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Gays tackle Burris pick

BY YASMIN NAIR

Gov. Rod Blagojevich recently announced that he was appointing Roland Burris to the Senate seat previously occupied by President-elect Barack Obama. The move has generated controversy, censure and ridicule. The governor is being decried for equal parts hubris and arrogance, while Burris has been criticized for participating in what many claim is an unethical move.

This latest news may well turn out to be the most negative in Burris's career, one that has seen a steady climb upwards, from being the first African American elected to statewide office in Illinois, first as comptroller (1979-1981) and then as attorney general (1991-1995). Burris is well-liked and respected in political circles. Michael O'Connor, former legislative aide to State Rep. Connie Howard, said that Roland Burris is "eminently qualified." Burris has been broadly

supportive of LGBT-defined issues.

(On Jan. 6, Senate authorities denied Burris the opportunity to be sworn in with the newest group of senators. Burris was slated to meet with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid Jan. 7 in the latter's office.)

Rick Garcia, political director of LGBT-rights group Equality Illinois, praised Burris, saying that Burris has been supportive of gay rights

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LaBelles of the Ball

page 18

After a 32-year layoff, the music trio LaBelle (consisting of, from left, Nona Hendryx, Patti LaBelle and Sarah Dash) are back with a new album and tour. Read an interview with Dash on page 18. Photo by Kwaku Alston

Four arrested in Calif. gang rape

Four males—including two teens—have been arrested on suspicion of gang-raping a woman in Richmond, Calif., in December while allegedly taunting her for being a lesbian, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

Police have arrested Humberto Hernandez Salvador, 31, as well as two teens, ages 16 and 15. Josue Gonzalez, 21, turned himself in. Authorities said that the foursome attacked the victim, 28, Dec. 13 after she got out of her car, which had a rainbow gay-pride sticker.

Authorities said that one man allegedly ordered her to disrobe, and sexually assaulted her with the help of the others, according to the New York Daily News. When the group saw a potential witness approaching, they forced the vic-

tim back into her car and took her to a burned-out apartment building. She was then sexually attacked again inside and outside the vehicle.

Salvador "had the most involvement and gave orders and directions to the other individuals," Richmond Police Lt. Gagan said. "But they're all responsible for the crimes that were committed against the victim."

All four are being held on gang rape, kidnapping and carjacking charges.

More than 200 people attended a vigil for the victim held in Richmond this past weekend, according to the Bay Area Reporter. A benefit and raffle are planned for Jan. 9 at the Oakland lesbian nightclub Velvet, the Bay Times reported.



Josue Gonzalez. Photo courtesy of the Richmond (Calif.) Police Department

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Openly gay California State Sen. Mark Leno (above) talks about Prop 8 with Windy City Times. Read page 4.



Katerynn Cusanelli (above) is someone who's definitely new to MTV's The Real World. Find out why on page 15.

Photo courtesy of Tamika Young

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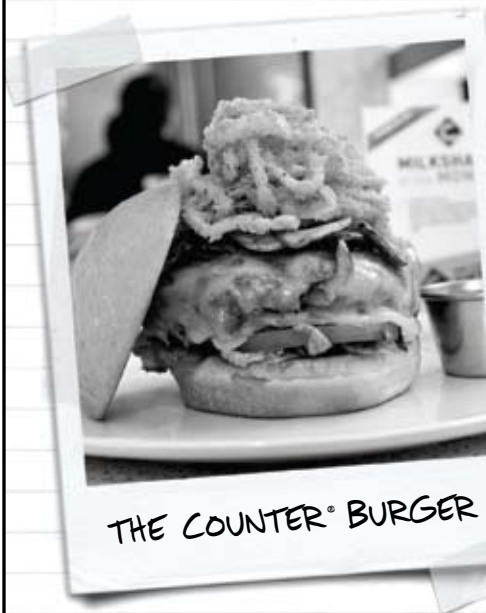


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California State Sen. Mark Leno

Mark Leno talks Prop 8

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Mark Leno made history Dec. 1, becoming the first out man to serve in the California Senate. (He won 80 percent of the votes in the general election.) But he certainly did not rest on any laurels, kicking off the 2009-10 session by proposing an anti-Proposition 8 resolution, SR 7. (Openly gay Tom Ammiano put forth a similar measure in the other legislative house, the Assembly.)

Windy City Times recently talked with a very busy Leno about his proposal and the measure he is hoping to have eventually declared legally invalid.

Windy City Times: You introduced a measure Dec. 2 connected with Prop 8. Could you talk about it a little bit?

Mark Leno: Sure. It's a resolution—so it's not binding legislation—to put the California State Legislature on record [that] Proposition 8 is unconstitutional and should be thrown out by the supreme court. We base our belief on the same argument that's being used in a number of lawsuits—that Prop 8 undermines a minority's equal protection under the law.

Equal protection is a foundational stone of our constitutional democracy. The drafters of our constitution understood clearly that minority rights would be at risk if undermining equal protection for them was considered a mere amendment. So, to protect the minority, the drafters of the constitution set a higher bar for revising the constitution; a revision is a radical or significant change to it. Undermining equal protection would be considered a radical or significant change.

So that process for revision—different from an amendment—requires a more deliberative process, engaging the legislature and a two-thirds majority from each house prior to voters considering it. And the proponents of Prop 8, for their own reasons, decided to skip the legislative step.

WCT: I think a lot of people across the country were shocked when the Prop 8 results came in because they see California as this bastion of liberalism.

ML: Well, it is a very mixed state, actually—and there were many things that went wrong with the [anti-Prop 8] campaign. But to put a silver lining on the results of Nov. 4, it should not be overlooked that our accomplishment in the “No on 8” campaign was that we picked up 18 percentage points of support that we did not have just eight years ago. The 14 words of Proposition 8—“Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California”—were put before California voters in the form of Prop 22 in March 2000; we lost by 22 points, 61-39. We lost by 4 points in 2008. We picked up 18 points of support and the other side lost 18 points of support, so clearly this issue is moving very quickly.

I would suggest that it is historically unprecedented that an important social issue like this would have a shift in public opinion in such a relatively short period of time. So the window is closing very quickly for the other side. In fact, what's uncommon here is that we're fighting a war in which we know who wins. We're going to win the war; we just don't know when the last battle is. We thought it was Nov. 4.

The issue of our resolution, which is now before the California Supreme Court, is one that is much broader than marriage equality. It really questions if we still have a constitutional democracy in California or if we let majority votes take away anyone's rights. It also questions whether we have a democracy or a theocracy. If you ask most people who supported Prop 8, they say, “Marriage is between a man and a woman. The Bible tells us so.” The genius of our democracy is that we protect everyone's constitutional right to freedom of religion but we don't let any one interpretation of any one holy book become state law. It's curious that we're fighting wars around the world to prevent that very thing from happening. Any religious minority should be concerned about this.

Also, it would be very impractical to let Prop 8 stand because, whereas the supreme court ruled that these are constitutionally protected rights—the right to marry the person one loves—they were overturned by a simple majority vote. So should we come back in two years and have the rights again, [only to] have them come back two years later and have them taken away again? This is very messy, and it's not constitutional democracy—and the drafters of our constitution saw this.

WCT: Obviously, we know about your position on Prop 8, but what are a couple of your other platforms?

ML: I will be authoring California's single-payer universal healthcare bill; California is the only state legislature in the country to place [such a] bill on our governor's desk. We've placed it on [Gov. Arnold] Schwarzenegger's desk twice, and he's vetoed it twice—but we will continue to lead the charge.

I'm also involved with renewable and clean energy production, having authored more bills promoting the solar industry than any other legislator in Sacramento.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The National Center for Lesbian Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal filed a reply brief Dec. 5 in the California Supreme Court **as the organizations seek to overturn the anti-same-sex-marriage initiative Proposition 8**, according to a Lambda Legal release. The brief contends, among other things, that the proposition is void because it would take away a right for a particular minority, which cannot be accomplished via an initiative process.

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights ruled Dec. 29 that a church group discriminated against a lesbian couple, Harriet Bernstein and Luisa Paster, when it did not let them hold their civil-union ceremony on property the group owns but has allowed others to use publicly, Advocate.com reported. Next, an administrative-law judge will rule on a proper remedy for the situation.

In New York, **Jesse Parsons was sentenced to five and a half years in prison after he pled guilty to attacking a gay man, Lance Neve, back in March**, Advocate.com reported. Originally, Parsons had agreed to a plea deal of four years in prison, but Judge Richard Keenan threw it out and tacked on a year and a half after Parsons said in court in November that Neve deserved to be attacked. Parsons must also pay \$24,000 for Neve's medical expenses.

Christine Maggiore—an **HIV skeptic who published the book What if Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong**—passed away Dec. 29 at the age of 52, the Los Angeles Times reported. Maggiore, whose 3-year-old daughter died in 2005 of AIDS-related pneumonia, also founded Alive & Well AIDS Alternatives, a support group that challenges assumptions about AIDS.

In Arizona, the conservative Alliance Defense Fund is asking attorneys to **oppose a proposed change to the state bar association's oath that promises equal representation to LGBT clients**, according to 365Gay.com. In a letter to the bar association's president, the fund and other conservative lawyers were concerned that “the proposed provision is unnecessary, exceedingly ambiguous, and unconstitutional.”

In Washington, D.C., Diego Miguel Sanchez is now **the first trans individual to work on Capitol Hill**, according to 365Gay.com. Sanchez will work under U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., as his legislative assistant for LGBT, Healthcare, Labor, Veterans and Census issues.

A controversial study has revealed that **men who engage in risky sexual behavior with other men report much higher rates than normal of experiencing severe childhood sexual abuse**, according to an item in the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Although about 20 percent of gay and bisexual men in the survey were sexually abused as children—a rate similar to that found among heterosexual women—80 percent of those indi-

viduals experienced “severe” abuse, which involved violence.

The Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic at New York's Columbia Law School has secured **asylum for a gay, HIV-positive man from the Ivory Coast** who thought he might be persecuted if he was forced to return to his homeland, according to a press release from the clinic. The African man, 32—who arrived in the United States in January 2004—said that he was constantly subjected to verbal, physical and sexual abuse in the Ivory Coast.

Modern sex researchers have generally overlooked the Kinsey scale and Alfred Kinsey's findings, according to an article in the December issue of the Journal of Bisexuality. Paul H. Gebhard, a member of Kinsey's research team, said that today's scientists, for example, are looking at genetic causes of sexual orientation—something Kinsey avoided because he thought the results could be used against people.

In California, the attorneys for 14-year-old murder suspect Brandon McInerney **want a judge to allow them access to files involving the prosecution of underage individuals as adults**, PinkNews.co.uk reported. McInerney stands accused to shooting and killing classmate Lawrence King, who reportedly was gay.

In San Francisco, **First United Lutheran Church has installed a transgender minister—Jay Wilson**—making him one of a very select group in the city, according to the Bay Area Reporter. First United was actually the first Lutheran church to ordain an openly LGBT pastor in the 1990s. The ordination ceremony included some accommodations for Wilson, who has the autism spectrum disorder known as Asperger syndrome.

In Memphis, Tenn., **a second transwoman who worked as a prostitute has been shot**, according to On Top magazine. As of early January, Leeneshia Edwards remained in critical condition after being attacked Dec. 23. Another transwoman, Duanna Johnson, died in December after being shot Nov. 10. A video of Johnson being beaten down by two cops (who lost their jobs) was circulated online early last year; police still have no leads in Johnson's murder.

In Nevada, gambling regulators have filed a complaint against Las Vegas gay nightclub Snick's Place and licensee Dominic Vitale, **alleging that several patrons engaged in sex acts in public areas of the bar**, according to the Associated Press. The complaint lists seven counts, each punishable by a fine of up to \$100,000; also, the club's slot-machine license could be revoked.

The city of Phoenix, Ariz., recently approved a gay domestic-partner registry, according to On Top magazine. However, the registry—which passed 6-0 and will take effect Feb. 9—only guarantees the right to visit a partner while in a Phoenix hospital, nursing home or other health-care facility.

In Iowa, Sioux City councilmembers are **delaying taking action on an anti-same-sex-marriage resolution**, according to an Advocate.com item. Before proceeding, the city's mayor, Mike Hobart, said that he wanted to consult the state's attorney general “on whether we have the jurisdiction and authority to pass the resolution.”

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'Gays Got Talent' finals Jan. 10

The finals for Gays Got Talent, a wide-ranging Chicago-area talent contest, will take place Jan. 10, 2009 at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Doors open at 4 p.m., and the show begins at 5 p.m.; the cost at the door is \$5. On that day someone will be crowned the "Most Talented Gay" of 2008.

"People were encouraged to come out and dance, sing, perform poetry, comedy or display their magic, drag, or puppetry skills," said Amy Matheny, host of Gays Got Talent. "And the final big show will have it all—from comics to singers, musicians, slam poets, magicians and the oldest gay talent there is—drag kings and drag queens." The talent comes to the finals from many clubs around town including Stargaze, Crew, Jeffrey Pub, Mary's Attic and @mosphere.

The audience will vote to award the grand-prize winner \$1,000 cash, American Airlines tickets, a trip to Toronto, Broadway in Chicago tickets and more. See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com for more.

1,000+ teens get HIV tests

More than 1,000 teenagers had screenings Jan. 3 for HIV and other diseases at a South Side health-related event, according to the Chicago Tribune.

The tests were part of the second annual Teen Test Day, which took place at South Shore Cultural Center, 7059 S. Shore. Metropolitan Area Group for Igniting Civilizations sponsors the event.

Fake bills allegedly found at Hydrate

People in the Chicago neighborhood of Boytown are on the lookout for fake money after counterfeit money was allegedly found at Hydrate nightclub, 3458 N. Halsted.

According to the police report, the manager of Hydrate reported that after the bar closed for the evening on Dec. 29, he discovered eight \$20 U.S. currency bills that appeared to be counterfeit. No arrest has been made.

The matter has been referred to the Secret Service for a follow-up investigation.

Anti-DOMA rally set for Jan. 10

As part of continuing protests spurred by the passage of California's anti-gay-marriage measure Proposition 8, protests will take place around the country Saturday, Jan. 10, to demand the repeal of the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act.

Chicago's protest will start at 11:30 a.m. with a brief rally at the State of Illinois Building Plaza, on the corner of Clark and Randolph. There will then be a march up to Holy Name Cathedral, 735 N. State, and back. The main Chicago protest at Clark and Randolph is coordinated by the Gay Liberation Network and the Chicago chapter of Join the Impact.

See www.gayliberation.net and www.JoinTheImpact.com.

Men's group holding social, meetings

Men Nurturing Men (MNM) will hold a "REUNION" potluck social Saturday, Jan. 10, 6:30-11:30 p.m., at one of the members' homes.

Also, MNM will form a meeting group for an eight-week session starting Thursday, Jan. 29. Each group is limited to the first 10 men who respond, with preference given toward past attendees.

RSVP on or before Jan. 7 to 708-439-5227 or bemnmchicago09@yahoo.com.

OPALGA holiday brunch Jan. 11

OPALGA (The Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association) is holding its annual holiday party—the "Aren't You Glad the Holidays Are Over?" brunch—on Sunday, Jan. 11, 1-4 p.m., at Trattoria 225, 225 Harrison, Oak Park.

Tickets are \$30 for OPALGA members, and \$35 for non-members or guests. Call Jan at 708-848-0273.

Garcia speaking in Arlington Heights

Rick Garcia, director of public policy for LGBT-rights organization Equality Illinois, will speak about his organization Saturday, Jan. 10, in Arlington Heights at 7 p.m. There will be free pizza, beer, wine and soft drinks.

An RSVP is highly recommended. E-mail Fran Bailey at info@outinthesuburbs.com for more details.

Center hosting art shows in Jan.

The Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, will host two art shows in January.



John Gress's work, "Barack Obama and Family."

The opening reception for "Jeff Stevenson: Many-One" will be held Friday, Jan. 9 on the second-floor gallery, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; a \$5 donation is requested. The show will run through Feb. 15.

The second show—which will premiere shortly before President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration—is "Yes We Can: John Gress on the Campaign Trail with Barack Obama." The opening reception will be held Friday, Jan. 16 at the center's third-floor gallery, 6:30-9:30 p.m.; a \$5 donation is requested. Gress's work involves commercial and photojournalism/documentary photography, and the show will run through March 1.

