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# Report: LGBs more likely to be poor

BY BOB ROEHR

There are "many reasons to think that LGB people are at least as likely—and perhaps more likely—to experience poverty" than their heterosexual counterparts, according to "Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community," the first report ever to look at the subject in depth.

The overall rate of poverty in the United States was 12.5 percent in 2007. Lesbian couples and the children of same-sex partners definitely are more likely to live in poverty than are their heterosexual counterparts, the report's lead co-authors Randy Albelda and Lee Badgett told members of the LGBT congressional caucus at a briefing March 20.

Badgett said "the myth of gay affluence" is what motivated her to get involved in the field. Gay magazine surveys have found that their readers are affluent, which is typical of all magazine subscribers, and antigay groups have spun this into an assertion that all gays are rich and powerful and therefore do not need legal protection from discrimination.

Her earlier research debunked this myth, "but that research aimed at the middle of the income distribution." She said an out lesbian friend working at a homeless shelter for women had noted that 20-25 percent of her clients were gay or bisexual.

"This is a part of the community we don't hear much about, they are invisible in many ways."

The main group of poor LGBT people who have been studied is homeless kids who have run away or been kicked out by their families, she said.

"We know that gay families have less access to the institutional supports that come with marriage and often we see that they don't get as much family support as their heterosexual siblings and colleagues get ... and same-sex couples are twice as likely to be uninsured as people who are married."

Badgett lamented the fact that the 2000 U.S. Census does not ask questions about sexual orientation. Her analysis was based upon data from

Turn to page 4

## SPRING THEATRE PREVIEW

Productions covered in our 2009 Spring Theatre Preview include (L-R) *Class Dismissed*, *Rent* and *A Perfect Wedding*.

pages 11-16

## LGBT recovery house opens on N. Side

BY SAM WORLEY

Living with Pride, an addiction-recovery house tailored specifically to the needs of the LGBT community, opened its doors March 1. The house, located in the North Center neighborhood, is seeking applicants; it now provides services to two people, with a third on the way. Promising a safe and sober space for those facing substance abuse issues, Living With Pride is staffed 24 hours a day by volunteers.

According to Living with Pride's executive director, Dr. Claudia Mosier, it is the first LGBT-specific halfway house in Chicago.

In an interview that ran in the April 9, 2008 issue of Windy City Times, Mosier said, "You can get sober and clean in general halfway houses, but we want a place where GLBT people can go to if they just want to be around primarily GLBT folks, where there is less likelihood that they'll have to deal with any prejudices anybody else in the halfway house might have about people being GLBT."

Living with Pride's board of directors consists of those who are in recovery, or people with an interest in the field of LGBT individuals becoming clean and sober.

"Some of them have been in halfway houses in their past recovery, so they know what it's like to be a GLBT person in a more heterosexual-based halfway house," Mosier said.

Although the community has far more options than it used to, one of the problems LGBT seeking recovery face is how much the community continues to revolve around its bars and clubs. Living with Pride aims to help people deal with that dilemma.

Mosier described the residence as a "house of hope."

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

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# WINDY CITY TIMES

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Legendary singer Etta James (above) is one of the musical acts profiled in this week's Pop Making Sense. See page 21.

### SPRING THEATER

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U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher (above)—who is spearheading an attempt to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell—may be leaving Congress. See page 4.

Photo by Bob Roehr

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Features include:

- an interview with Mr. USA Ivan Rusilko (right)
- Nat'l roundup
- Bent Nights: Vern Hester's concert review
- Mar & Bernie's travel blog

Photo by Steve Starr



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President Barack Obama.

## U.S. signs UN LGBT statement

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The Obama administration has signed onto a United Nations official statement of support for "Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity."

In signing the statement, the United States joins 66 other nations in declaring support for LGBT people to be afforded basic human rights. The other nations signed on last December.

The 13-point statement says the signatory nations reaffirm, among other things, "the principle of non-discrimination which requires that human rights apply equally to every human being regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

"We are also disturbed that violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization and prejudice are directed against persons in all countries in the world because of sexual orientation or gender identity, and that these practices undermine the integrity and dignity of those subjected to these abuses," says the statement.

The countries condemn the use of such practices as execution and torture against people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as "other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary arrest or detention and deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to health." The statement makes no mention of the right to equal treatment under marriage laws.

The Human Rights Campaign applauded the Obama administration's move, noting that it is a reversal of a position taken by the Bush administration. HRC said that, prior to signing onto the statement, the United States was the only western nation that did not support the statement. HRC President Joe Solmonese said the statement "officially recognizes that basic human rights include the equality of LGBT people."

