conflict or tension in any of my interviews because, before launching into questioning, I made sure we connected as human beings.

WCT: What do you hope to achieve with this film?

KD: I hope to give people the resources and tools to talk about this issue. It isn't just GLBTQ folks who need tools to talk about this issue but politicians, teachers, therapists and families need to know both sides of this argument. I also wanted to find a way to talk about this issue in an accessible, colorful and light way. Therefore, we are using an animated character [a yellow bird] as the narrator. This frees us from attaching a gender, race, sexual orientation or age to our narrator's perspective. We animate the Bible any time that it is mentioned. We hope by treating the film as entertainment, and the content as information, that we can reach a broad audience.

***Fish out of Water*, which was filmed locally, will be released in 2009.**

Entertainment news

Jack Mackenroth, who competed on the reality-TV show *Project Runway*, recently revealed his HIV/AIDS education campaign at the Gay Men's Health Crisis' "Fashion Forward" benefit in New York City, according to Advocate.com. Mackenroth, who has been HIV-positive for almost two decades, has called the program "Living Positive by Design."

The movie *Milk* got off to a very strong start in its first week of limited release, according to CNN.com. The film biography of the late gay politician Harvey Milk (which stars Sean Penn) grossed \$1.4 million in just 36 theaters, an average of \$38,375 a cinema. The movie that won the box office for that weekend, *Four Christmases*, averaged \$9,571 in 3,310 theaters.

The Trevor Project—which runs the only nationwide, 24-hour crisis and suicide-prevention helpline for LGBTQ youth—**will honor Oscar-nominated actress Sigourney Weaver Dec. 7 in Los Angeles**, according to PR Newswire. Actress Anne Hathaway will present Weaver with the Trevor Life Award, which honors individuals who inspire LGBTQ youth. Weaver has been in movies such as *Infamous* and *Jeffrey*, and will be featured in the upcoming Lifetime film *Prayers for Bobby*, in which she plays a conservative woman who questions her homophobia after her gay son's suicide.



The Rebels. Photo by Mel Ferrand

SPORTS

Flag football wraps up in a rough way

BY MEL FERRAND

Lesions, and cracked ribs, and tears, oh my!

The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) flag football leagues ended their fall seasons Nov. 22-23—and while the men suffered through frigid temperatures, the women had more than Mother Nature to contend with.

With the continued growth of the league, the women split three into four divisions for the playoffs yielding some interesting results. Further, this year, regular season stats tended to matter less than usual and even "Las Vegas" would have had a hard time predicting these outcomes.

In the Competitive Division, the seventh-seed Head Cases successfully upset two higher-ranked teams to march into the finals, only to be trounced in the end by number-one seed Rebels. Additionally, in the Upper Recreational Division, during the age-old match-up between age/experience and youth, youth (Celtic Crown, the number-two seed) eventually won out over number-five seed Synergy during an incredibly close game that ended 26-21. Several members of Synergy have been playing football together, under various team names, for the last ten years and currently the average age of the players is over 35. They will definitely be back to avenge their loss and champion older female athletes everywhere.

The Intermediate and Lower Recreational divisions are where things got even more unusual. Hail Mary's was successful in barely defeating nemesis Blue Spin to earn a spot in the finals, only to have their hopes dashed by the Diesel Daisies in a nail-biting double-overtime championship match-up. The game was fierce, with each team executing intricate plays and scoring on almost every possession. When the clock ran out, the score stood at 27-27 and the captains were called in for overtime rules. After the first overtime, the teams were once again locked in a tie, so the markers were reset and the teams took the field again. Eventually, Hail Mary's defense was unable to push the Daisies, and the final score was 40-33. The twice-defeated number-one seed will have to hope three is a charm as they prepare to return next fall.

The championship game for the Lower Recreational Division was where one must have suspended all disbelief. To begin, the match-up was between the two "worst" or lowest-seeded teams in the entire league. One, Halsted's, had lost every single regular-season game going into the playoffs; while the other, Frieda's, had a total of seven players available to compete in the championship match. To compound this deficit, several of them were injured—a couple during the game—and then to add insult to

injury, or "put salt in the wound," the one injured reserve was called in off the sidelines to play simply so the team wouldn't forfeit. As one might guess, this wasn't the most beautiful football to watch, but the competition was first rate. Halsted's was down by a point at halftime and Frieda's was resting and icing. Some of the injuries included cracked ribs, split foreheads, torn finger ligaments—and one player was hit so hard she blacked out for a moment. It should also be mentioned that a player came back from the emergency room with her head bandaged and her eye slowly swelling shut, but determined to be there to support her team. Ultimately, the perseverance of these women carried them to the winner's circle when Frieda's won 20-14.

Finally, during the ceremony at the end-of-season party, Rebel Tara Lykowski was the recipient of the second annual Angie Oldham Memorial Award that was started last year to commemorate the dedication Angie had to sports and CMSA. The award recognizes exceptional play in spirit, hustle and sportsmanship.

Chicago Dragons show Jan. 24

Local gay and gay-friendly rugby team the Chicago Dragons will hold its 3rd Annual Ms. Ruck & Maul Contest Saturday, Jan. 24, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 5-8 p.m.

Tickets for the event—which will feature team members in drag—are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. In exchange, patrons get four drink tickets and a whole lot of entertainment. This event is one of the team's biggest to help raise money for club expenses such as field costs, travel and equipment.

See www.ChicagoDragons.org.

Softball classic seeks volunteers

The Chi-Town Softball Classic will take July 2-5, 2009, and event organizers are seeking volunteers.

Volunteers of all types and talents are being sought in various areas, including marketing, hospitality, Web design and graphic design.

Interested persons should e-mail ChiTownSoftballClassic@gmail.com.

Navratilova and Takei on British reality show

Legendary lesbian tennis player Martina Navratilova and out actor George Takei (*Star Trek*) are two of the famous people featured on the latest season of the British reality show *I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here*, according to ESPN.com.

In the show, the cast of 10 is filmed in the Australian jungle performing stunts such as eating bugs and crawling into tanks with snakes in return for food.

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