RSVP to Ben Gannon at ben@centeronhalsted.org or call 773-472-6469, ext. 177.

Addendum

In listing deaths from 2008, Windy City Times overlooked the passing of Joe La Pat. La Pat died June 29, Gay Pride Sunday. For several decades, he helped improve Chicago through his real-estate development with partner Dick Uyvari, and through their civic and GLBT contributions. La Pat and Uyvari, together since 1969, were especially generous with the Center on Halsted and the Gay Games in Chicago. La Pat was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame posthumously this past fall.

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Downstate group raises over \$25K for scholarships

The Acorn Equality Fund (AEF)—a 501(c)(3) organization that provides scholarship and grant opportunities to LGBT persons, organizations and allies in downstate Illinois—raised more than \$25,000 at its 9th Annual Family Breakfast, held Dec. 6 at the Hotel Pere Marquette in downtown Peoria.

Eight scholarships totalling \$16,000 were awarded, including one \$4,000 scholarship, the largest scholarship in the history of the the AEF.

In nine years the AEF has awarded a total of

\$18,900 in grants to organizations in downstate Illinois and \$93,000 in scholarships. Donations can be made by sending a check to Acorn Equality Fund, P.O. Box 6286, Peoria, Ill., 61650-6286 or visiting www.acornequalityfund.com.

Roe v. Wade events Jan. 21-22

The Our Voices, Our Choices reproductive justice coalition and the Chicago Foundation for Women will hold a special event marking the 36th anniversary of the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision Wed., Jan. 21, 2009, at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, 6:30-8:30 p.m. There is a suggested donation of \$5 at the door.

that he would sign on to important LGBT-focused legislation such as increasing Ryan White Care Act funding, and helping make voluntary HIV testing as routine as a blood test.

— Also contributing: Tracy Baim

A look back: Talking with Burris

Whether Roland Burris gets to hold the post for any length of time will be up to politicians and judges, a fate also awaiting Blagojevich. To provide some background on Burris, who has been out of the spotlight in recent years, Windy City Times is taking a look back at his answers to candidate surveys and interviewer questions.

The following are quotes from an interview with Roland Burris that ran in the December 1997 and January 1998 issues of BLACKlines, a now-defunct sister publication to Outlines newspaper, which in 2000 merged with Windy City Times. The interviewer was Jon Dallas:

Jon Dallas: Same-sex marriages recognized in other states [none at the time of the interview] will not be recognized in Illinois under a law [Senate Bill 1773 sponsored by Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, R-Palatine] signed in May 1996 by Gov. Edgar. If you had been governor, would you have signed that law? Will you work for its repeal?

Roland Burris: [This question] touches on a very philosophical point with me, a personal point. I have made sure that there will be no discrimination against gays and lesbians, as a matter of fact I've amended statutes, sexual orientation preferences for hate crimes saying that you can't attack people and I've worked to pass laws for the interest of anti-discrimination. I've met with all of my gay friends and they know where I stand on this issue. We have discussed it and we have talked about it and they've sought to convince me, but guess what? They haven't quite been able to do it yet. I'm not there. And the reason why I'm not there as I've told them [gay friends] is that they don't have an answer for it either. If you take it [same-sex marriages] to its ultimate conclusion, it will then be the destruction of the species. So therefore, I am not there. The bill that would come to me I could not sign. Not that I don't support all [lesbian and gay] efforts, but when it comes to the sanctity of marriage, that to me under my culture and my beliefs ... is a philosophical difference. In our structure in society, when we look for the perpetuation of mankind, we look for the opposite sex. There was a reason for the creation of the opposite sex—for procreation. Various things have to happen when you get the opposite sex together some person may not be able to produce. But under the biological existence, the circumstances are that they [gays and lesbians] can't. But if you get two females together, you know that they cannot reproduce. You put two males together you know that they cannot reproduce. So given that as I see our societal structure, I see it [society] as having been created in this fashion some other societies and cultures are different as for the perpetuation of the species.

JD: Current statistics state that lesbians and gay men consist of about 10 percent of

The following day, the Chicago Abortion Fund will host a rally at Federal Plaza at 11:30 a.m.

For more info on these events, see www.chicagoabortionfund.com and www.cfw.org.

ALCC seeking nominees

The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) is accepting nominations for the 2009 Advocates of the Year Awards, which will be held Tuesday, May 5, at the Playboy Foundation, 680 N. Lake Shore. The Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of men and women in Illinois who are making a difference in the lives of people with HIV.

To submit a candidate for consideration,

the population. Given that fact, how do you feel about [same-sex marriage]?

RB: That's fine. It could be 30 percent or 40 percent of the population. But when you're dealing with my personal, inner beliefs, and my gay friends have respected my views on this because they have parents the same way ... this is something that I'm not new at discussing. They've been trying to convince me [to support same-sex marriage] and some of them haven't been able to do it. Some of the white [lesbian and gays] have been non-supportive but some Black lesbians and gays [have been supportive]. Marc Loveless and I have been through this and a couple of [my] white staff members knew that some [in the white lesbian and gay community] didn't support my task because it was racism. It had absolutely nothing to do with my personal belief in the sanctity of the homosexual marital relationship. I did not get that support from them [white lesbians and gays] anyway ... they have not supported my candidacy [while] other candidates didn't believe in the marital situation either. It was a race question. To my Black gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, they're dealing with my inner beliefs. And my belief is that I will protect every right that you have and I will go to death with you. But I don't think that we can take it to that level of marriage. If the two [lesbians or gay men] want to get married, live together that is their decision. But don't ask the societal structure to sanction that [marriage]. It would be like the common-law arrangement, and a lot of heterosexuals are in common-law arrangements, there's some protection that [heterosexuals] get under that [arrangement]. Now in the same-sex arrangement, I don't want to go down that path because it's a path of no return. If you start down that [road], generations from now, what will happen to our species? If there's a law [for same-sex marriage] I will not support it.

JD: What will you do to stop violence against lesbian and gay people?

RB: If someone attacks [lesbians and gays] because you are lesbian or gay, they ought to have an enhanced penalty because they have no right to interfere with whatever you want to be ... it [is] your right. I'm not somebody who's flippant about this [issue]. I've been in it, I understand it, I've changed and got educated [on lesbian and gay issues] and have become an advocate for violence against lesbians and gays. I will certainly speak out regarding any violence against any citizen anywhere in the state of Illinois.

JD: Do you favor increasing funds to pay for the new AIDS medications?

RB: I will support anything that will deal with the elimination of AIDS. Certainly. I've been out on AIDS walks and I've hired an HIV-positive person on my staff. I think I'm on the right side of that issue.

JD: Do you support a bill to make discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal in the state of Illinois?

RB: Absolutely.

For the complete interview see the following links: www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=20127 and www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=20126.

download the nominating form at www.aidslegal.com/Documents/Nominating_Form_2009.pdf and return it with letters of support to ALCC by Friday, Jan. 30.

If you have any questions, please call Ricardo Cifuentes at 312-427-8990 or ricardo@aidslegal.com.

Café hosting queer open mic

Urban Café, 1467 W. Irving Park, is sponsoring OUTmusic Queer Open Mic on the last Tuesday of every month.

The shows will feature mostly queer acoustic music. Call 773-327-9427 or visit www.urbancafechicago.com.

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago also surveyed the gubernatorial candidates that year. Burris scored a 73-percent rating on that survey, while Blagojevich was 100 percent.

And, finally, below are Burris' answers to the 2002 Windy City Times/BLACKlines questionnaire for statewide candidates.

1. Would you support a state civil rights bill for gays and lesbians? **YES.**
Would you lobby for it? **YES.**

2. Do you favor a statewide registry of names of people who test positive for HIV? **NO. That is an unreasonable invasion of privacy.**

3. On AIDS services in the state, do you favor:

- Increasing funding? **YES.**
- Reducing funding? **NO.**
- Maintaining current funding? **NO.**

4. What steps, beyond current programs, should the state government take to fight AIDS? **State government can do more in terms of incorporating responsible sexual awareness education into our public school curriculum; supporting community-based needle exchange programs; and providing financial support for community-based safe sex public education campaigns.**

5. On Medicaid, do you favor mandatory coverage of persons with HIV/AIDS? **YES.**

6. Do you favor same-sex marriage? **NO. I favor civil unions, extending employee benefits to include same-sex partners, and the addition of gay, lesbian and transgender protections under the human rights act, but I am opposed, on religious grounds, to recognition by marriage of same-sex couples.**

7. Do you believe in the right of gays and lesbians to become foster parents in Illinois? **YES.**

8. Should gays and lesbians have a right to adopt children? **YES.**

9. Should gays/lesbians have the right to custody of their own children? **YES.**

10. Do you favor hate-crimes legislation that increases penalties for crimes committed based on the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person attacked? **YES.**

11. Do you have rights for transgendered persons in employment, housing and public accommodations? **YES.**

12. Do you support a woman's right to choose abortion? **YES.**

13. Do you favor maintaining current affirmative action programs? **YES.**

14. Do you favor public funding of the Boy Scouts, given that the private agency has been allowed to discriminate against gays and lesbians? **NO.**

15. Are any members of your current staff, either campaign staff or legislative staff, openly gay, lesbian, bi or transgendered? **YES.**

16. Please list any and all experience you have on gay issues, whether on legislation, voting lobbying, personal, etc. **As attorney general, I was responsible for incorporating gay, lesbian issues into the victim's rights, domestic abuse and hate-crimes legislation. I created the first ever Women's Advocacy Division to protect women from domestic abuse. Those protections extend to gay, lesbian and transgender victims.**

Duncan draws mixed reactions from LGBTAs

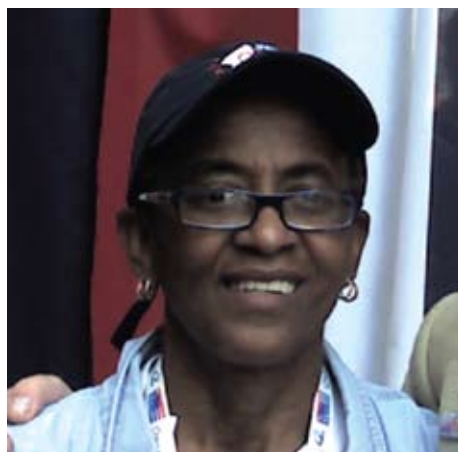
BY YASMIN NAIR

After eight years of No Child Behind, which emphasized testing scores as indicators of student progress, the naming of Arne Duncan as President-elect Barack Obama's secretary of education is being hailed as an opportunity to undo and reform the education legacy of the Bush administration. Duncan's reputation as a progressive educator rests in part on his support for the proposed and now-postponed Pride School campus of the North Lawndale Social Justice School, which would have focused on the needs of LGBT youth.

Despite glowing accolades in the national press, Duncan's record is seen quite differently by progressive LGBT educators and school advocates in Chicago and elsewhere. Henry Giroux, a renowned scholar of pedagogy, recently co-authored (with Kenneth Saltman) an article entitled "Obama's Betrayal of Public Education? Arne Duncan and the Corporate Model of Schooling" on TruthOut.org. The piece is especially critical of Duncan's Renaissance 2010 program. Under this program, according to school-reform publication Catalyst, "The idea is to close low-performing schools and replace them with smaller, entrepreneurial schools, many of them free from union contracts and some state regulations." Catalyst reported that "only 2 percent [of students] were enrolled the next fall in new Renaissance schools. Nearly half of the displaced students landed at schools that were on academic probation."

Giroux and Saltman pointed out the flaws in privatizing public school education on a corporate model where "testing [is] used as a ploy to de-skill teachers by reducing them to mere technicians, [and] students [are] similarly reduced to customers in the marketplace rather than as engaged, critical learners and [where] always underfunded public schools fail so that they can eventually be privatized."

Erica Meiners is an associate professor of education and women's studies at Northeastern Illinois University. She is also a coordinator at St. Leonard's High School, an Albany Park high school for the formerly incarcerated. Talking with Windy City Times, Meiners saw Arne Duncan within the context of privatization and militarization; she pointed out that Chicago is the most militarized school district in the country, with several of its institutions—like Senn High on the North Side—partly or entirely given over to military academies. Regarding the Pride campus, Meiners said, "I'm torn because I do spend time in schools and I see the persistent heteronormativity in schools, and the violence that compulsory heteronormativity does to all youth, but I also see the violence white supremacy does, and the violence of misogyny." She said that she would rather see a comprehensive structural



Renae Ogletree.

push from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to institute gay-straight alliances (GSAs) at all schools, "along with workshops for teachers not just on LGBTQ issues, but working with English-language learners, with workshops on undoing racism."

Meiners was concerned about the militarization adding to homophobia because "[t]ypically, what we know of military academies is that misogyny and anti-gay hazing are significant. Where's the push from CPS to address queer issues at these schools? In the new all-boy school in Englewood? What about LGBTQ students in the military schools?" Brian Roa, a faculty sponsor of the Senn High School GSA, said that one of the students at Senn Military Academy (which is a wing of the high school) was a trans youth who preferred to wear the uniform of the female students but was not allowed to do so.

According to Therese Quinn, associate professor of art education at the School of the Art Institute, the teachers hired at the new charter or contract schools created under Renaissance 2010 generally cannot join the Chicago Teacher's Union; are on year-to-year contracts; and are often underprepared—which has a detrimental effect on both faculty and students who are LGBTQ-identified or gender-nonconforming: "Exploited people are not the best people to be teachers. They can't stand up for the kids [or themselves] because they have to look out for their jobs."

Gender JUST (Justice United for Societal Transformation) describes itself as an organizing project concerned with developing a multidimensional LGBTQ agenda based on principles of economic justice. Members attended the meeting where the postponement of the Pride Campus was announced. Sam Finkelstein, a spokesperson for the group, said that the organization had come to support the community, but "we are not supportive of anything that's part of a plan to privatize education. So if [it had eventually come up for a vote] we would have said: if this is going to be part of the Renaissance 2010 plan, we cannot support this. Even though it might be good for LGBT youth, it would be overall destructive in terms of privatizing education. There needs to be a larger systemic solution to the issue of bullying in high schools." Finkelstein was also critical of the process through

which the Pride Campus was introduced, citing a lack of transparency as well as a lack of inclusiveness in the design team, pointing out that there were no trans people on it.

Michael Vaughn, Duncan's spokesperson, responded to questions about privatization and militarization. With regard to the former, he told Windy City Times, "Our priority is to give our students great options, especially in neighborhoods that have been traditionally underserved. We're willing to listen to anybody who comes to us with great ideas of great new options for families." He took issue with the notion that CPS was being "militarized," saying that such schools were "military academies in structure but they're set up as college prep in curriculum." With regard to homophobia in such schools, Vaughn was not aware of incidents like the one described by Roa.

Some are optimistic about Duncan's ascendancy. James Madigan, the interim executive director at Equality Illinois, said that it's "refreshing to know that someone who's receptive to the idea of LGBT students is going to take on a national role." Madigan hoped that Duncan will enable federal resources to "to try to influence schools to make them more tolerant and inclusive."

That hope was echoed by Renae Ogletree, an out lesbian and director of student development at Chicago Public Schools. Ogletree—who was on the proposed LGBT school's design team—praised Duncan's willingness to consider the needs of LGBT students but sees the issues extending beyond him: "The problem is with the whole notion of systemic change. What will this administration put in place that strengthens anti-bullying and anti-harassment measures, and that ensures that people are respectful of gender diversity, ensures that LGBT youth get their medical and social needs considered? Is that an agenda that Arne Duncan will take with him—to ensure that all LGBT youth can access those resources?"

For now, progressive LGBTQ educators and advocates are skeptical. Erica Meiners wondered, "If we consider the work he's done in Chicago as an indication of what he plans to do nationally, can we expect the militarization of public schooling in every urban school district?"

Point Foundation scholarship deadline Feb. 9

Point Foundation—the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBT students of merit—has started its 2009 application season. Students who will be enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs for the 2009-10 school year are eligible to apply for the prestigious, multi-year scholarships. The application deadline for this year's scholarships is Feb. 9, 2009.