The 66 other nations signed the statement in December of last year, marking the first time a statement condemning human rights abuses against LGBT had been presented to the U.N. General Assembly.

The U.S. State Department issued a three-sentence statement today to note the event, saying the U.S. "is an outspoken defender of human rights and critic of human rights abuses around the world."

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## DADT lead sponsor to leave Congress

BY BOB ROEHR

The lead sponsor of legislation to repeal the antigay military policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT), Ellen Tauscher, D-Calif., may be leaving Congress to go to the State Department. Her departure is likely to hinder the possibility of moving the repeal bill forward during this legislative session.

"Last week, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton asked me to serve as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security," the 13-year veteran of the House said in a news release issued March 18. Tauscher, a strong

backer of Clinton's presidential bid, said she accepted the offer.

The statement was unusual in that nominations are made by the president and potential nominees are supposed to keep their lips sealed until the official pronouncement is made and through confirmation hearings.

Tauscher acknowledged, "The confirmation process for senior posts in government is fraught with uncertainty and can take weeks, if not months." Historically, members of Congress easily win confirmation, but the recent withdrawal of former Senate leader Tom Daschle to senior posts in the Obama administration suggests that

may be changing.

Tauscher had reintroduced the repeal legislation March 3. Her announcement comes as a surprise to many of its supporters.

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network spokesman Kevin Nix thanked Tauscher for "her tireless efforts" to repeal DADT. "We wish her all the best in her move to the State Department."

"Tauscher's shoes will be difficult to fill, but we are confident that others on the House Armed Services Committee and in the full House are equally up to the task of leading the fight to lift the ban," he said.

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

## POVERTY from cover

the census on same sex unmarried couples living together, the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, and the 2003/5 California Health Interview Survey.

Albelda reminded the audience that their analysis only covers couples. "Individuals are much more likely to be poor than people in two adult households." There seems to be a synergistic effect between other risk factors for poverty and being gay or lesbian.

"Not surprisingly, lesbian couples have statistically significantly higher poverty rates than married heterosexual couples, and gay men have lower rates," she said.

About 20 percent of same-sex couples had children living in the household, a lower figure than their heterosexual counterparts. "What was striking was the very high level of poverty among the kids in gay and lesbian couples." Surprisingly, "[t]he children of gay male couples were much more likely to be poor."

Albelda said most anti-poverty programs in the U.S. are designed from the default position of a single parent household with children, "there is no incentive whatsoever to claim somebody's income in the household if you don't have to." This discourages heterosexual marriage.

At the same time, employment based benefits packages "are based on a male breadwinner model" with families in mind. "Gay and lesbian families don't look like either of those," she said.

One thing that surprised Albelda is the effect of education: "Highly educated lesbian and gay male couples are much less likely to be in poverty than comparably educated married couples. And the reverse is true, those [lesbians and gay men] with lower levels of educa-

tion are much more likely to be poor. So the payoff for education at both ends is much more extreme for gay and lesbian couples."

Badgett said employment discrimination is a major explanation of lower economic status: "We see a large income gap for gay men compared with heterosexual men."

Some reports have suggested that gay men are more likely to be self-employed, perhaps by choice, suggesting that perhaps they might be making career choices based on job satisfaction rather than on maximizing income. But Badgett said she has not seen good data confirming any of this.

Another possibility is that some people might be limiting their income in order to meet eligibility qualifications for programs such as housing assistance or the AIDS drug assistance programs.

Albelda readily acknowledged anecdotal accounts of this occurring though she is not aware of any data on the extent of that activity. She said with incomes between about \$13-\$25 an hour "you run in place and lose valuable support" as your income increases.

Diego M. Sanchez, legislative assistant to Rep. Barney Frank, said this is a problem for people living with HIV in the congressman's Boston area district. "If you make too much money you don't get medical entitlements, you get pulled off of the waiting list for housing."

He said they are working to try to remove these disincentives in the Medicare and Medicaid program.

"Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community" was prepared by The Williams Institute at UCLA and is available online at [www.law.ucla.edu/WilliamsInstitute/pdf/LGBPovertyReport.pdf](http://www.law.ucla.edu/WilliamsInstitute/pdf/LGBPovertyReport.pdf).

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The nomination should be 100 words or less and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information of the nominee.

Please email nominations to [Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com](mailto:Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com) or fax to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609.

Following the policy instituted in 2005 that individuals can only win once, those who have won the award since that year are ineligible for this year's awards. Honorees will be notified in May and recognized in June in Windy City Times and at a ceremony at Center on Halsted on Tuesday, June 23.