On average, a Point Scholarship awards \$13,200 in direct financial support in addition to the programmatic support the foundation provides in leadership training and mentoring. See www.pointfoundation.org/apply.html for more info.

Pop/rock band at Prime Timers social

Rick Torres, with his backup band, will provide the musical entertainment for the Sunday, Jan. 11, Chicago Prime Timers open social at Ann Sather Restaurant, 909 W. Belmont.

The open social begins at 6 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner and program at 7 p.m. Dinners are \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. See www.primetimersww.org/chicago.

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Amber Hollibaugh.

Renowned activist Amber Hollibaugh is in Chicago

BY YASMIN NAIR

Amber Hollibaugh has a unique history among LGBTQ activists, and she now brings that to Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan, as chief officer of elder and LGBTI women's services. Hollibaugh is widely regarded for her writing on queer issues relating to the most marginalized and invisible in the community, including the poor and sex workers. Her 2000 collection of essays and interviews, *My Dangerous Desires: a Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home*, details her life as a working-class girl growing up in California, and escaping poverty and incest by moving to New York City. On the way, Hollibaugh worked as a sex worker and stripper to pay for her unfunded activism. She comes to Howard Brown from a previous position as senior strategist for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Hollibaugh spoke to Windy City Times about her new job; Chicago activism; and the issues facing LGBTI women and the LGBT elderly.

Windy City Times: What attracted you to Howard Brown and Chicago?

Amber Hollibaugh: I have always had an interest in areas and geographies that were not the coast. The majority of the country is neither on one coast or the other; it is configured around different kinds of terrains and different kinds of impacts that come from those terrains: the Midwest, South, the Southwest—the rural areas, rather than urban. Those places impact the

way that you live as an LGBT person and they're often the places that get the least amount of visibility and attention. So Howard Brown was a real opportunity to come to Chicago, a city that I love, and also to a place where dynamic and extraordinary work was going on, but was not being talked about in many of the areas where I did my work.

WCT: What will your work entail, in relation to the elderly and to women?

AH: The LGBTI women's services already have a really good foundation, with lots of history, because of the Lesbian Community Care Project. I see my job in LGBTI women's work as using that as a foundation to expand services to queer women at Howard Brown. The elder-services program is relatively new; the earmark was received a couple of years ago, and a survey was done of needs and issues but the real programming work is just now just beginning. We have a lesbian geriatric physician, a case manager [and] an HIV over-50 prevention educator; we have real substance in that program. My job is to make all that more comprehensive and embedded in every single part of the agency. And then beginning to grow elder services, which nobody's done. There's a terrific elder program at the center but it's not primarily focused on physical or behavioral needs of older people. Frankly, except for SAGE [Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders] in New York, very few comprehensive programs exist.

WCT: Why do you think the elderly are ignored that way in our community?

AH: I think it's the general ageism in the culture; old people are at best patronized as "cute." They're not integrated in a dynamic way into the culture. When you get past a certain age, you're over in this culture and all you have to offer are your memories of what you did before you got old. And that [is true in] the LGBT community as well. A lot of LGBT folks don't know anybody that's 70 or 80. That has two kinds of impacts. One: You have no way to think about your own life as a person getting older, as an LGBT person. Two: Older LGBT folks are often seen as a weight in the community, rather than full members that are the age they are.

Our policy organizations tend to not do advocacy work around the lifespan, so at a certain point you drop off the face of the earth. You're not seen, you're not valued, the kind of politics that's embedded in age around sexuality has real impact on our communities. People don't assume you're sexually active once you reach a certain age, and you're in a community that considers sexual capacity really important. You're kind of lost. The idea that you are still an erotic person when you're older is something that makes a lot

of people uncomfortable, and your attractiveness in the community is often judged by age. It then becomes very difficult to participate as a community member at your age.

WCT: How would Howard Brown address these issues?

AH: I'd like people to know that Howard Brown is a site for comprehensive care for elders and women. We're doing home healthcare visits for frail older people, who might not be able to leave their houses. We can bring a doctor to their house and that's a pretty rare capacity. We have a case manager who can also go with that doctor to help put people into the services that they need. We're beginning to build peer teams, of older LGBT people from very diverse communities who are themselves 60 and above and want to do outreach to other older LGBT people. They'll be peer workers in paid part-time positions.

Howard Brown tends to be seen as serving gay white men. We want to make it clear that we're intentional about serving older people and women.

WCT: What are other specific issues you've seen with regard to aging and how might they be resolved?

AH: Everybody worries about being institutionalized in places where there may not be policies in place that protect them; they're worried about transphobia and homophobia. The last thing you want to deal with when you're going to a nursing-home senior center for lunch—because it's your only hot meal—is somebody's bad attitude about "sitting next to a fag." If you can't get the care you need because somebody doesn't want to bathe the dyke, you're in trouble. Most people do not bring a lot of resources to their aging life, so they cannot just move out if they're treated badly. Our job here is to educate the places that provide the care for elderly people so that they're safe places that anyone can access. For instance, changing their intake forms so they don't ask, "Are you married?" Or providing services that are not heterosexually biased, so you can be open about your life history and not assumed to be heterosexual.

WCT: You came to this work through years as an activist and grassroots organizer. What do you feel about the rise of the professional gay activist who goes straight from college to the nonprofit sector and who might not have your kind of background?

AH: I don't want to disparage the extraordinary work that people do. We've done enough activism to change things enough that being a "professional homosexual" is not completely marginalized. But it is also true that diverse backgrounds like myself are less and less likely

to be in that professional mix and that is not okay with me. We're still in the midst of building a social-justice movement of LGBT communities; our organizations have to reflect the diversity of those communities in order to advocate for the different things we need. If your uh-huh experience is coming out at Vassar, that's a very different experience than coming out in the army or coming out in a rural town where your dad's a farmer. If we don't have diversity in our ranks, we won't have diversity in our policy. And I don't mean diversity in [a superficial way] but in terms of depth of experience; this is about racism, class, gender and economics. The recession is only going to get worse before it gets better. The bulk of LGBT are middle-class or working-class, and many of us are poor; to not be able to articulate their economic circumstances is not okay.

See www.howardbrown.org for more information.

Perez Hilton in Oak Brook Jan. 11

Self-proclaimed "Queen of All Media" Perez Hilton will be at Borders Books and Music, 1500 16th, Oak Brook, on Sunday, Jan. 11 at 4 p.m. to promote his satire, *Red Carpet Suicide*.

Hilton—founder of PerezHilton.com, one of the country's most popular celebrity blogs—cuts loose with a book that'll secure his reputation as "the most hated man in Hollywood" (Rolling Stone).

See www.borders.com or call 630-574-0800 for more info.

YPC looking for adult volunteers

Youth Pride Center (YPC)—an LGBTA-focused organization for teens and young adults of color—is looking for adult volunteers for its youth program in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

Volunteers must be at least 25 years of age and be willing to submit to a Department of Children and Family Service background check. Volunteers also must be willing to work in a structured, discipline youth-led environment. They are needed in all areas, including administrators, mentors, tutors, fundraisers, cooks and field-trip chaperones. (YPC takes four cultural field trips per month and four out-of-state trips per year).

Call Frank at 773-808-6503.

Monday, Jan. 12
7:15 p.m.
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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Gay South African judge appointed to highest court

South African Supreme Court of Appeal Judge Edwin Cameron, who is openly gay and openly HIV-positive, was appointed to the nation's highest court, the Constitutional Court, by President Kgalema Motlanthe on New Year's Day.

The South African Lesbian and Gay Equality Project said Cameron is the first openly gay or HIV-positive person "to hold such a position in the highest court of any country."

"He was among the few lawyers who defended anti-apartheid activists against the old regime," the group said, "and he is known for his criticism of the SA government on HIV/AIDS policies. Judge Cameron also set the legal strategy for the country's constitutional and legal reform on the rights of lesbian and gay people."

South Africa's post-apartheid constitution was the first one in the world to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, and South Africa is one of six nations where same-sex couples have access to full marriage.

In a January 2006 interview with the U.S. magazine POZ, Cameron said, "If I go into a gay bar or club—which I do—there's almost no one who doesn't know me, black or white. But that hasn't affected my personal interactions. I'm a loner. I've run away from intimate commitment my entire adult life."

In January 2008, Cameron sported eye glitter as he officiated at the wedding of AIDS activist Zackie Achmat and husband Dalli Weyers.

Ethiopian religious leaders call for gay-sex amendment

A group of Ethiopian Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox religious leaders meeting in Addis Ababa on Dec. 22 called for a constitutional amendment criminalizing gay sex.

The head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Patriarch Adune Paulos, said having gay sex is "stupid, like animals," and that homosexuals need to be taught a lesson.

Ethiopia already has a law banning gay sex, under penalty of up to three years in prison, according to Human Rights Watch.

Anti-gays target Serbian Web site

The Serbian Web site queeria.com says it has come under assault from anti-gay forces following a decision by the Ministry of Culture to give it \$4,200 in funding.

"Our collaborators and activists have been constantly receiving death threats and threats of physical violence," said editor Predrag M. Azdejkovic. "Every day threats are being sent to the Web site's official e-mail address to the effect that the Web site is going to be hacked, that we are sick people who should be treated, that all of us should be killed."

Azdejkovic said the site, which is run by the Belgrade organization Queeria Center, also is being targeted in two anti-gay Facebook groups, one of which has 2,500 members.

"Members of these groups are openly uttering death threats to the Queeria Center activists whose pictures circulate among the groups' members," he said. "They are advocating breaking and entering the premises of Queeria Center and its activists' private apartments."

Azdejkovic asked journalists "to rise in defense of their gay colleagues working for the Queeria Web site and put pressure on the Republic of Serbia authorities in order that they protect us."

Australian Parliament gives gay couples equal rights

Australia's Senate and House of Representatives passed legislation in late November that changes some 100 laws to give gay couples equal rights.

The measure now goes to the Governor-General for formal approval.

The changes, introduced by the federal government, extend spousal rights to same-sex de facto couples in areas such as health care, taxation, pensions, parenting, public benefits, workplace benefits, workers' compensation, veterans' affairs, elder care and educational assistance.

"At long last we have removed discrimination against same-sex couples from commonwealth law," said Attorney-General Robert McClelland.

Gay campaigners cheered the move but said gay couples will not have complete equality until they can get married.

British MP enters civil partnership

British Member of Parliament Nick Herbert, who serves as justice secretary in the Conservative Party's "shadow" cabinet, entered into a civil partnership with his spouse, Jason Eades, at Lambeth Town Hall in South London in late December.

Herbert, 45, and Eades, 36, have been together for 10 years.

Herbert represents the predominantly rural constituency of Arundel and South Downs, which is north and east of the gay resort city of Brighton.

One other Conservative MP, Alan Duncan, is known to have tied the knot with a same-sex partner.

British same-sex civil partnerships carry the same rights and obligations as a marriage.

Queen to knight British AIDS activist

Queen Elizabeth II announced on New Year's Eve that she will knight leading AIDS activist Nick Partridge, chief executive of the AIDS organization Terrence Higgins Trust.

Partridge told the BBC he was "absolutely delighted" by the honor.

He will be "invested" later this year when Elizabeth lays a sword on his shoulders.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"CIVIL UNIONS ARE AN INADEQUATE substitute for marriage. Creating a separate, new legal structure to confer some benefits on same-sex couples neither honors American ideals of fairness, nor does it grant true equality." — *New York Times editorial, Dec. 20.*

"WE FEEL A DEEP LEVEL OF DISRESPECT

when one of the architects and promoters of an anti-gay agenda is given the prominence and the pulpit of your historic nomination. We urge you to reconsider this announcement."

— *Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese to Barack Obama Dec. 17 after Obama announced that prominent evangelical preacher Rick Warren will deliver the invocation at the presidential inauguration.*

"IF ANY GOOD CAN COME FROM THIS (INAUGURATION INVOCATION) controversy, it is that many Americans now realize that (Rick) Warren is masquerading as a moderate and posing as a pragmatist. Many Americans—who previously respected Warren—now view him as a poll-tested Pat Robertson who hides hate behind a Hawaiian shirt. He seemed arrogant and out of touch on NBC's Dateline when he told Ann Curry that he wasn't homophobic because he provided (gay) protesters outside his church with doughnuts. Gee, thanks, maybe next time you take away our rights we'll get ice cream from His holiness." — *Syndicated gay columnist Wayne Besen, Dec. 22.*

"(IN RESPONSE TO THE RICK WARREN FLAP, OBAMA SAID,) 'WE CAN disagree without being disagreeable and then focus on those things that we hold in common as Americans.' Sounds nice. But what we do not 'hold in common' is the dehumanization of homosexuals. What we do not hold in common is the belief that gays are perverts who have chosen their sexual orientation on some sort of whim. What we do not hold in common is the exaltation of ignorance that has led and will lead to discrimination and violence. Finally, what we do not hold in common is the categorization of a civil rights issue—the rights of gays to be treated equally—as some sort of cranky cultural difference. For that we need moral leadership, which, on this occasion, Obama has failed to provide. For some people, that's nothing to celebrate. The party's off." — *Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen, Dec. 23.*

"I'M ACTUALLY NOT A HUGE GAY MARRIAGE SUPPORTER. I personally don't want to get married but I think that any law or amendment to the constitution that deals with sex and love should just be banned in general. I don't think any government should encroach on what goes on in the bedroom at all. ... I'm a complete libertarian and so I really disagree with it." — *Gay singer Rufus Wainwright to New York Press, Dec. 8.*

"I AM NOT NOR HAVE I EVER BEEN OPPOSED TO anyone's right to marry—straight or gay. I myself just don't want to at the moment and feel a strong tie to the traditional bohemian concept of being a homosexual, ie: the last thing we want is to be like everybody else. But who knows, a girl likes options. Maybe someday I will want to marry! Plus, in terms of prac-

tical issues such as citizenship, taxes, inheritance, etc. ... it is appalling (sic) that LGBT couples don't have the same rights and options that other people have and compared with Europe and Canada, the US should be ashamed of how they treat love. I have voiced my strong opposition to Prop 8 on many occasions and will continue to do so until that referendum is



I'm actually not a huge gay marriage supporter.

—Rufus Wainwright

reversed. OK?" — *Singer Rufus Wainwright in a clarification posted on his blog, Dec. 16.*

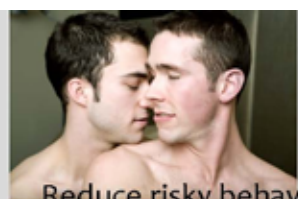
"TWENTY YEARS AGO, AS WE SAT IN POLICE CELLS FOR THE crime of being ourselves, we could not possibly have imagined something like this. People everywhere who suffer human rights abuses should take this apology as a sign that no matter how bad things seem there is always hope of a better future." — *Rodney Croome of Australia's Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group after the Hobart City Council apologized Dec. 10 for having banned a booth promoting gay law reform from the city's popular outdoor Salamanca Market in 1988. In the weeks that followed, more than 100 people were arrested for refusing to vacate the site, marking Australia's largest-ever act of gay civil disobedience.*

"WHY IS (POPE) BENEDICT SO OBSESSED WITH GAY SEX? He seems to talk about it all the time, issuing an almost weekly tirade of denunciations that borders on a compulsive disorder. This prejudice is par for the course. The Vatican recently opposed a United Nations statement condemning homophobic violence and the criminalization of same-sex relations. Without gay priests and bishops, the Catholic Church could barely function." — *British gay activist Peter Tatchell in a Dec. 23 statement.*

"THIS (THE NO ON 8 CAMPAIGN) WAS POLITICAL MALPRACTICE. They fucked this up, and it was painful to watch. They shouldn't be allowed to pawn this off on the Mormons or anyone else. They snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, and now hundreds of thousands of gay couples are going to pay the price." — *An unnamed "Democratic consultant who operates at the highest level of California politics," to Rolling Stone magazine, Dec. 11.*

"IF WE CAN ELECT AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN AS PRESIDENT, we can support gay marriage! Defeat Prop 8! We will not give up!" — *Madonna, during a concert at Dodger Stadium, Nov. 6.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley



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**REV.
IRENE
MONROE**

Gay is NOT the new Black

If you are African-American and gay, and fighting alongside your white LGBTQ brothers and sisters for queer civil rights, the notion that "Gay is the new black" is not only absurdly arrogant, it is also dangerously divisive.