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Sat. 6/20 7:30pm vs. Boston Breakers

Wed. 7/1 7:30pm vs. Washington Freedom

Sun. 7/12 7:00pm vs. FC Gold Pride

Sun. 7/26 7:00pm vs. Washington Freedom

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## LGBT global activists paint vivid picture

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

Heartland Alliance and the Center on Halsted invited five forum speakers (of the Global Equality Network, or GEN) participating in a month-long fellowship with Chicago organizations to share their unique experiences at "Out Around the World: Global LGBT Activism." The alliance's director of global HIV initiatives at Heartland Alliance, Sean Casey, moderated the forum, which included GEN fellows Georges Azzi (Helem), Rosana Flamer-Caldera (Sri Lanka), Hasna Hena (Bangladesh), Georges Kanuma and Olumide Makanjuola (Nigeria). The forum, held on March 17 at the Hoover-Leppen theatre at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, was attended by more than 30 people.

Each panelist spoke briefly about the challenges each organization faces within an oppressive society, which in some cases includes imprisonment or state-sponsored executions for having or being accused of same-sex relationships. Global activists have strategically formed partnerships with other movements by joining campaigns for women's rights and children's rights in their regions. Azzi shared some of the challenges in the Lebanese LGBT nonprofit organization Helem, like not having a word in the Arabic language to describe homosexuality in a positive way.

Azzi said, "What we have as an organization? We have the Gay and Lesbian Center. It's a little bit less big than this one, but it exists." Flamer-Caldera of Equal Ground in Sri Lanka, where the sentence can be 10 years in prison for having same-sex relationships, was grateful for the opportunity: "When I walked into the Center [on Halsted] I thought 'Wow. Do you think one day in Sri Lanka we can have a center like this?' It's a dream; [it] might come true one day."

And speaking of dreams that continue to become more real with every campaign, the LGBT community of Sri Lanka held its first annual PRIDE event in 2007. Equal Ground has decided to mainstream LGBT issues by looking at the issues as a human rights issue and not as a special rights issue. Flamer-Caldera concluded, "There is a lot more that we have to do in our countries. One of the key things is to change the law, but changing the law is not going to change peoples attitudes about homosexuality—not in a hurry, anyway."

GEN has partnered with four organizations in Guatemala City; Beirut, Lebanon; Colombo, Sri Lanka; and Lagos, Nigeria. For more information, visit [heartlandalliance.org](http://heartlandalliance.org).

## AFC: Governor's budget proposal hurts HIV services

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn has proposed a state budget plan that reduces some HIV prevention and care spending by 3 percent, according to a press release from AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC). The plan is part of reforms designed to balance the state's budget without eviscerating essential health and human services.

"In these difficult economic times, tens of thousands of HIV-affected Illinoisans need a dependable health and human services safety net to meet their basic needs," said Mark Ishaug, AFC's president/CEO. "While troubled by HIV funding cuts, we recognize that budgetary reform is urgently needed. We will work closely with Governor Quinn and the General Assembly to find sustainable solutions in order to ensure that essential state services continue for those most vulnerable due to illness, disability, unemployment, and other hardships."

Gov. Quinn said the state must address a debilitating deficit of nearly \$11 billion in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Without a balance of cost-containment measures and targeted revenue increases, vital state services would need to be

eliminated at a time when help is needed the most, he said.

"We recognize that without tax and other revenue increases, reductions to HIV services and other programs for vulnerable citizens would be far greater," said John Peller, AFC director of government relations. "HIV funding reductions will require even more diligence among state officials to ensure continuity of care and strategic investments in evidence-based interventions that yield the greatest results."

## TPAN names new director

HIV/AIDS agency Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) has announced that Bruce Weiss is the organization's executive director.

"Bruce is that rare combination of experienced leadership and unbridled enthusiasm," said TPAN board president Condon McGlothlen. "Everyone at TPAN is excited about his arrival."

A recipient of the 2006 Capital Pride Hero Award honoring LGBT leaders, Weiss has provided leadership to the HIV/AIDS community in Washington, D.C., for more than a decade. He served for several years as the executive director of the Sexual Minority Youth Action League, overseeing major growth in their programs, staffing and funding. He later became the director of the Whitman-Walker Clinic of Northern Virginia, a community health clinic focused on HIV and LGBT health care.

"I feel very fortunate to be joining such a vibrant organization," said Weiss. "Chicago is a great city and the TPAN staff, board of directors and volunteers inspired me with their energy and passion the moment I walked through the front door. It is a remarkable organization providing important HIV prevention and care services."

Bill Farrand, who has served as TPAN's interim executive director since October 2008, will continue in his role as the agency's director of client services.

## WCT publisher makes honor roll

More than 100 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) alumni have achieved renown as journalists, publishers and media personalities in the history of the school district. CPS issued a press release announcing the top 100 list; Windy City Times co-founder and publisher, Tracy Baim, is on said list.

The list of media personalities, found on the CPS alumni Web site, [www.CPSalumni.org](http://www.CPSalumni.org), also includes the late Studs Terkel, Saul Bellow, Nelson Algren, Ethel Payne, Jerome Holtzman and Mike Royko. There are seven Pulitzer Prize winners, seven Peabody Award winners, two National Book Award winners, two members of the Baseball Hall of Fame Writer's Wing and 18 Emmy Award winners listed.

Several CPS alums now have awards named for them, including the late John Chancellor, Peter Lisagor and Herb Block, a three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist.

Baim attended Grenneman, Newberry and Walt Disney grammar schools, and is a 1980 graduate of Lane Technical High School.

## Health summit proposals due March 31

The 2009 National LGBTI Health Summit is accepting workshop proposals for the upcoming gathering, to be held in Chicago, on Aug. 14-18. Proposals will be accepted through March 31.

Individuals and groups are invited to submit proposals that address wellness issues (emotional, physical, spiritual, psychological, environmental, social, and/or sexual health) of LGBTI people.

See [www.2009lgbtihealth.org](http://www.2009lgbtihealth.org) for more information.



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### Health talk



U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-ILL., stopped by Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan, March 20. Howard Brown President/CEO Michael Cook told Windy City Times that Durbin was "interested in the depths of our work" as a group discussed everything from research to the center's services. "[Durbin] asked intelligent questions about issues we face," Cook added. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

## Commission issues three resolutions

The City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues adopted three resolutions at its meeting on March 18.

The resolutions deal with the federal policy not to count same-sex married couples in the 2010 U.S. Census; civil-union legislation in Illinois (House Bill 2234); and the Obama administration's reversal of the previous U.S. administration's refusal to sign a statement from the UN that calls for an end to a) criminal laws based on sexual orientation and gender identity and b) human-rights violations and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The first resolution concludes "the Bureau of the Census should safeguard the raw data derived from census questionnaires in such a way that a corrective or supplemental report, which the Bureau of the Census should be required to issue, could accurately state the number of respondents who answer that they are in marriages between persons of the same sex."

## BEHIV gets \$25K grant

Better Existence with HIV (BEHIV) has been notified that it is the recipient of a \$25,000 M•A•C AIDS Fund grant to help fund the agency's Housing Assistance Program. This grant is a \$10,000 increase over last year's award.

BEHIV's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) ministers to those living with HIV/AIDS and their families by helping them maintain their housing and independence through technical assistance in budget planning, apartment searching and applying for federal programs; advocacy in dealing with landlord/tenant conflicts; and emergency and ongoing rental and utility subsidies for clients who meet low-income eligibility criteria. See [www.behiv.org](http://www.behiv.org).

## Heartland Café reopens

Heartland Café, 7000 N. Glenwood, has reopened after health inspectors closed it March 12, according to a business press release.

A patron dialed 311 after "feeling ill" because of tofu and vegetables eaten at the café. The release stated that "[t]he inspection was fair and we immediately set about to address the issues raised and some that weren't."

For more information about the establishment, see [www.heartlandcafe.com](http://www.heartlandcafe.com).

## Die Mommie Die! kicks off screening series

Starting this month, Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark, will begin a monthly screening series as a companion program to Reeling: The Chicago Lesbian & Gay International Film Festival.

Screenings will be held on the fourth Friday of each month. Discounted tickets are available for Reeling Members.

Die Mommie Die! (with Charles Busch) will run March 27 at 8 p.m. Coffee Date will be shown April 24 and Exposed: The Making of a Legend will run May 22. See [www.chicagofilmmakers.org](http://www.chicagofilmmakers.org).

## LGBTQA state bar group seeking nominations

The Standing Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity of the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) is now accepting nominations for its annual community leadership award.

Award recipients may include judges, lawyers, members of state or local legislative bodies, educators or community activist groups involved in legal issues relating to the LGBT community.

Nominations must be received by Friday, April

10; the award will be presented at the awards luncheon at the ISBA Annual Meeting at Lake Geneva on Friday, June 26. For more info, see [www.isba.org](http://www.isba.org) or e-mail Janet M. Sosin at [jsosin@isba.org](mailto:jsosin@isba.org).