In a presumably "post-racial" era with the country's first African-American president-elect, it's easy for some to assume that race doesn't matter.

But when critiquing the dominant white LGBTQ community's ongoing efforts to gain marriage equality and its treatment of Blacks as their second-class allies in the struggle a reality check happens: Both straight and queer African-American communities bond together against their strategy for marriage equality.

Why?

Because race does matter!

Here's a case in point: Proposition 8 and blaming the Black community for its win at the ballot box.

The Proposition 8 debate has brought much consternation and polarization between white LGBTQ communities and African Americans.

And with the expectation of a dominantly white marriage-equality movement pushing forward a single-issue agenda, the movement arrogantly ignores vital ways for coalition-building within Black communities, and honorable ways of connecting their struggle to those of African Americans.

But here's an example that defused the tension in much of the heterosexual African-American

community when it was publicly arguing that same-sex marriage is not a civil-rights issue.

In commemorating the 40th anniversary of *Loving v. Virginia* in the June 12, 1967 historic Supreme Court decision that advanced racial and marriage equality in this country, the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc., marked the anniversary by stating the following: "It is undeniable that the experience of African Americans differs in many important ways from that of gay men and lesbians; among other things, the legacy of slavery and segregation is profound. But differences in historical experiences should not preclude the application of constitutional provisions to gay men and lesbians who are denied the fight to marry the person of their choice." And in April 2006, the fund filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case brought by New York same-sex couples challenging their exclusion from marriage.

But the Marriage Equality movement neither extends its reach beyond its concerns within its community nor outside of it.

How the marriage debate should have been framed—in a way that speaks truth to various LGBTQ communities of color and classes—has not been given considerable concern.

And with no public language to adequately articulate the unique embodiment of LGBTQ communities of color and classes within the same-sex marriage debate, this has become contentious. The dominant white queer language of this debate, at best, muffles the voices of these communities, and, at worst, mutes them. In other words, in leaving out the voices of LGBTQ communities of color and classes, the same-sex marriage debate is hijacked by a white upper-class queer universality that not only renders these marginalized queer communities invisible, but—as it is presently framed—also renders them speechless.

Within and across states, the marriage-equality movement persistently dons white leadership. Faces of color become important, visible and needed to the Marriage Equality movement only when the movement is actually pimping a

mented on Beatie's pregnancy by saying, "It kinda [sic] freaked me out at first." She also asked the question "Is this going to be good for our people?"

Personally, I think Boylan's statement has to be the ultimate betrayal. Here is someone who was born a male, married a woman, had children and then decided to change his gender. Now Boylan has the gall to antagonize another member of the transgender community who is in a very similar situation. Did Boylan realize the hypocrisy coming out of her mouth?

Another issue that came up during the interview was the fact that Beatie wanted the child's birth certificate to state that he is the father and his wife Nancy is the mother. The hospital refused his request. Instead, the hospital listed Thomas and Nancy as "parent-parent." Beatie turned to the American Civil Liberties Union but his case was rejected.

While it is true that hospitals have a compelling interest in ensuring accurate medical records, it is also true that one doesn't have to be biologically related to a child to be a mother or a father. Oregon laws says that the person who gives birth is listed as the mother. Thomas might have been able to get around this by putting his health at risk and having the baby at home instead of at the hospital. He could have lied and said that his wife Nancy was the mother. Instead he chose to be honest and now he's being penalized for it. What's worst—there is no one representing his case.

Many in the gay and lesbian community have conformed to heterosexism. The idea of a transgendered man having a baby makes them uneasy. This is a classic case of internalized homophobia! On top of being ridiculed, called a "freak," receiving anonymous harassing phone calls and death threats, Thomas Beatie has been sold out by his own community. I think the

Black page from the civil-rights movement for a photo-op moment to push their agenda.

The problem of saying "Gay is the new black" poses the following problems for many African Americans:

—The marriage-equality movement exploits Black suffering and experiences to legitimate its own;

—The marriage-equality movement's rallying cry against heterosexist oppression dismisses its own responsibility when it comes to white skin privilege.

—The marriage-equality movement appropriates the content of the Black civil-rights movement, but discards the context and history that brought about it.

But this is not surprising because the larger LGBTQ movement has distorted, if not erased, its own history when it come to the Stonewall Riots of June 27-29, 1969, in Greenwich Village, New York City, which started on the backs of working-class African-American and Latino transgender patrons of the bar. Those brown and black LGBTQ people are not only absent from the photos of that historic night, but they are also bleached from the annals of queer history and gay-pride events.

Because of the bleaching of the Stonewall Riots, the beginnings of LGBTQ movement post-Stonewall is an appropriation of black and brown transgender liberation narratives absent of black and brown people. And it is the visible absence of these black, brown and yellow LGBTQ people that makes it harder for white queer elites in our movement to confront their racism and transphobia.

If African-American LGBTQ people are not included in the history and in the decision-making issues involving queer life, how then can the movement expect our participation, let alone the rest of the African-American community?

Sadly, if racism continues to go unchecked in the marriage-equality movement it won't only cost California's LGBTQ community the right to marry—it will cost us all.

GLBT community's reaction Beatie's situation is a complete outrage and it's one that raises several questions: Why is the GLBT leadership looking out for their own personal interests? Why is Thomas Beatie being scapegoated as the person who may have ruined gay marriage? Since when did homophobes need an excuse to discriminate against gays?

Call me a hippie, but I think that unless someone's actions are harming others, people should be able to do whatever they want to do. And since I have heard no one question Thomas Beatie's parenting, I really don't see a problem. What Beatie is doing takes balls. Instead of living in fear and in shame, he is living his life openly and honestly. He should not be shunned but praised and respected. Until the GLBT community learns to stick together, and stop going along to get along, it will remain a community that is divided and conquered.

Jamar Osborne is a nationally published columnist and human rights activist. He has a juris doctorate from the University of Oklahoma and a bachelor's degree in political science from Cameron University.

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**JAMAR
OSBORNE**

Divided and conquered: Shunned by his own community

Divide and conquer was a war strategy used by Julius Caesar. The Gauls were worthy adversaries but Caesar was able to overcome them by stirring up conflict between the Gallic tribes and getting the tribes to fight amongst themselves. The once fierce warriors became easy prey and were ultimately defeated.

In some ways, the GLBT community is similar to the Gallic tribes. With so much internal turmoil, its plight becomes undermined and the community becomes casualties of its own division. Case in point—Thomas Beatie, also known as "The Pregnant Man."

Recently, Beatie appeared on ABC for the Barbara Walters special "What is a Man? What is a Woman?" There were many things in the interview that I found personally disturbing. Chief among them was Beatie's charge that GLBT representatives told him not to go public with his pregnancy and not to show pictures of his pregnant belly because it might become a challenge in the struggle for gay marriage, hate crimes legislation, etc.

Jennifer Boylan, a transgendered woman com-

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Dan Rest/Lyric Opera of Chicago

OPERA'S ON

Patricia Racette (holding a child in *Madama Butterfly*) talks about being a lesbian opera star. See below.

THEATER

Taming of the Screw.
Page 14.

Photo courtesy of Fellowship for the Performing Arts



MOVIES

Hitting the 'Road.'
Page 16.



MUSIC

Dash away.
Page 18.

Photo by Kwaku Alston



Patricia Racette: Out of her cocoon

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008, soprano Patricia Racette was supposed to appear at a Lyric Opera of Chicago Discovery Series symposium on Puccini's 1904 opera *Madama Butterfly*. But thanks to that day's massive snowstorm that walloped the Windy City, Racette didn't make it.

"I felt terrible that I couldn't be there because I was all dressed up with nowhere to go," Racette said, noting the irony in having a *Madama Butterfly* symposium without the *Butterfly*.

With a severe scarcity of available taxis, Racette considered trudging through the thick snow for what she estimated would have been a 20-minute walk. But she decided against it.

"I could not in good conscience go there the night before a show—that would have been irresponsible," Racette said, pointing out how opera singers have to take precautions to stave off colds and other maladies.

Disappointed opera fans who missed out on seeing Racette up close and personal have another chance. She and Lyric Opera of Chicago dramaturg Roger Pines appear for a special interview at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, on Thursday, Jan. 22.

"Hopefully people will come as a matter of compensation for my [earlier] absence," Racette said.

Expect Racette to talk a lot about Puccini's tragic 15-year-old geisha heroine, Cio-Cio-San. It's one of Racette's signature roles and she is performing it in Chicago for the first time in the Lyric's 1982 production by Tony Award-winning director Harold Prince.

Opera devotees are also in for a treat since Racette will be sharing anecdotes about appearing many world-premiere operas like Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline* and *An American Tragedy*. And since Chicago audiences have seen Racette sing varied oper-



Patricia Racette. Photo by Devon Cass

atic repertory in Italian (*La Bohème*, *Turandot*), Czech (*Jenufa*), and French (*Faust*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*), expect some first-hand insights into linguistics.

But one aspect of Racette's jet-setting career is sure to be interest to LGBT audiences: Racette's life as an out lesbian.

Racette publicly came out in a 2002 edition of *Opera News* that featured her on the cover.

"They approached me almost a year before saying they wanted to do a cover on me and it had nothing to do with my sexuality," Racette said. "In fact, [interviewer Eric Myers] asked me at the time of the interview six months before the article came out if I would like to be open about my personal life."

Racette says that she and her partner, mezzo-soprano Beth Clayton, had talked before the interview about whether to open up about their relationship.

"For various reasons, we waited until the appropriate moment in our lives," Racette said.

"Personally, we had always been very much out, but it's another thing where you're in a public profession and you do that in print."

Racette said that she and Clayton haven't really experienced any negative response from the *Opera News* article, although she admitted that they don't know the exact reasons why they would get passed over for a role.

The fact that Racette and Clayton's continue to be hired by the world's leading opera houses shows practically no detrimental effects. (Chicago audiences might remember Clayton's recent turns at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Maddelena in *Rigoletto* in 2006 and Antonia in the world premiere of William Bolcom's *A Wedding* in 2005.)

"I don't feel like I can be effective as an artist if I'm not honest about who I am and if I don't share with the world perhaps what is the most joyous thing in my life, which is my relationship with Beth," Racette said. "Hiding it sort of seems shameful and I'm not the least bit shameful about it."

Racette and Clayton met in 1997 when they were both cast in production of Verdi's *La Traviata* at Santa Fe Opera. Racette was playing the consumptive courtesan Violetta, while Clayton was Flora, her friend and confidante.

"The energy between us was palpable and, frankly, it was a force not to be denied," Racette said, joking how it was probably the first time Violetta ran off with Flora instead of the opera tenor Alfredo.

Those happy memories are what prompted Racette and Clayton to make a home together in Santa Fe. The two had a commitment ceremony in 2005 with both of their families in attendance. (Clayton's parents even paid for the reception.)

Unfortunately, Racette and Clayton's separate opera careers often means they spend months apart from each other. Opera singers often have no control over their singing engagements other than saying "yes" or "no" to them years in advance.

"Thank God for Skype and iChat and those

things," Racette said. "The first time we spoke via video Web camera, I was in San Francisco and Beth was in Munich. That's really far, but it does make difference to be able to see the face of your loved one."

Racette and Clayton have been able to work in the same city at the same time on rare occasions. In the summer of 2003, Racette and Clayton both starred together as sisters in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Racette was Tatyana and Clayton was Olga.

Then there was the autumn of 2007, when Racette was starring as *Madama Butterfly* for the Metropolitan Opera, while across the plaza of Lincoln Center Clayton was appearing in the title role of *Carmen* for the New York City Opera.

"Goodness gracious, our friends and family all descended upon New York City because it was a chance to see us both at the same time," Racette said. She was surprised at how harmonious it went, since Racette expected some conflict over their nervousness of playing such iconic roles in such important houses.

Racette and Clayton attribute the strength of their relationship partially to the fact that they both understand the rigors of being in the opera business. That, and the fact that they're both different voice types, so they're not in competition with each other for the same roles.

"Gosh, I can't even imagine that if we were both sopranos or mezzos," Racette laughed, saying that they would constantly be bickering like, "You got that *Butterfly*? I wanted that!"

Patricia Racette is interviewed by Lyric Opera of Chicago dramaturg Roger Pines Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, at 7 p.m. as part of the "Sing OUT" lecture series. Tickets are \$10; \$5 for students and seniors. Visit www.centeronhalsted.org for more information.

***Madama Butterfly* continues for seven more performances through Jan. 29 at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker. Tickets are \$32-\$197. Call 312-332-2244 ext. 5600, or visit www.lyricopera.org.**



The Illusion. Photo by Jordan Mann

THEATER REVIEW The Illusion

Playwright: Tony Kushner
after Pierre Corneille
At: Promethean Theatre Ensemble
at City Lit, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr
Phone: 773-305-2897; \$20
Runs through: Jan. 17

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

There's a crucial performance in Promethean Theatre Ensemble's staging of Tony Kushner's *The Illusion* that is seriously lacking. By the time the play makes its final revelation, it's not as emotionally earth-shattering or introspective as it could be.

Yet don't let that discourage you from seeing Kushner's freely adapted take on Pierre Corneille's 1636 comedy *L'illusion comique*. Kushner's adaptation celebrates the abilities and failures of storytelling to prompt people to look at their own frailties.

The plot hinges on wealthy lawyer Pridamant (Tom Weber), who makes an arduous journey to magician Alcandre (John Christopher Brown) to find out what has happened to his banished son. Alcandre then presents visions of Pridamant's son's life with the aid of his servant, Amanuensis (Ed Rutherford). The odd thing is that the characters' names keep on changing in the scenarios (including Pridamant's son, played by a strapping Nick Lake).

Things start off lightly as in a romantic comedy with a hopelessly-in-love heroine (a spirited Devon Candura), her wily lady-in-waiting (a commanding Anne Korajczyk) and a romantic rival (a

stiff Steve Gensler).

Things get more complex as Alcandre's conjuring continues and Pridamant comments on the actions. There's an appearance by a comic braggart named Matamore (Blake Williams doing his utmost to be ridiculously florid), while the characters show darker sides to their motivations. By the time the dark conclusion is reached, former lovers prove to be adulterous and deceitful.

Director Russell Berns stages things simply, but effectively. Lighting designer Tamar Geist presents simple colored pools of light for the actors to shine in, while set designer Roger Wykes offers just a few rotating flats in three shades of color.

Costumer Jeanne Jones is much more helpful by serving up outfits that are fairytale-like, then later more Hellenic as things become akin to a Greek tragedy. Stephen F. Murray's fight choreography could have been more dynamic, but that might have betrayed the ultimate illusion that the play is offering up.

Now onto the performance that makes Promethean Theatre Ensemble's production less effective than it could be: the one by Weber as the contrite and curious father, Pridamant.

Throughout the visions of his son's life, Pridamant's makes interjections of approval and utter despair by the end. These need to be as realistic and heart-wrenching as possible, but Weber doesn't deliver the goods.

So when the final revelation is made, Pridamant's about-face lacks the weight needed to question the whole enterprise you've just seen (and at that, Kushner's questioned notion of storytelling being an educational tool for the betterment of mankind).

There aren't too many failings in Promethean

Theatre Ensemble's take on *The Illusion*, but this crucial one lessens its introspective impact.

THEATER REVIEW Marvin's Room

Playwright: Scott McPherson
At: Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr
Phone: 773-728-7529; \$22-\$30
Runs through: Jan. 31

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Scott McPherson's look at "dying as a way of life" opens with two people well on their way to that final departure—an elderly spinster and her bed-ridden brother, the latter of whom we meet only as a series of offstage coughs, grunts and whimpers—along with their caretaker, Bessie, who has just learned that *she* may have contracted leukemia. The search for a bone-marrow donor brings her estranged sister home, accompanied by two young sons. Lee and Charley currently live in a shelter, a consequence of teenage Hank torching the family house, for which he has been incarcerated in a mental institution.

In 1992, there was little doubt as to where our sentiments should lie: Bessie stoutly declares her lifelong devotion to her impaired elders to be all the fulfillment she desires, while Lee's flight from an environment centered upon disease and death (with even characters figuring only in passing anecdotes dying untimely) manifesting itself in one destructive choice after another. But if every cripple finds its crutch, and vice versa, could not Bessie's self-sacrifice also have been fueled by an unwillingness to shoulder the risks of adulthood? And could Lee have made more of her independence without

the burden of guilt over her "selfishness?"

The cast assembled by director Michael Ryzek for this Redtwist Theatre production conveys with vivid intimacy the challenges represented by McPherson's three generations of flawed human beings facing their ultimate fate, while never neglecting the text's considerable humor—Aunt Ruth's implanted electronic device, for example, or a scene at Disney World where Bessie faints and is rescued by a strolling Goofy-costumed actor.

Seventeen years after the epidemic that claimed the life of its author, it would be simple to view Marvin's Room solely as social propaganda connected with AIDS' early years, its emotions heavily weighted toward a single directive. But in 2009, its milieu can just as reasonably be perceived as a caveat on the American medical-industrial complex and its reliance on profit-motivated technology. (The perimeter of Redtwist's storefront auditorium is decorated by hundreds—hundreds!—of prescription-labeled vials. How many convalescent-home dumpsters supplied the scenic designer and property crew this hoard of discarded pharmaceuticals?) If McPherson's legacy sends us home with no other lesson, it is that comfort in our last days will come, not from overworked doctors or smug bureaucrats, but from human resources—that's you and me, by the way—whether of the hands-on or the support-from-afar variety.

River North Dance doc on WTTW Jan. 11

River North Chicago Dance Company's hour-long documentary, *Every Dancer Has A Story* will air on local station WTTW-11 Sunday, Jan. 11, at 3 p.m.

The documentary precedes the company's annual Chicago engagement at the Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph, on Feb. 13-14. Tickets are \$30-\$65 for the February engagements; visit www.harristheaterchicago.org.

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



Marvin's Room.

SPOTLIGHT



Economic times may be grim, but there is a relatively cheap way to turn your frown upside down: **The 8th Annual Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival**. Revel in this laugh-filled festival which features more than 100 sketch comedy troupes performing 131 shows in eight days. And if you want to be a part of the comedy, the festival also features workshops and seminars for those who might be considering a career in comedy. The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival plays Jan. 8-18 at the Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont. Tickets are \$12.50 per show, and \$150 for an all-festival pass. Call 773-327-5252 or visit www.chicagosketchfest.com. Photo of Bri-Ko courtesy of Guy F. Wicke



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THEATER REVIEW

The Screwtape Letters

Playwright: Jeffrey Fiske and Max McLean after C.S. Lewis
At: Mercury Theatre, 3745 N. Southport
Phone: 773-375-1700; \$29-\$48.50
Runs through: Feb. 15

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's hard not to love a Disney animated villain. Most are so clever, so urbane and so terrifying that they outshine the goody-two-shoe heroes. This might help explain why Jeffrey Fiske and Max McLean's adaptation of The Screwtape Letters has found such success at Chicago's Mercury Theatre. (It has been extended through mid-February.) Although based upon a 1942 novel of the same name by C.S. Lewis (best known for his Chronicles of Narnia books), The Screwtape Letters—on stage—feels more like it's making a bid for its title character to enter the annals of Disney's animated villains. The traits are all there for the demonic Screwtape, a high-ranking official in Hell who spends the entire play lecturing and dictating on the proper way for its tempting agents to convert humanity to become food for the dark side. Screwtape has an upper-crust British accent, an affected verbosity and a pull-out-all-the-stops rage scene when his malevolent plans face failure. Co-author McLean is clearly reveling in this chance to pour the oil on as a pompous know-it who dispenses condescending missives on human failings to his unseen nephew and junior tempter, Wormwood.



The Screwtape Letters. Photo courtesy of Fellowship for the Performing Arts.

And like most Disney villains, Screwtape has a cute sidekick. Yvonne Gougelet plays Toadpipe, a tall and limber gargoyle who totters about as Screwtape's personal secretary and stenographer. Gougelet makes Toadpipe endearing with a muttering voice like Looney Toons' Tasmanian Devil, her penchant of nibbling on human bones and her facial expressions to illustrate Screwtape's points about human frailty. All this plays out on Cameron Anderson's

ghoulish raked set which is a mix of cozy study and the Parisian catacombs piled with human femurs and skulls. Other technical elements are great, ranging from Tyler Micoeau's spooky lighting effects to Michael Bevins' fun Toadpipe costume. Bart Fasbender's sound design of whooping letter deliveries and thunderous hellfire is also effective. There's no denying that everything in The Screwtape Letters is professionally produced and packaged under co-author Fiske's direction. But one would like some more variety in it, since it practically consists only of Screwtape dictating a series of letters. And if you're not a diehard Christian, The Screwtape Letters certainly won't make you feel welcome. The whole thrust of the play operates under the premise that salvation is only attainable through Christ. It also blatantly suggests that the rest of us who don't live up to heaven's standards will become flesh for Hell's demons to feast upon. The Screwtape Letters offers a black-and-white view of morality cloaked in insightful views of human behavior courtesy of an unabashed Christian like C.S. Lewis. If that sounds too simplistic and judgmental, go at least to see what could easily be the next great Disney villain.

'Idol' in 'Grease'

American Idol season five winner Taylor Hicks will star in the first national tour of Grease, playing Chicago on a limited engagement through Jan. 18 at the Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Congress. Tickets are \$26-\$85. Call 312-902-1400 or visit www.ticketmaster.com.

CRITICS' PICS

Don't Dress for Dinner, Royal George Theatre, through March 11. How much fun is this rambunctious farce? Imagine playing bumper cars after inhaling a tank full of nitrous oxide. Down to the last Freudian slip (and provocative slip), this inspired cast of zanies are a giddy delight. CS

La Rondine, Metropolitan Opera High-Definition Simulcast in area movie theaters, Jan. 10. The "Love Couple" of soprano Angela Gheorghiu and tenor Roberto Alagna are known for being holy terrors offstage. But onstage, the married couple makes beautiful music together. See them both in director Nicholas Joël's lovely Art Deco resetting of Puccini's 1917 operetta-hybrid romance. SCM

Million Dollar Quartet, Apollo Theatre, through January 24. Not a greatest-hits retrospective, but replication of a pivotal moment in American pop-culture history when the icons of the past and future convened to make music. This reminds us why rock-and-roll never died. MSB

Wicked, Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre, through Jan. 25. Wicked and its famed Dragon Clock are winding down their time after more than three record-breaking years in the Windy City. Don't miss out on this Broadway spectacular that offers a revisionist take on The Wizard of Oz. SCM

—By Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan



Entertainment news

International pop star Kylie Minogue will release a brand-new collection of remixes of her classic songs, entitled Boombox The Remix Album 2000-2008, on Jan. 27 on Astralwerk Records, according to an EMI Music release. There will be remixes of such songs as Slow, Come Into My World and Can't Get You Out of My Head.

Katy Perry, the Indigo Girls and Uh Huh Her are the scheduled headliners for the continuous lesbian-themed party known as The Dinah 2009, which will take place in Palm Springs, Calif., April 1-5. Tickets will go on sale Jan. 1; see www.thedinah.com.

Speaking of the Indigo Girls, the acclaimed duo has launched their own imprint, IG Recordings, to release their first studio album in three years, according to a company press release. Emily Saliers and Amy Ray's new 2-CD album, Poseidon And The Bitter Bug; one CD has a full band version of songs and the other has acoustic versions of the same tunes, and a bonus track.

Pamela Anderson stunned a studio audience watching The Osbournes record their television show **by flashing her breasts to the crowd**, according to IMDB.com. The Baywatch beauty's chest spilled out of her dress while she was filming a guest slot for the upcoming variety show Osbournes: Reloaded, which is hosted by Sharon, Ozzy, Kelly and Jack Osbourne.

Hunky Twilight actor Taylor Lautner is working out in an attempt to convince the movie's producers he should reprise his role in the forthcoming sequel, New Moon, according to IMDB.com. Reportedly, the franchise's bosses feel that Lautner does not physically measure up to the character, as described in the books.

Todd Homme, 23, from the Lifetime Channel's new reality hit Blush: The Search for the Next Great Make-Up Artist, **was found dead at his New York home and the cause was under investigation**, according to TVGuide.com. Homme was found by his partner, Neal Krogh, 34.

Medical examiners couldn't confirm the cause of death of the seemingly healthy Homme.

The 2008 AfterElton Visibility Awards—bestowed upon media images that readers thought best represented gay and bisexual men—are out. The categories included Man of the Year (awarded to those who joined in protests after Prop 8 passed), Favorite TV Drama (Torchwood), Favorite TV Comedy (Ugly Betty), Favorite Straight Ally (Brad Pitt, over Keith Olbermann and Kathy Griffin) and Favorite Lesbian (Ellen DeGeneres).

Chris Noth, Sex and the City's Mr. Big, is closing his New York nightclub, The Cutting Room—10 years after opening the venue in the city where the hit TV show was set, according to IMDB.com. Joan Rivers will give the final show Jan. 13.

Singer Adele—known for her hit song Chasing Pavements—has revealed that **her new song, Daydreamer, is about her doomed love for a bisexual guy**, according to PinkNews.co.uk. The 19-year-old crooner said, "I had no problem with him being bisexual, but I can't fight off girls and boys; I get jealous enough as it is."

Kylie Minogue.

TELEVISION

The real girl

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

Since its debut in 1992, MTV's *The Real World* has illuminated televisions nationwide with fresh images of diverse, non-stereotypical and real queer young people including its first season's Norman Korpi (NYC), HIV-positive Cuban Pedro Zamora (San Francisco), bisexual Filipina Ruthie Alcaide (Hawaii), African-American Karamo Brown (Philadelphia) and athlete Tyler Duckworth (Key West). With its 21st edition, set in Brooklyn, N.Y., the show welcomes its first transgender cast member, Katelynn Cusanelli, who underwent sexual-reassignment surgery in Thailand just weeks before cameras rolled.

"I was at the point where I needed to do post-surgical care and that plays out as a part of the show," she chafes. "That was a factor while living there."

In the season premiere, the full cast of eight (another *Real World* first—it's typically seven members, sometimes with an eighth "surprise" housemate added later) moves into a giant house situated in Brooklyn's Red Hook neighborhood (which, due to its far-flung placement from public transport, has not been gentrified or hipster-saturated, like more predictable and expensive settings like Williamsburg or Park Slope). They include West Palm Beach-raised, Montana-based Katelynn, 24; snarky, metro-sexual, Salt Lake City Mormon Chet Cannon, 23; Salt Lake City non-Mormon Baya Voce, 21; Gettysburg, Penn., Iraq war vet Ryan Conklin, 23; Kansas City, Mo., teen-pageant queen Devyn Simone, 20; San Francisco artist Sarah Rice, 22; muscular Salem, N.H., trainer Scott Herman, 23; and Miami Beach dolphin trainer J.D. Ordonez, 22.

Cusanelli remains mum about being transgender at first, but a couple of housemates quickly prove keen transpotters, including the openly



Katelynn Cusanelli.
Photo courtesy of Tamika Young

gay Ordonez. In an effort to make her feel comfortable and give her the opportunity to disclose her status, he invites her to a one-on-one dinner in Manhattan's very LGBT Chelsea neighborhood. They indeed bond over the evening.

Real World producers sought out young people "with stories to tell" for their 2009 edition. Cusanelli, who decided to audition while waiting with a friend at a casting call, felt she not only had a worthy story to share, but saw a great opportunity to contribute to transgendered representation in the media.

Familiar with the show and the privacy she would relinquish if cast—even the bathroom's several showers are partly transparent—Cusanelli was also prepared for the possibility of a conservative, conflict-stirring Puck-style housemate. "It's MTV's *Real World*, they're going to cast divergent personalities," she affirms. "Singing 'Kumbaya' is not how this goes. They're going to cast someone who is the antithesis of me just to cause drama, and there was drama because they cast eight people who are strong-willed in their own right."

One of those people is Cannon, who seems to enjoy, and even encourages, being perceived as gay. However, his conservative, hetero-identified Republican side becomes more pronounced by

Election Night, and he wasn't alone in his political leanings, according to Cusanelli. "Scott is a Republican and lies about being a millionaire," she shared, "and, as a result, wasn't at all for Obama!"

In a later episode, the cast appears at the NYC LGBT Community Center's Election Night Party (where several cast members volunteered). "Chet surrounded by 400 queers watching a Black man become president—he was a bit uncomfortable!" she recalled with a laugh. "But Chet is far, far more open-minded than I think people give him credit for. I'm not sure if he celebrated [the passages of] Proposition 8 and Amendment 2. I think that Chet is more for humane treatment of all people rather than rigid dogmatic morality."

Cusanelli is frank when fielding questions about her castmates and the experience—that, or she had a mean poker face. She dubbed Sarah, who previously leaned towards lesbian relationships but is currently involved with a man, a *bona fide* has-bian. Asked whether rumors that Ordonez slept with Anderson Cooper are true, she brusquely replied, "I have no idea! To be honest I wasn't that concerned with J.D.'s relationships. I honestly don't give a damn." And, an admitted tech geek, she was frequently put to use by even the production crew: "Oh, I did

so much tech support in that damn house it's not funny! Production asked me to fix that dinosaur of a computer they gave us."

Now back in Missoula, Mont., with her supportive boyfriend, Mike (seen briefly in the first episode), Cusanelli admitted the experience was life-changing in numerous respects, from her personal growth to chosen family. "I expected to go in and meet six strangers and maybe walk away with a friend," she said, "but I met seven amazing individuals and walked away with a plethora of friends for life. I have bridesmaids now!"

Does she wish a second trans cast member had been amongst them? "That was a secret hope of mine," she admitted, "but in a way I'm glad they didn't [cast a second such housemate]. If you get two trans people together, they compare their experiences to see whose is more 'valid.' Two sets of those hormones might not have been good."

The Real World: Brooklyn premieres Wed., Jan. 7, at 9 p.m. CT. Check www.mtv.com/ontv/dyn/real_world_brooklyn/series.jhtml for more information and additional footage.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Revolutionary Road

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio are back together 11 years after setting millions of hearts (including mine) aflame as the doomed lovers in *Titanic*. But it's unlikely that anyone will want to romanticize the unfortunate couple they play this time out. There are no feel-good "king of the world" catchphrases in **Revolutionary Road**, a cautionary tale of suburban ennui. Instead, one character plainly states the theme of the movie when he comments acridly, "Plenty of people are on to the emptiness, but it takes real guts to see the hopelessness." In place of Celine Dion wailing on the soundtrack over the Celtic pipes, we get Thomas Newman's signature icy percussion, barren piano and strings. If there is lovemaking, it springs from guilt and desperation instead of passion, intimacy or desire. But, believe it or not, there are thematic similarities between this new film (helmed by *American Beauty* director Sam Mendes) and *Titanic*—if one looks closer.

Based on a novel by cult favorite Richard Yates



Revolutionary Road.

(the high-minded Sloan Wilson of his day), the story of *Revolutionary Road* is set in a world not unlike the one inhabited by the characters in *Titanic*. We are stuck in the conservative 1950s and if the trappings of the characters are not quite as first-class as those of *Titanic*, the social conventions are just as rigid in the abhorrent world of bland suburbia lavishly portrayed in the film. The pristine surroundings inhabited by Frank and April Wheeler, encapsulated by their picture-perfect home on Revolutionary Road, are no less monstrous than the vast ocean liner was in *Titanic*. But this time it's the structure, representing the achievement of the conventional hopes and dreams Frank and April buy into, that remains intact while the more ominous conventionality and liability it also represents slowly drown their relationship (or capsizes, or crashes like an ocean liner striking an iceberg, etc.—feel free to fill in your own metaphoric phrase here).