## Amigas Latinas' book party with Josefina Lopez

Amigas Latinas will host a book-release party featuring Josefina Lopez, best known for writing *Real Women Have Curves*, Saturday, March 28, 7-11 p.m., at Mercury Cafe, 1505 W. Chicago.

Lopez will discuss her newest work, *Hungry Woman in Paris*.

The suggested donation is \$5; all proceeds will benefit About Face Youth Theater. See [www.amigaslatinas.org/events.php](http://www.amigaslatinas.org/events.php).

## 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 next event is March 31 at 7:30 p.m.

The shows will feature mostly queer acoustic music. Call 773-327-9427 or visit [www.urban-cafechicago.com](http://www.urban-cafechicago.com).

## Free tax-prep help March 31-April 1

Center on Halsted and Ladder Up will offer free tax-preparation assistance Tuesday, March 31, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and Wed., April 1, 6-8:30 p.m., at the Center, 3656 N. Halsted.

Eligibility requirements include families earning up to \$45,000 annually and individuals earning up to \$20,000 annually. People should bring all income and expense documents from 2008, identification of all family members and a copy of a 2007 tax return, if available.

E-mail [tballentine@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:tballentine@centeronhalsted.org) or call 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

## Planning seminar March 28

On Saturday, March 28, 1-2:30 p.m., Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, will host a free legal-preparation seminar which is designed to provide free, accessible legal education for the LGBT community about critically needed protections.

Volunteer attorneys will be available after the seminar to answer questions. Attorneys Ray J. Koenig III and David Wells of David Wells and Associates, P.C. are presenting, and the event is co-sponsored by SAGE Center on Halsted and Center on Halsted's Legal Clinic.

Contact Serena Worthington at [sworthington@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:sworthington@centeronhalsted.org) or 773-472-6469, ext. 160.

## Webber honorary chair of school auction

The Chicago Waldorf School has announced that award-winning landscaper and Chicago Greenworks founder Christy Webber is the honorary chairperson for the school's biannual auction fundraising event.

The auction will be held Saturday, April 4, at the South Shore Cultural Center, 7059 S. South Shore. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the live auction begins at 8:45 p.m. Tickets are \$85 each; see [www.chicagowaldorf.org](http://www.chicagowaldorf.org) for all sorts of information, including the school's auction acquisition wish list.

The school is at 1300 W. Loyola.



Carey Nachtigall.

## PASSAGES Carey Nachtigall

Carey Nachtigall, a beloved advocate for Chicagoans with HIV who worked with AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC), passed away at home March 16, surrounded by family and friends after a long and arduous battle with cancer.

Diagnosed with HIV in his 20s, he had been on disability for several years when volunteer work; a job as a paralegal with the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago allowed him to return to an energetic and purposeful life of advocacy.

Nachtigall is survived by his partner, Enrique (Henry) Chang; his mother, Gloria Nachtigall; his two sisters, Fran and Aline Nachtigall; extended family; and many friends.

Born and raised in Long Island, N.Y., Nachtigall moved to Illinois to attend school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received a degree in psychology, and then later completed his Masters coursework in counseling at the University of Illinois at Springfield. In Champaign, Carey worked with the Gay Community AIDS Project, where he served as an openly HIV-positive speaker to school and professional groups.

During his nine years as a paralegal and client advocate at ALCC, Nachtigall's co-workers fondly remembered him as a gruff, sarcastic New Yorker (and devoted Yankees fan) with a seemingly limitless capacity for empathy. Ann Fisher, ALCC's executive director, once asked him if he usually disclosed his own HIV status to his clients. He said "Almost never—I don't want it to be about me; it's about them." But when he met a client who was truly in despair, he didn't hesitate to share his own fears and struggles.

Nachtigall's warm spirit and strong character will be missed terribly. Funeral services have been held in New York. A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held in Chicago at a time yet to be announced. At the request of his family, any donations made in Carey's honor should be addressed to: AIDS Legal Council of Chicago, 180 N. Michigan, Suite 2110, Chicago, Ill., 60601.

To learn more information about the memorial service as it becomes available, please contact Anne Schmidlin, AIDS Legal Council of Chicago, at 312-427-8990 or visit [www.aidslegal.com](http://www.aidslegal.com).

## PASSAGES Lawrence B. Cole

Lawrence B. Cole, a retired CPA, former concierge at 3180 N. Lake Shore, longtime Lakeview resident and native of Buffalo, N.Y., passed away peacefully March 11. He was 75.

Cole was the beloved life partner of 44 years to James R. Russell. He was the dearest friend of Carol Geisler of Chicago and John Cochanes of San Diego; and a cousin of Vernon Anderson of Palatine.

Services were private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society, 225 N. Michigan, Ste. 1210, Chicago, Ill., 60601; or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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# 'First'-rate

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA; PHOTOS BY KAT FITZGERALD, WWW.MYSTICIMAGESPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



More than 700 well-dressed supporters of Center on Halsted attended this year's Human First Gala March 20 in the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker. Prior to the dinner, one organization and three people were honored with Human First awards: State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, State Rep. Greg Harris, Joseph Loundry and The Night Ministry. Feigenholtz said, "I'm going to sleep with [the award] under my pillow, because it's where dreams happen and the Center on Halsted is a dream."

The Center's executive director, Modesto "Tico" Valle, said, "I can't believe the time has gone by so fast. I'm just amazed every single day the number of people that continue to come to the Center on Halsted, especially during this economic downturn."

The program was brief, which left plenty of time for dancing. Malik's Ultimate Band played R&B classics and pop favorites.

**Thursday, April 2**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Susan Jane Gilman**  
**Undress Me in the**  
**Temple of Heaven**

**Wednesday, April 8**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Staceyann Chin**  
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# WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

## Denmark OKs gay adoption

Denmark, which enacted the world's first same-sex civil-union law in 1989, extended adoption rights to gay couples March 17.

Parliamentarians voted for the measure 62-53, with 64 legislators not present.

The bill was supported by the opposition Social Democrats and Socialist People's Party. The ruling Liberal Party opposed it, though seven Liberal MPs broke ranks and voted for it.

Denmark's groundbreaking 1989 "registered partnership" law granted same-sex couples more than 99 percent of the rights and obligations of marriage—a model that later was copied by several other European nations.

Beginning in 2001 with the Netherlands, gay couples began gaining access to marriage itself. Same-sex marriage now is possible in Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain and the U.S. states of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

From June to November 2008, gays in California also could marry, until voters amended the state constitution to stop it. The constitutionality of the amendment, known as Proposition 8, is now being reviewed by the California Supreme Court.

## CoE, HRW: Serbia needs to protect gays

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe's human-rights commissioner, said March 11 that Serbia is doing a bad job of protecting gay people.

"Discriminatory statements made by political figures and the media go largely unpunished," he said. "Human rights activists in particular are victims of intolerance, hate speech and threats, sometimes resulting in physical attacks. Such instances must be condemned from the highest political level and sanctioned appropriately."

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe seeks to develop common democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other texts. Forty-seven nations are members of the body.

On March 10, Human Rights Watch urged Serbia to relaunch efforts to pass a gay-inclusive anti-discrimination bill that recently was removed from active consideration in Parliament following objections from the Serbian Orthodox Church.

## Homophobic bullying 'rife' in British schools

A YouGov survey of more than 2,000 primary and secondary school teachers has revealed that homophobic bullying affects more than just the 150,000 gay pupils in British schools, the gay lobby group Stonewall reported March 10.

The "Teachers Report" found that boys who work hard, girls who play sports, young people with gay parents and young people who are presumed to be gay all experience anti-gay harassment.

Findings included:

—Nine in 10 secondary school teachers and two in five primary school teachers said pupils experience homophobic bullying even if they are not gay.

—Homophobic bullying is the most prevalent form of bullying after bullying because of weight.

—The vast majority of incidents go unreported by pupils.

—Forty-three percent of secondary school teachers and three in 10 primary school teachers have heard anti-gay remarks by other school staff.

—Nine in 10 teachers have received no training about homophobic bullying.

"This survey reveals how much remains to be done by our schools to demonstrate to all pupils that homophobic bullying is unacceptable," said Stonewall Chief Executive Ben Summerskill.

## HRW: Cayman Islands should protect gays

The Cayman Islands, a British overseas territory, should revise a draft constitution that will be submitted to voters May 20 to ensure it protects everyone from unequal treatment, and the British government should ensure this happens, Human Rights Watch said March 11 in letters to Caymanian Gov. Stuart Jack and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

The draft constitution will eliminate a free-standing guarantee of equality before the law and limit anti-discrimination protections only to rights expressly included in the constitution.

"This means that large and critically important areas of daily life would not be covered, including access to jobs, housing, and medical treatment," HRW said. "Reportedly, the government succumbed to pressure from religious groups, and the action was apparently intended to deny protections to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people."

Boris Dittrich, advocacy director of HRW's LGBT Rights Program, accused the British government of "using a double standard, approving a draft constitution for an overseas territory that gives fewer protections than British citizens enjoy at home."