The roles are reversed: This time it's Kate who is the risk taker, yearning to be free of the social constraints while Leo plays the more cau-

tious one, hemmed in by responsibility and laziness. When April suggests that the couple sell everything and move to Paris, Frank initially likes the idea. However, when the exhilaration fades, reality sets in and the stage is set for awful consequences. As in *Little Children*, Winslet plays a trapped housewife but there is no hunky Patrick Wilson for a hot affair to ease the tension, though neighbors and secretaries abound for both her and DiCaprio. (A bedroom scene between Frank and his secretary has similarities to TV's retro-themed *Mad Men*, but none of its fun.) A sexual dalliance won't fix what's wrong with April. Only Frank, in the male-dominated world of the 1950s, has the power to do that by releasing her from her cage. And as April becomes more and more desperate, the film descends along with her.

The movie's really a psychological horror story in which the characters, especially the wife, are broken down—much like the spinster Eleanor Vance, played by Julie Harris in *The Haunting*. Like poor Eleanor, who the haunted house wants to help "come home," April's powerful spirit will not be able to overcome the suffocating conventions and her husband's ultimate cowardice engulfing her (and as in *The Haunting*, the perfect house stands ready to trap another couple in its seemingly perfect web).

The film turns on a scene in which Kathy Bates (another holdover from *Titanic*), who memorably plays the couple's realtor, and her husband bring over their grown paranoid schizophrenic son, John (Michael Shannon), for a "social call." Shannon—who is funny, sad and moving in his two scenes—plays a character so fed up with the conventions of the era they've driven him nuts. He's the truth-teller of the piece—the author's voice and the physical embodiment of suburban crazy who speaks the "hopeless" line quoted above and whose insights April wants to escape.

Directing his wife for the first time, Mendes elicits a strong performance from Winslet, who is matched in intensity by DiCaprio (their last


confrontation and her knuckling under are powerful, frightening and depressing). Both vividly demonstrate the hysteria just beneath the polite veneer (as does Bates). The film is as suffocating to watch as its subject matter and has none of the suburban crazy fun of *American Beauty* or the dark beauty of *Road to Perdition*, his masterpiece. It gets under your skin, just as *The Hours* and *Far From Heaven* did, but it left me in a funk as all these kinds of emotionally punishing movies do in which suburban ennui and repression overcome their characters—perhaps because I grew up in the world inhabited by these characters and uncomfortably remember arguments heard through the walls late at night.

I appreciate the filmmaker's desire to present a story with such emotional intensity and the actors' willingness to go down the dark ladder for him, but I also readily admit that this reunion of Kate and Leo will never hold a candle to their first onscreen match-up for me. I much prefer the phony, ersatz, junky old-time romance of *Titanic*. I've seen it at least a dozen times and I'm going to book a return trip again right now because, clichéd as that song is, it's also true—and my heart has gone on and on and on with that movie. Yes, I laud the achievement that has been wrought with *Revolutionary Road* but I don't expect I'll be in the mood to experience its bleak sentiments again anytime soon.

Check out my archived reviews at www.windycitytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.



Check out this week's Nightspots to see what Marcus Patrick (above) and Ron Oliver have to say as MAFIA's special guests.



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Disc and That: Recent and upcoming DVDs

—**Bigger, Stronger, Faster (already out; \$26.98):** This might sound like a porn film, but it's actually a documentary about the controversy concerning steroids. Presented from a first-person perspective by a seemingly conflicted narrator (Chris Bell), the movie ably examines the pros and cons of steroid use and involves Arnold Schwarzenegger, an HIV-affected person, Bell's own family—and a muscular cow that has to be seen to be believed. The DVD (from Magnolia Home Entertainment) includes 40 minutes of deleted scenes not seen in theaters. (There is also a tragic update: Mike Bell, Chris' brother, was found dead in a rehab facility Dec. 14 at the age of 37.)

—**Donnie Darko: The Blu-Ray Edition (Feb. 10; \$34.99):** Revisit the visions (and that scary rabbit) in hi-def when cult classic Donnie Darko comes out on Blu-Ray. The movie stars some very recognizable names, including Jake and Maggie Gyllenhaal, Drew Barrymore and Patrick Swayze. The disc includes two versions of the film: a theatrical and a director's cut—with the latter featuring 20 minutes of additional footage.

—**Dirty Dancing: Official Dance Workout (already out; \$16.98):** I'm going to refrain from using "the time of your life" in reference to this DVD, but the people behind it swear that "everyone can learn to move like Baby and Johnny with original dance steps and soundtrack favorites." While the people in the apartment below you may grimace with each graceful step you take, you can dream about dancing with Patrick Swayze (or Josef Brown, who is in the theatrical production currently taking place in Chicago).

—**Futurama: Into the Wild Green Yonder (Feb. 24; \$29.98):** Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment presents the fourth and final feature-length epic of the animated sci-fi comedy Futurama with this release. Joining the saga this time as guest stars are illusionist Penn Jillette, hip-hop legend Snoop Dogg and Family Guy creator Seth MacFarlane. Among the special goodies is a rather modest documentary, "How We Make Futurama So Good."

—**Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson (already out; \$26.98):** Narrated by actor Johnny Depp, Gonzo is a documentary that examines the pivotal moments of Thompson's life—including his relationship with the Hell's Angels and his involvement in then-Sen. George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign. Among the extras are a commentary from the director (Alex Gibney, who also helmed Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room), deleted scenes and photo galleries.

—**Half a Person (already out; \$26.99):** Two best friends—one straight, one gay—travel from their small town in Canada to Toronto. As one can imagine, the journey is emotional as well as geographical. Outtakes are also featured in this Ariztital Entertainment release.

—**Murnau, Borzage and Fox (Dec. 9; \$239.98):** This set showcases 12 releases from legendary directors F.W. Murnau and Frank Borzage (in collaboration with studio head William Fox) that are new to DVD. These films from the 1920s and '30s include Murnau's Sunrise and City Girl as well as Borzage's 7th Heaven and Lucky Star. Each film comes with its own extras, such as still galleries, theatrical trailers and, in some cases, commentaries.

—**My Bloody Valentine: Special Edition (Jan. 16; \$19.98):** What's Disc and That without a little horror? A terrifying tale about a small town that faces horrifying consequences for holding a holiday dance on the anniversary of deadly tragedy, My Bloody Valentine: Special Edition contains all-new special features including an interactive horror film history. The DVD's



The cast of Vicky Christina Barcelona.

release will coincide with Lionsgate's theatrical 3-D remake (starring hotties Jaime King and Jensen Ackles, among others) of the film that will be in theaters the same day.

—**Nixon: The Election Year Edition (already out; \$29.99):** With Frost/Nixon out in theaters, it is the perfect time to (re-)release this Oliver Stone-directed film. To many, Oscar winner Sir Anthony Hopkins was hypnotizing as Richard Nixon. The loaded cast also includes Joan Allen, Ed Harris, Bob Hoskins, James Woods, Paul Sorvino, David Hyde Pierce and Michael Chiklis—and who knew out actor Wilson Cruz was in it as well? Special features include two commentaries, Charlie Rose's interview with Stone and a documentary, "Beyond Nixon."

—**Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom (Feb. 3; \$24.99):** The all-new feature-length movie about four African-American gay friends in Los Angeles, Noah's Arc: Jumping The Broom, captures the drama of life and love that were hallmarks of the LOGO TV series. As you can guess by the "Jumping the Broom" part of title, two characters aspire to get married—but not before all sorts of shenanigans take place (with special appearances from some of the series' guest stars). Special features include a making-of featurette and cast photo shoots.

—**Rent: Filmed Live on Broadway (Feb. 3; \$24.95):** Rent, the groundbreaking Pulitzer and Tony® Award-winning musical, thrived for well over a decade on Broadway, and on Sept. 7, 2008, Sony Pictures Releasing's new alternative programming division The Hot Ticket captured the final Broadway performance. (This special release is timed to the launch of the national theater tour of Rent, which begins this month with original Broadway cast members Anthony Rapp, Adam Pascal and others.) Now's your chance to sing Seasons of Love repeatedly—until the neighbors call the authorities, at least. Special features include "Rent: The Final Days on Broadway"—a retrospective documentary featuring the cast and crew.

—**Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (already out; \$39.95):** Pier Paolo Pasolini's controversial final film, Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom, has been called depraved, but it's also been hailed as a masterpiece. The polemic poet, novelist and filmmaker's transposition of the Marquis de Sade's 18th-century opus of torture to 1944 Fascist Italy is all but guaranteed to provoke debate with viewers. Special features of the film, originally released in 1975, include "The End of Salò," a 40-minute documentary about the film's final scene.

—**Tyler Perry's The Family That Preys (Jan. 13; \$29.95):** Academy Award winner Kathy Bates and Oscar nominee Alfre Woodard star as the matriarchs of two very different families being torn apart by greed and scandal. The movie also stars Sanaa Latham, Taraji P. Henson (currently winning raves as Brad Pitt's mother in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button) and Rockmond Dunbar (who has played gay in such films as Dirty Laundry and the groundbreaking Punks).

—**Vicky Christina Barcelona (Jan. 27; \$28.95):** Writer/director Woody Allen uses vibrant Barcelona, Spain, as the backdrop of a sexually charged movie that stars Javier Bardem, Penelope Cruz, Scarlett Johansson and Rebecca Hall. Two women (Johansson and Hall) are on a holiday in the title city when they encounter a playboy painter (Bardem) and, later, his ex-wife (Cruz). People were abuzz about a same-sex kiss between Johansson and Cruz in the film—but the movie offers so much more.

—**Wall-E: 3-Disc Special Edition (already out; \$22.99):** One of the most acclaimed films of the year (it even made Windy City Times' list of the best LGBT movies of 2008), Walt Disney Studios' Wall-E focuses on a garbage-compactor robot (voiced by Ben Burtt) with a big heart who actually holds the future of mankind in the palm of his metal hand. Even though no words are spoken for about the first half-hour, this film ultimately says more about love and society than 98 percent of other movies—down to the (ugh)

cockroach pet/best friend. Special features include a commentary, making-of featurettes and a new animated short, Burn-E.

—**Wrangler: Anatomy of an Icon (already out; \$19.99):** This documentary focuses on the life of '70s gay-porn king Jack Wrangler—and if being a porn star wasn't enough, the out entertainer married 55-year-old songstress Margaret Whiting when he was 33. The movie is packed with rare footage, celebrity interviews (Bruce Vilanch, Chi Chi LaRue, Michael Musto and more) and a commentary by Wrangler himself.

—**Yentl: Extended Director's Edition (Feb. 3; \$29.98):** Face it: You either want it or you know someone who does. Yentl, the tale of a Jewish girl (played by Barbra Streisand, who also served as producer, director and co-writer) who disguises herself as a boy in order to pursue a religious education, comes out as a two-disc set next month. Among the special features are Streisand's original concept reel, rehearsal/final film comparisons and storyboard montages for musical numbers. (Note: It is also being released to mark the film's 25th anniversary.)

—Andrew Davis



The cast of Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom.

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LaBelle. Photo by Kwaku Alston

MUSIC

A Dash of LaBelle

BY ANDREW DAVIS

In the 1960s and 1970s, the trio LaBelle (consisting of Patti LaBelle, Nona Hendryx and Sarah Dash) shook up the music world with its unique take on funk, rock and soul—most notably with its smash hit, Lady Marmalade. Now, more than three decades after breaking up, the group has reunited with an album (Back to Now) and a tour that will include a Jan. 10 stop in Chicago. Windy City Times talked with the very affable Dash last month about reuniting, gay audiences and Dash’s own life, which has had its share of drama.

Windy City Times: What spurred LaBelle’s reunion?

Sarah Dash: It just seemed so right. Patti’s manager had told her, “You all have to make time to do this.” When Patti would say that LaBelle has come back together, people would yell and clap so much. And Nona said, “Pat, you can’t play with people like that,” and Patti would say, “I do plan on us [reuniting].”

We had an opportunity to sing on a project that Nona brought to the table called Preaching to the Choir; it was a theme song to the film [of the same name]. When we were going to do that, Nona said, “I have this song called Dear Rosa [on Back to Now] that I think we should do as well.” Then Pat called me and was like, “Girl, did you hear the playback on that song? We still have it.” Dear Rosa really gets to my heart; Nona is such a good songwriter and singer—which is a rare thing in this industry.

WCT: And speaking of this album, I’ve listened to it quite a few times. The song System has this distinct ‘70s groove, and Truth Will Set You Free has me chair-dancing if I’m sitting down.

SD: [Laughs] Nona laid that lead out, didn’t she?

WCT: So who made the first move to record a whole CD?

SD: Of course, we’re dealing with Patti’s schedule being so busy; she has a new cookbook that teaches people how to eat [healthfully]. Patti has really made a conscious effort to really get people to get well and to cook well. She’s a fabulous cook—but when she found out she had diabetes, she made a conscious effort to put together a cookbook that would have food that tastes good and is good for you.

So, with everything she was doing, we had to plan around that. But when we did Preaching to the Choir and Dear Rosa, that’s when we made a more conscious effort to put this CD together. Nona had run into Lenny Kravitz and she told

him that we’d be in the studio making demos to see what sounded good, and he came by. We played [the song] Superlover, and he asked, “When did you all do that?” We said “Today,” and he asked, “You all sound like that *today*?” [Both laugh.] And he said, “Count me in.”

WCT: Do you have any other favorite songs on the CD besides Dear Rosa?

SD: One song I was kinda iffy about was How Long—but I now love it. I haven’t put the CD on in a minute, but I also really like System. Shed a Tear for the World is powerful. We could go down the list.

When we got with [songwriter/producer Kenneth] Gamble, I saw Gamble and [professional partner Leon] Huff being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and Patti sang If You Don’t Know Me By Now. Then, Nona brought a song and I told Patti, “I feel that Gamble and Huff could do some justice to this song. Let’s get them to produce it.” Gamble was supposed to do one song and he did five.

The other thing is that we used live musicians—horns and strings; maybe we’ll be able to incorporate some of that in our live shows as well. Then, Wyclef Jean did [the song] Roll Out. Some people comment that Patti uses a Vocoder on that song, but because she *can* sing, that makes it more interesting. It wasn’t meant to hide her talent; when you have a singer as talented as her, you can do anything with it—and it’s not an insult to her listeners.

Coming where I’ve come from: Doing jazz and blues; singing on The Rolling Stones’ Steel Wheels CD; and [currently] recording an inspirational album... One guy said he wanted to hear more of my voice on the [LaBelle] CD, and I said, “We’re unselfish women. We go for what works for the music; it’s not based upon individual need, but upon LaBelle doing the best possible work for each song.”

WCT: I was looking at the liner notes of the CD, and I read at one point that “Back to Now is about showing that love lives on.” Could you talk about that?

SD: Well, love does live on. Some people may divorce or break up, and they can’t be friends—but the moment you see that person, you remember the love. Even though we were divided and doing our own individual things, our love for each other lives on. We’re like sisters.

WCT: People tend to know more about Patti or Nona—but what have you been doing since 1976 [when LaBelle split]?

SD: I did three recordings for Kirshner Records [Sinner Man, Ooh La La Too Soon and Leaving Again]. Then, I did some work for Patrick Crowley and sang on a couple songs with [gay disco icon] Sylvester. Then, I went on the cabaret/jazz circuit.

I presented a biographical and theatrical piece, Crossroads. I did a lot of club work.

My organization, Dash Inc., started raising

funds for homeless women with children. Mary Wilson [of the Supremes] and I did a couple of concerns on World AIDS Day, and I spoke with children at risk. All that came about when I was injured for four and a half years; I couldn’t walk.

I started working on my inspirational CD even though I couldn’t perform like I wanted to. I enhanced my speaking and used my testimony to uplift and help other people. I’ve only been off the cane for two and a half years. My manager was always encouraging me.

I had the surgery and went through different physical therapies; I had a torn ligament and meniscus. It took them almost a year before they found out what the problem was. Plus, I got divorced in the process. But out of all that came who I am today. When life deals you lemons, you make lemonade.

Also, the gay community has been incredibly supportive. It was very inspiring when I went to San Francisco last year and did [the cabaret/

comedy/cirque event] Teatro Zinzanni; a large amount of the gay community came out and showed me so much love.

WCT: You’re rehearsing for a performance at the Apollo. Are you nervous at all?

SD: You never feel too sure of yourself. I really want our music to be right, and this is our first major public show. I am a bit nervous but I’m hopeful. It’s really important that it sounds right.

WCT: I think it’s good to be a little nervous. Otherwise, you may not really care about some aspects of the show or be overconfident.

SD: I bet you’re right about that. When I think about being nervous before the show, I’m going to think, “Andrew, I’m coming for you.” [Both laugh.]

LaBelle will perform at the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 8 p.m. See www.ticketmaster.com.



‘The Annie Lennox Collection’ out in Feb.

The Annie Lennox Collection—featuring the most successful female British artist in pop music history—will be available Feb. 10, courtesy of Arista Records. This 14-song retrospective brings together the acclaimed artist’s finest solo work on a single disc for the first time, and includes a pair of new songs available exclusively with this release.

Among the tracks on the CD will be No More I Love You’s, Cold, A Whiter Shade of Pale and Little Bird. The collection also features Sing, a song that references The SING Campaign, a humanitarian organization Lennox founded to raise awareness and support for the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa.

RESTAURANTS

Dish List

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Dish list spotlights a hot new Streeterville cafe, **Espression by Lavazza.**

The U.S. launch of Espression by Lavazza, Italy’s leading coffee company (that was founded in 1895), has occurred in Chicago at the Drake Hotel, 140 E. Walton. However, despite (or maybe because of) the tony address and the chaos on nearby Michigan Avenue, the cafe is a sedate getaway.

Espression by Lavazza takes Lavazza’s passion and creativity in coffee and beautifully channels them into a single physical space. Lavazza Director of Marketing Ann Ertsas told Dish List that Espression “touches all the senses”—a justifiable conclusion. Chic art on the walls often dazzle; the sleek counters, chairs and even carafes are made of various materials just begging to be touched; cool music is piped in through the speakers; and the smells of the items there are comforting, to say the least.

Ah, yes: the menu items. Espression has enough tasty items to entice anyone, at any time of the day. Training Manager Giancarlo De Marinis served an amazing array of sandwiches and other treats such as *involtni di salmone affumicato*, smoked salmon roll-ups with asparagus, cream cheese and mixed greens. Another item, *prosciutto e brie panino*, played up the salty and sweet beautifully with its combination of prosciutto, Brie cheese and fig conserve on a panini bread. The gelatos were sublime, with such flavors as pistachio, chocolate and lemon.

However, it’s the signature espressos that really shine. There are literally dozens of espres-

sos and related drinks—and all that Dish List tried were especially tasty. *Espressone* is espresso topped with flavored light mousse (in flavors such as caramel and chocolate), while *espresso nocciolato* and *espresso autunnale* will make anyone a fan of the hazelnut spread Nutella.

In addition, the staff was especially friendly, with De Marinis adding that he is “training people to recognize customers” by their orders as well as their faces. He said that his goal is to “make people comfortable.” The prices, by the way, are quite reasonable, leading Ertsas to say that Espression is, essentially, “affordable luxury.”

The hours for Espression are 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; and 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Lavazza cafes are in the Loop at 111 W. Jackson, 134 N. LaSalle, 27 W. Washington and 162 E. Ohio. See www.Espression.com and www.Lavazza.com.



REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE

OUT OF TOWN

FOR SALE HOTEL: 46 room national flag hotel, constructed 2000, Saugatuck, Michigan. **John Mandich, Marcus & Millichap 248- 415-2628.** (12/03/08-2)

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CONDO

REDUCED BY \$96,000: Exquisite 2400 SF Duplex Down \$ 529,000. Italian Cabinetry and Brazilian floors, 3br - 2ba - 2fpl s/s app. Balcony + 1car garage w/ roof deck. **Pictures @ www.caminorealre.com or 773-412-4545.** (12/10/08-4)

100% REHAB, 1,750 SF, \$375,000, 4415 BEACON: Fab xtra lg 2BR 2BA w sun rm, den, sep LR/DR/open kit Cosco laundry/storage rm, pkg incl. **Koenig&Strey 312-502-3520** **catterbury@ksgmac.com.** (10/29/08-1)

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EDGEWATER PENTHOUSE FOR SALE: 2BR/2BA 5855 N. Sheridan - Highly desirable 26th Floor penthouse unit, most exclusive tier in building "A" W/views of lake, beach, and skyline from 3 private balconies. SS Appl kitchen, braz cherry floors, granite bathrooms, custom paint and lighting - turn key condo - steps to beach! **Priced to move at \$384,750, includes 1 parking spot and 1 year of free assessments! Please call 847-833-4955 to set up a private showing...you will not be disappointed.** (09/17/08-4)

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FOR RENT

STUDIO

1332 W. HOOD AVE. - EDGEWATER STUDIO: Sunny studios with all utilities included. Laundry in building. Close to trans. & shopping. Credit check required. **\$585/mo w/ no dep. One avail. Jan. another in Feb. Winter Special: One Month Free! 773-392-4550. www.landstarrealty.com.** (1/21/09-4)

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2032 W. FARRAGUT, #G: Oversized 1500/sq ft English garden home with 9.5 ceilings, large living/dining combo, wood-burning fireplace, two nice sized bedrooms, in-unit washer/dryer, maple/granite kitchen with plenty of counter space and room for eat-in dining. Two car tandem parking too! Close to Andersonville, Lincoln Square and public transportation. **\$1,600/ mo. Email mbowler@atproperties.com. Mary Bowler, Realtor, @properties.** (12/31/08-4)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

INDIA SURROGACY SEMINAR IN DALLAS FORT WORTH ON JANUARY 28th: Fatherhood for Gays & Singles. World Renowned Surrogacy Expert. **www.MedicalTourismCo.com Limited to First Few Registrations.** (1/28/08-4)

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Michael Rosenbaum.

NUNN ON ONE Kickin’ it old-school with Michael Rosenbaum

BY JERRY NUNN

Back in 1991, a group of theatre students lived all together in a three bedroom house in Bowling Green, Ky. Who knew that years later, one would be a world-famous super villain and another a writer for Windy City Times? After all this time, we had to catch up...

Windy City Times: So, the last time I saw you in person was at a party at Western [Kentucky University]. You told me that you were going to move to New York after graduating and become famous. Now look at you!

Michael Roesenbaum: I remember saying that; I do. I just had a feeling that this would all happen.

WCT: How did you get started after arriving in The Big Apple?

MB: I had dinner with some other acting alumni from Western Kentucky, who were living in New York and I called them up to say thanks for having me. One of them got me an interview with their agent the following Monday.

WCT: So it’s all who you know, sometimes.

MB: It was serendipitous. Everything just clicked. I auditioned for Conan O’Brien and got a sketch comedy segment called the Amsterdam Kids. It was about two kids that were misinformed about Amsterdam liberal policies. The episodes were on every week for five weeks.

WCT: So that got you some exposure. So what happened after that?

MB: Well, I just kept auditioning, little by little, for different projects.

WCT: How did you get in the movie Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil?

MB: I auditioned for it although I had never heard of it or read the John Berendt book. They had me read for it on tape. The next day they called and said, “You have a call back and Clint wants you to be a little more subtle.” I couldn’t believe that Clint Eastwood casts from videotape! A week later, I flew to Atlanta and filmed the movie.

WCT: That must have been exciting.

MB: It was. Clint really made me feel comfortable on set and didn’t hound me with me with a lot of notes. [Does a dead-on Eastwood interpretation] “Well Michael, how did that feel?” Next I had an audition and was cast on The Tom Arnold Show. That brought me to L.A. and got me in the door. There are lots of stories of overnight successes but, for me, it was step by step.

WCT: It has been great to watch your rise to fame.

MB: Well, you knew me. You lived with me, for God’s sake. I was always a bit of an extrovert. I knew where I wanted to go and where I wanted to be. I knew I could do this.

WCT: Well, you definitely hit it big with the

WB show Smallville, playing Lex Luthor. How many seasons were you on?

MB: I did seven seasons and I just finished this past May. They are continuing on another season. My contract was up and it had run its course. I loved the cast and the crew but I felt like my work was done. They have asked me to come back a few times. People think they have seen me on the show since then but I found out they have been using body doubles to pretend that it’s me. I don’t know how fair that is to the fans.

WCT: So you don’t think you will ever come back?

MB: No. I told the producers that I would only come back for the last episode or two if they let me wear a bald cap. I just grew my hair out.

WCT: Shaving your hair just drove you crazy, didn’t it?

MB: It wore out its welcome. Seven years everyday, filming in Vancouver, freezing my ass off. I couldn’t even wear a hat because my makeup would get ruined. I had to be there two hours before the crew got there to shave my head. The makeup girl was like my therapist. She knew everything about me and knew I wasn’t coming back. I am truly grateful to the show. It put me on the map. It gave me financial stability. I am able to take care of my mother’s gambling problem! [Both laugh.]

WCT: Well, you are not like that character you played on TV.

MB: Anyone who knows me was surprised I was playing the villain. I have always been the jokester so everyday on set I was doing stand-up comedy for the crew; then I had to be all serious. I was craving to do funny stuff. Now I have that freedom.

WCT: I thought how brilliant that you could grow you hair back and have a whole other career after the show.

MB: You hit the nail on the head. In fact, right now, I have a holiday beard growing. I remember you in a beard, too. You grow good beards.

WCT: I did it for theatre; it works well for Shakespeare. How did you get involved with all the voice work on cartoons such as Justice League and Batman?

MB: I was doing voiceover work in New York for everything from Trojan condoms to Magnavox. It’s a lot of fun and easy to do. I didn’t have connections, only that my agent said they need a replacement for a small part in the Batman Beyond cartoon. After that I auditioned for the Justice League and played the Flash for six years.

WCT: You were so good. I grew up with comic books and it was wild to see you do all these superhero projects.

MB: That’s so cool to hear from a friend because I never knew anything about it. I was learning as I went along. I would get these crazed fans that would be like, “Hey, you’re the Flash!”

WCT: Did you make appearances at the comic-book conventions?

MB: I went to one in Chicago, actually. The idea of someone paying me money just to sign autographs seems silly to me. A free trip? Great! Fans love it and it’s good for everyone.

WCT: Those fans will stay with you forever. You have a lot of gay fans too, just to let you know.

MB: Really? That’s comforting. The wardrobe guy on Smallville always told me that. I told him they like the pretty boy, they like Tom. He said, “They like you too...trust me.” Tell them I am better with hair, Jer.

WCT: The pictures you sent me are with hair. You have played gay in Sweet November with Keanu Reeves and did drag in Sorority Boys.

MB: It’s really hard playing a transvestite and then having to carry Charlize Theron into the bathroom and undress her. I really had to stay in character. [Laughs]

WCT: Now is there someone famous that you never thought you would meet?

MB: It’s funny how I became friends with Car-

rie Fisher. Her daughter was a fan of Smallville and wanted an autographed picture. I said I want a picture, in exchange, of Carrie in Return of the Jedi in that little skimpy outfit with Jabba the Hut. She jokingly wrote, “Michael, fuck me, Carrie.” We have been throwing parties together ever since for Christmas called the “Bah Humbug” parties, where we get lumps of coal and we trim the tree with people like Robert Downing, Jr., and Alec Baldwin on the list.

WCT: That sounds surreal. All this and you started from humble beginnings in a small town.

Tickled Pink charity party set for Feb. 20

Tickled Pink—the party that brings together the city’s hip, young or young at heart for a celebration—will take place Feb. 20, 7 p.m.-12 a.m., at Tantrik nightclub, 800 W. Superior.

At the event, guests can sip on delicious cocktails served by celebrity bartenders, dine on appetizers, and cruise the candy bar. Tickled Pink’s dance floor will be the place to be seen with the sounds of spinning deejays and live music. Also, attendees will be among the first to witness Tantrik’s interior.

Tickets are \$95 in advance and \$120 at the door, and proceeds will benefit the Breast Cancer Network of Strength (formerly the Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization). Call John Keogh at 312-294-8557 or see www.tickled-pinkchicago.com.

Mapplethorpe and Michaelangelo at NU

Largely unknown works by photographer Robert Mapplethorpe and original drawings from the Prado Museum by Michelangelo and other 16th-century masters will be exhibited this winter during two major exhibitions at Northwestern University’s Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston.

The “Polaroids: Mapplethorpe” exhibition, featuring more than 90 photographs, in the Block Museum’s Alsdorf Gallery Jan. 13-April 5. New York’s Whitney Museum of American Ar in collaboration with the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, New York, organized the exhibition. To see examples of works in the exhibition, visit www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/exhibitions/future/mapplethorpe.html.

“From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado,” in the Main Gallery Jan. 23-April 5, focuses on artworks from roughly 1520 to 1620.

Admission is free. Call 847-491-4000 or see www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu.

IGLTA announces travel discount

The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) has announced a new benefit program with longtime partner and hotel industry Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants.

Using special rate code “GLT” on Kimpton’s Web site, www.kimptonhotels.com, all LGBT travelers will now receive 10 percent off the best available rate at any of the company’s unique properties. Additionally, each time IGLTA’s code is used, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants will donate \$10 per night back to IGLTA’s mission of raising the profile of LGBT travel worldwide.

Since its founding in 1981, the company has been a pioneer in the hotel industry and was one of the first hotel groups to target specialized outreach to the GLBT market.

MB: You cast me in my first show there at Western when you were directing a children’s play.

WCT: I guess I saw a star in you very early on. What’s in the future for Michael Rosenbaum?

MB: I am writing a lot. I am being very selective. I don’t have to jump at everything that comes at me. I want to do more movies. I would do a sitcom; I did a couple but they were short-lived. I always thought I would have my own show.

See www.michaelrosenbaum.com.

Smith, Florida part of speaker series

Actor/playwright/academic Anna Deavere Smith and author Richard Florida will be among those taking part in the “Conversations in the Arts” series in 2009. The programs involve public intellectuals who specialize in such areas as economic development and diversity in the arts.

Smith will speak Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 7:30 p.m. in Columbia’s Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash. This event is free and open to the public; however, space is limited and reservations are required. Call 312-369-6600.

Florida—author of The Rise of the Creative Class and Who’s Your City?—is slated to speak Thursday, April 30. Tickets will be available one month prior to his appearance.

South Asian version of Vagina Monologues at Strawdog

Rasaka Theatre Company will present the Chicago premiere of *Yoni Ki Baat*—a South Asian-focused event loosely inspired by Eve Ensler’s The Vagina Monologues—at Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway, Jan. 4-Feb. 1, 2009.

The show will include six new monologues by local writers, including ensemble members Anita Chandwaney and Mary Anne Mohanraj. Tickets are \$10-\$20; call 312-777-1070 or visit www.strawdog.org.

Trans model at ‘Center’

Isis King, the trans individual who competed in the most recent cycle of America’s Next Top Model, recently appeared at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. She spoke about her life, her recent television appearance and future career plans. Last month, King found out on The Tyra Banks Show that trans physician Dr. Marci Bowers (of TV’s Sex Change Hospital) will finance King’s gender-reassignment surgery.



Isis King (front, center) at Center on Halsted. Photo from Danny Kopelson

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Jan. 7

Heating it up in the New Year – Sexy tips presented by Tulip Toy Gallery, 6 - 9 p.m. \$5, includes 2 drink tickets and snacks, www.centeronhalsted.org

Howard Brown seven session LGBT Specific Smoking Cessation Program begins. Group participants receive seven weeks of the program, free nicotine replacement patches and \$25 for completing the program survey at the end of the seven week session. Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan Rd. www.howardbrown.org.

Center on Halsted Women on Wednesdays: Every first Wednesday of the month a fun alternative place for women to meet other women. Each month a different theme. 6-9 p.m. \$5, includes 2 drink tickets and snacks, Center on Halsted, 3656 North Halsted, (773) 472-6469, www.centeronhalsted.org.