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Read the national roundup online at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).

# QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"**HOMOSEXUALITY IS SEEN AS A VIOLATION OF THIS NATURAL CREATIVE ORDER**, and it is an offense to God. ... Leviticus 18:22 says: 'You shall not lie with a man as one lies with a female. It is an abomination.' Leviticus 20:13 says, 'If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act, and they shall surely be put to death.' ... When we create laws that goes (sic) against what biblically we are supposed to stand for, I think we are agreeing, or allowing to go forward, a sin which should not be treated by government as something that is legal. ... We are taking sins and making them to be legally OK, and that is wrong. That is an abomination. ... And I'm not saying that this is the only sin that's out there. Obviously, we have sin. We have murder, we have all sorts of sins. We have adultery. And we don't make laws making those legal. ... All sin is equal. That sin there is as equal to any other sin that's in the Bible." — *Colorado state Sen. Scott Renfroe, R-Greeley, on the floor of the Senate Feb. 23 during debate on a bill to allow gay state employees to share health benefits with their partners. The bill passed.*



**We've settled for fractions for equality. And I think that that is going to end**

—Cleve Jones



and drink purer water and our kids will be able to play with less-toxic toys. An office mate—a straight woman upset about Warren—said this morning that she's getting 're-excited' about Obama. I guess I'm feeling that way too. Re-excited—and it feels so good." — *Gay writer Dan Savage to this column, Jan. 15.*

"**WELL, I THINK THE GAY PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS LIKED ME BECAUSE** I have always been myself, I'm not intimidated by how people perceive me, I don't judge nor criticize people. I think that's another reason they at least know that I'm sympathetic. I think all people have a right to be who they are. We're all God's children and God should be the one to judge, not other people. So I have a lot of gay friends,



Photo by Andrew Davis

lesbian friends. I work with a lot of people. I am not gay. I have been accused of that. But I have been happily married for 42 years to the same man. And he's not the least bit, you know, threatened by the fact that I may be gay. And he knows I have a lot of friends. But I love everybody. It doesn't matter to me." — *Dolly Parton to CNN's Larry King, Feb. 21.*

"**I NEVER KNOWINGLY SLEPT** with a Windows user. Ever." — *San Francisco Chronicle sex columnist Violet Blue in the movie MacHeads as quoted by CNN.com, March 2. The 2008 film is enjoying a second life at Amazon, where it's the No. 4 top-selling documentary.*

"**I DO NOT WANT TO ADD TO** the acceptability of asking every candidate, 'Are you straight or gay or lesbian?' and make it a legitimate question, so I don't submit to that question. I don't care if people think I'm gay because I don't answer it. I'm flattered that at 84 people are interested in my sex life—and, it's quite limited." — *Former New York City Mayor Ed Koch to The New York Times, Feb. 28.*

"**IT'S A MONSTER BOOK. ... IT'S AN ATTEMPT TO PUT US (GAY PEOPLE)** back in history from the beginning. No history book ever recorded anything about us, and researching this book I found out that both (Abraham) Lincoln and George Washington were gay. ... I have stuff that will go beyond anything that has ever been written or said." — *Veteran gay and AIDS activist, author and playwright Larry Kramer discussing his upcoming book, The American People: A History, with the Montreal newspaper Hour, March 5.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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"Windy City Media Group generated enormous interest among their readers in this year's LGBT Consumer Index Survey. Out of approximately 100 print and online media partners who participated in the survey, Windy City was the best performing regional media in the U.S. Only survey partners with a nationwide footprint were able to generate a greater number of responses." —David Marshall, Research Director, Community Marketing, Inc.



SUSIE DAY

## No justice, No coat

Want to hear something weird about the left? It's chock full of human nature. For example: Some communist, in the dead of winter, stole my girlfriend's coat.

I take you back a few months. A cold December. My girlfriend and I are invited to a "holiday party," as the Americans say. Note how the festive noun "party" is modified by the cautious adjective "holiday" so as not to exclude broad-minded Muslims, Jews, atheists, Wiccans, Buddhists, godless Trotskyites, pantheistic vegetarians, anarcho-syndicalists or Darwinian psychics. Also note how these seasonal events tend to happen around Christmas, birthday of the zeitgeist-pummeling Baby Jesus, who, everyone knows, loved a good party. This particular revel is given by *Monthly Review*, a vital and venerable journal of ecumenical Marxism, run by a few stoic smart people, some of whom I am slightly afraid of.