Thursday, Jan. 8

GLBTQ Friends Central Kane County Coffee & Conversation, 2nd and 4th Thursday nights of each month. Borders Books, Kirk & Main (Rte 64), St. Charles, 7 p.m. 630-338-6134 on the day of the event for last minute changes. gaysop@yahoo.com

Joan Corwin, author of Safe Shall Be My Going, Press 53 Open Awards Anthology, 7:30 p.m. Women & Children First Bookstore, 5233 N. Clark 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

PFLAG Glenview, Congregation BJBE, 7 p.m. 901 Milwaukee, Glenview, 773-472-3079 www.outinthesuburbs.com/

Friday, Jan. 9

Center on Halsted Art Show: Jeff Stevenson: Many-One. Opening reception will be held on at Center on Halsted, 2nd floor gallery, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. \$5 donation requested. Cash bar. Thru Feb. 15, 2009 RSVP to Ben Gannon at ben@centeronhalsted.org or call 773-472-6469 x 177

Hydrate Positively Aware Party, 8-11 p.m., followed by DJ Greg Drescher, 3458 N. Halsted St., hydratichicago.com

Jeff Stevenson: Many-One art exhibit, \$5 donation, 8:30 - 9:30 p.m., Center

on Halsted's 2nd Floor Living Room Space 3656 North Halsted, 773-472-6469 www.centeronhalsted.org

Leather Archives & Museum last day of "ask", a mixed medium exhibition celebrates the mask and its ability to transform its wearer into dual persona of subject/object. 6418 N. Greenview Ave. 773-761-9200 www.leatherarchives.org

Man's Country Peter, Blake & Angel, 5017 N. Clark St.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Equality Illinois suburban event, Public Policy Director, Rick Garcia, will talk about the organization and the IL Civil Unions Bill. Free pizza & beverages. 7 p.m. 1619 S Highland, Arlington Heights RSVP to Fran Bailey info@outinthesuburbs.com

Men Nurturing Men, reunion potluck social: theme: 2009, Changing Men's Lives, One Man at a Time, at a member's home. 6:30 p.m. Bring comfort foods, RSVP by Jan. 07 to 708-439-5227 or MNMChicago09@yahoo.com

Rainbow Brunch, Look for tables near drink station, kids welcome. \$7.95, 10:30 a.m. Old Country Buffet, 701 N. Milwaukee, Vernon Hills, TashBanash@aol.com

Spin Fish Tank, hosted by Dummy Corps, \$10 20 oz. Bacardi fishbowl cocktails, 800 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

Windy City Media Group Gays Got Talent finals contest (dance, comedy, magic, impersonation, drag, burlesque, music and more). 3 p.m. door, 5 p.m. start, \$5 cover, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted

Sunday, Jan. 11

Borders Perez Hilton promoting his book, Red Carpet Suicide. 1500 16th, Oak Brook, at 3 p.m. Call 630-574-0800.

PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley, 2 pm, New England Congr. Church, 406 W Galena Blvd., Aurora, 630-738-1962

Reconciling Journey Affirming Devotional Study for GLBT Christians 6:30 p.m. Wesley United Methodist Church, 21 East Franklin, Naperville, 630-355-1834

Renaissance Society Roundtable: Chicago Artists? Is there such a thing anymore? Includes Elizabeth Chodos, Director of Three Walls; Paul Klein, critic; Chuck Thuro, Director of The Hyde Park Arts Center; Philip von Zweck, artist. Free. 2 p.m. Swift Hall room 310. www.renaissancesociety.org

Tuesday, Jan. 13

Gerber/Hart lesbian book group, to share readings and select new books for Spring 2009 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville

Global Neighborhoods: Rick Lowe and Kyong Par in Conversation: How cities and neighborhoods are reconstituted, how poetics of art and ritual propel and complicate urban rebirth. Tickets \$7, MCA members and students \$56 p.m. Museum of Contemporary Art 220 East Chicago Ave. 312.397.3832 www.mcachicago.org/media

Polaroids: Mapplethorpe exhibition. Largely unknown works by photographer Robert Mapplethorpe and original drawings from the Prado Museum by Michelangelo and other 16th century masters. Free. Northwestern University's Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at 40 Arts Circle Drive on the Evanston campus. (847) 491-4000 www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

Wednesday, Jan. 14

Groups for HIV+ individuals ages 18-35 looking to connect with others living with HIV/AIDS and to share stories and experiences in a safe and friendly environment. Free. 6 - 7 p.m., Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted, Information or register, call Aldo Hernandez, LCSW, Health Educator/Social Worker at 773-472-6469 X 450 or email ahernandez@centeronhalsted.org. Registration ends Jan. 29. www.centeronhalsted.org.

Thursday, Jan. 15

Groups for HIV+ individuals age 35+ looking to connect with others living with HIV/AIDS and to share stories and experiences in a safe and friendly environment. Free. 6 - 7 p.m. Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted. Informa-

tion or to register, call Aldo Hernandez, LCSW, Health Educator/Social Worker at 773-472-6469 X 450 or email Aldo at ahernandez@centeronhalsted.org. Registration ends on Jan. 29, 2009. www.centeronhalsted.org.

Friday, Jan. 16

Center on Halsted presents Gender Queer Cabaret, Showtime at the Apollo, an evening of gender bending queer musical performances based upon shows at the historic landmark Apollo Theater in Harlem, followed by a light dessert reception. \$10/\$3 students, 7 to 9 p.m., Hoover/Leppen Theatre, Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

Yes We Can: John Gress On The Campaign Trail With Barack Obama, exhibit opening reception, \$5 donation, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted 773-472-6469, www.centeronhalsted.org

Saturday, Jan. 17

9 to 12 Bowling League, GLBT bowling league meets once a month. \$10, 9 p.m. River Rand Bowl, 191 S River Rd, Des Plaines, retroactive1@comcast.net

All Womyn's Pizza and a Movie Night, \$5 suggested donation 7:30 p.m. Zacharias Center, 4275 Old Grand, Gurnee, lorita8708@yahoo.com

Sappho's Salon at Women & Children First, a provocative night of lesbian diversions, 7:30 p.m., Women and Children First Books, 5233 N. Clark St., 773-769-9299

Monday, Jan. 19

Northwestern University's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration featuring legendary soul and gospel singer Mavis Staples, noon, Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 50 Arts Circle Dr., Evanston campus. Author Tim Wise, prominent anti-racism writer and activist will be keynote speaker at noon, Thorne Auditorium, Arthur Rubloff Building, 375 E. Chicago. All free and open to public. www.northwestern.edu/mlk/index.html

Sunday, Jan. 11



'RED' RECKONING

Perez Hilton will promote his book, Red Carpet Suicide, at Borders, 1500 16th, Oak Brook.

Photo by Austin Young

Tuesday, Jan. 13

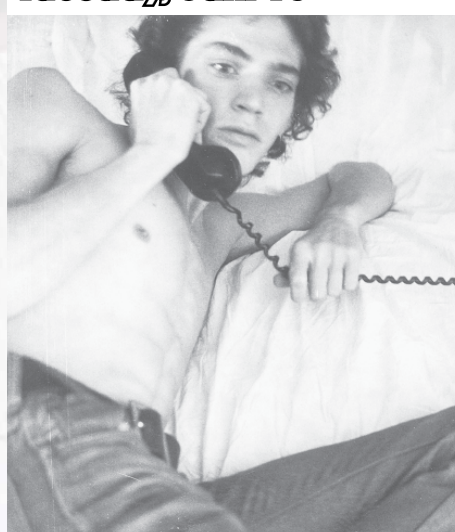


PHOTO FINISH

Robert Mapplethorpe's photos will be showcased at Northwestern University's Block Museum of Art.

Photo courtesy of Burke Patten

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



Boystown revelry

Spirits were high along North Halsted on New Year's Eve as revelers partied at Cocktail, Roscoe's and Sidetrack (where LGBT-rights group Equality Illinois held a party). Photos by Kat Fitzgerald/www.MysticImagesPhotography.com

SPORTS

Sasha Fierce

BY JERRY NUNN

Silver medal Olympic medalist Sasha Cohen, not to be confused with Borat's Sacha Cohen, will be part of the Smucker's Stars on Ice Tour. Sasha took a break from her busy day of preparation and skated by Windy City Times for a chat.

Windy City Times: Hi Sasha! Our readers are excited that you are coming to Chicago on this tour. Have you been to Chicago before?

Sasha Cohen: I have. I don't know the city very well but I love it. I like to come there because Chicago has a great skating crowd.

WCT: Well, there's lots of ice on the ground today for you to skate on! Tell our readers about your history. Where are you from?

SC: I am from California. I was born in LA and lived in Orange County most of my life. I moved off to New York and Connecticut for training for the 2006 Olympics. Now I am back living in Orange County, California. Half the year I am usually on tour doing shows. The rest of the time I am training and doing little odds and ends and having a good time.

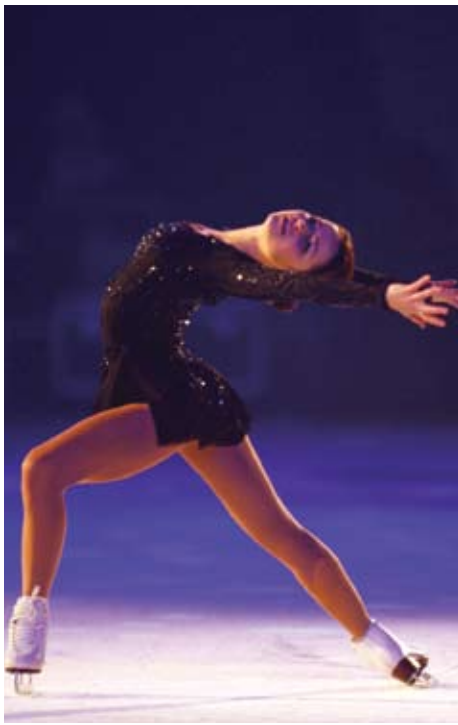
WCT: Did you get your start in dance or gymnastics?

SC: I actually did gymnastics for two years from ages five to seven. Then I went to skate one time with a good friend that was in gymnastics with me. I just loved it and wound up switching sports.

WCT: How much do you have to train before even thinking about the Olympics?

SC: It's something you start as a little kid and you kind of just do it for a couple of hours everyday. 12 years later you think maybe you could even make the team.

WCT: Well, you definitely made that team. After you performed your piece to Romeo And Juliet in the 2006 Olympics, people, including Peggy Fleming, referred to you as Juliet. How did that make you feel?



Sasha Cohen.

SC: It was such a compliment. The music meant so much to me and it was so beautiful. Every time I would skate it would re-inspire me. The music really moved me.

WCT: Are you going to be in the 2010 Olympics?

SC: I am going to decide that this next summer.

WCT: I heard you are a big fan of Audrey Hepburn like me!

SC: Yes, I love Audrey Hepburn! I grew up watching My Fair Lady, Roman Holiday and Breakfast at Tiffany's. I have always really, really loved her.

WCT: I have pictures of her all over my house. So, you co-wrote an autobiography?

SC: Yeah, Fire on Ice. It came out before the last Olympics. It has a lot of cute stories about my life and the training. The book includes the good times and the sad times, just thoughts from my life.

WCT: Any hints to what music you will be performing to at the Stars on Ice show in Chicago?

SC: Yes, I am skating to Moonlight Sonata and Please Don't Stop the Music.

WCT: Oh, a little Rihanna, very fun. Do you skate by yourself or with someone else?

SC: I am in a few group numbers with the rest of the cast and stuff on my own.

WCT: And this is your second year with the tour?

SC: Yes, this is my second full year of touring.

WCT: What's in the future for Sasha Cohen?

SC: I don't know. That's what I love. It makes life exciting. If I knew what was going to happen I would be so bored. I am the kind of person that sees what kind of opportunities come my way and make the most of them. Could be something in broadcasting or fashion design. Maybe I will go back to acting school. I am focusing on training right now and we will see where the next era goes.

WCT: Well, your fans can keep up with your life on your official Web site, www.sashacohen.com, I look forward to seeing your show!

SC: You'll have a great time and I look forward to seeing the Chicago crowds there!

For tickets to see the Smucker's Stars on Ice, visit www.starsonice.com or call 312-559-1212. Prices start at \$25 for the Feb. 21 show, which takes place at 3 p.m. at The Allstate Arena.

Gay diver is athlete of the year

Gay Australian diver Matthew Mitcham, 20, was recently named his continent's 2008 Sports Performer of the Year, according to TheAge.com. During the 2008 Olympics, Mitcham scored four perfect 10s to upset the favorite, Chinese diver Luxin Zhou. Mitcham is believed to be the first Australian to come out before competing at an Olympic Games.

Strike Out Against Hunger on Jan. 31

The 9 to 12 Bowling League and River Rand Bowl will hold its 12th annual Strike Out Against Hunger—a benefit for HIV/AIDS agency Vital Bridges—Saturday, Jan. 31, at River Rand Bowl, 191 S. River, Des Plaines, 7-10 p.m.

Bowlers of all skills are welcome. Tickets run \$30 for an individual bowler or \$150 for a team of six. Ticket includes three games, shoe rental and snack foods. See www.vitalbridges.org/pages/event-detail/17.php?id=3.

Milwaukee to host gay softball events; meetings in Jan.

During the week of Aug. 30-Sept. 5, 2009, Milwaukee and the Saturday Softball League will host the 33rd Gay Softball World Series (GSWS), also known as Series 2009.

In a related development, the city will present NAGAAAFest 2009 Aug. 29-Sept. 7. In addition to the softball tournament, NAGAAAFest will be a series of events, celebrations and parties for the entire community.

But before the tournament begins, the NAGAAA (North American Gay Amateur Athletic Association) Open Division winter meetings will take place Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 24-25, 2009, at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center (the host hotel for Series 2009). These meetings are held to set up the rules and criteria for organized gay softball.

See www.nagaaasoftball.org and www.nagaaafest.com.

Mammoth Gay Ski Week in March

Elevation 2009, the seventh annual Mammoth Gay Ski Week, will be held in Mammoth Lakes, Calif., March 18-22.

More than 2,000 people are expected to attend this event, the third-largest of its kind in the world. Among the scheduled highlights are several parties, including The Party @ 10,000 Feet and Cliffhanger, the main gala.

See www.mammothgayski.com.

Qrew Chicago wants new name

Qrew Chicago, an all-inclusive rowing (or "crew") organization, is asking the community for help in finding a new name.

People are apparently having trouble with its name. Qrew Chicago President Scott Curcio said, "It's witty and catchy, but as we grow, we continue to realize that our name is difficult to pronounce and comprehend among the greater rowing community." Also, the organization feels that the "Q" puts a limit on the identity of its diverse group of rowers.

Name and logo ideas should be sent to membership@qrewchicago.org through Saturday, Jan. 10.

FGG completes 2008 annual meeting

Appearances by South African High Court Justice Edwin Cameron and 2004 beach volleyball Olympian and Gay Games Ambassador Leigh-Ann Naidoo were among the highlights of the international Federation of Gay Games' annual meeting held in Cape Town, South Africa last year.

The federation's general assembly and board of directors meet in a different city each year to conduct committee meetings and hold leadership elections. This year marked the midpoint between Chicago's Gay Games VII in 2006 and the 2010 Gay Games VIII in Cologne, Germany.

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.



Chicago Dragons in action.

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LEVEL OF COMPETITION

We are hoping to register enough individuals to host both a competitive and recreational league. Participants will be able to self-select into one or the other upon registration. The Competitive League is for players who have several years of soccer experience. Although still a friendly league meant for recreation, it will be faster, more controlled, and more competitive than its recreational counterpart. The Recreational Soccer league is for players who want a friendly, fun league where they can play and develop skills even if they are relatively new (or just returning) to the sport. Our ability to maintain two divisions will be dependent upon the number of participants for each.

LOCATION:

Center on Halsted
3656 N. Halsted St., Chicago

THE LEAGUE

The next CMSA co-ed indoor soccer league begins in January and runs through March of 2009. Games will be played on Saturdays between 2:00pm and 6:00pm. Open gym/practice will be held January 10th and the season will start January 17th.

REGISTRATION

Player fees are \$81 and must be paid prior to the season starting. All players must be current CMSA members as well. Registration is available online at www.chicagomsa.com - please check our soccer page for additional information.



CONTACT: For more information on the league, please email Jason and Nick at soccer@chicagomsa.com

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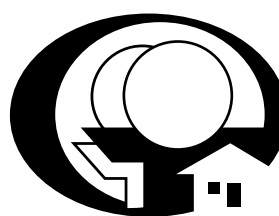
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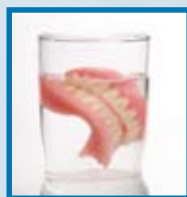
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