Year after year, not quite having made the strides in self-esteem I would have liked, I am again deeply flattered to receive a mass-mailed postcard invitation to another *Monthly Review* holiday party. Laura, my girlfriend, having bombed the Capitol Building in 1983 with a group of comrades in protest of America's invasion of Grenada, and having survived over 14 years in prison for it, flatters less easily. This invitation is, for her, merely another in a relentlessly bulging cornucopia of radical event offers. "But I'll go, if you want me to," she always says.

Naturally, Laura has a meeting before the

Monthly Review party. So I arrive first at the MR office around 6:00 p.m. and begin solo mingling. I spot an eminent Leftist historian across the room. His seething scholastic glare stops me cold, and it is instantly understood that, until I have caught up in my reading, I shall not approach.

I say hello, instead, to a vegan I've met briefly, a woman who quickly proves so annoying that I sidle over to the food table and begin eating shrimp, to repulse her. It works, and my luck improves, as I'm introduced to a lawyer who works on environmental issues. We get into a conversation about the siege on Gaza with a dancer, who's been there. Gradually, I realize the party is working: isolated most of the year, I'm back with my peeps. A fragile mélange of the irksome, wistful, tempestuous, and brave, we are united by a desire to make this world less toxic; by our need for equality and justice.

At last, Laura draws nigh. Stepping into an elevator that takes her to the office, she is greeted and shown to a side room, where she's invited to lay her coat with others on a battered wooden desk, across which thousands of orders for Sanforized shirtwaists might once have passed—this, after all, being the Garment District.

About Laura's coat. Although she's often described herself as a "revolutionary anti-imperialist," Laura bought this coat at Lord & Taylor's—a clue that, in order to succeed outside federal custody, radicals should probably bend a little. In prison, Laura was often cold, and made to wear clothes too big for her. After getting out, she spent several winters in borrowed or cheap, thin coats, until one year she decided it was OK to have a good, warm one. Mind you, Laura didn't get above herself: she waited for a sale—\$280 marked down to \$100—and got this wonderful, brownish-grey long coat, reversible, just her small size, that softly told her, every winter's day, life was actually working out.

Meanwhile, the party is growing steadily—a dietician, a Web designer, activists, students have added themselves to the mix, and the room is now pinko-packed. I introduce Laura to the eco-attorney; we find we know people in common:

Coffee sometime? Sure! We co-mingle, then drift apart, I to talk to a guy whose work with immigrants is heartfelt and astounding; Laura to old friends from the Weather Underground. Everyone agrees the shrimp is really good this year. The vegan appears to have left early.

After about an hour, I catch Laura's eye from across the room. Drawing my index finger across my throat and extending my tongue and eyeballs in secret, "couple's" code no one else understands, I suggest it's time to go. Laura nods, and we enter the "coatroom." Laura puts her hand on something that feels right, but which she quickly discovers ... is not. It's an unsubtle, deep black coat, too big, too quilted: her coat is not there. Someone—some woman who owns this off-brand, overstuffed thing—mistook Laura's amazing coat for hers.

Mistakes happen. It's dark and 28 degrees outside, but we wait 45 minutes until the party ends, to make sure it's OK for Laura to wear this coat home. She does. Well, maybe tomorrow somebody will call the MR office and say they got the wrong coat. Or next week? Next month? No one calls.

End of story. Compared to, say, Gaza, it's vastly forgettable. Because the loss of a coat shouldn't matter that much, we quickly reboot our macro-focus on Social Justice. We agree we would gladly give up all we own, if this would ensure that nobody's cold this winter; that people who make coats are paid decently; that Palestinians are treated as human beings.

Still, it's hard: Laura was just getting comfortable, learning to fetishize commodities. Once, she did things that sent her to prison because she wanted the U.S. not to invade sovereign countries. She still cares passionately about Revolution, but there's a hurt here that politics can't brush away. There's also the knowledge that somewhere, there walks someone purporting to believe in equality and justice—whose coat is not her own.

©Susie Day 2009

[No vegans were harmed in the writing of this column.]



## Dear Mr. President

Dear President Obama,

Please consider justice and inclusivity for all populations as you reform healthcare.

As LGBT Illinoisans, we know your commitment to this cause. Your record in support of civil rights for all and healthcare reform speaks for itself. You want a more inclusive, healthier world with less health disparities and stronger community health. A world where lesbian and bisexual women do not suffer from disproportionately high rates of smoking, alcohol use, obesity, and lack of insurance that place them at higher risk for breast cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression, addiction, and other chronic, life-threatening illnesses. A world where gay and bisexual men do not suffer from disproportionately high rates of psycho-emotional disorders, addictions, and (most notably) HIV/AIDS. A world where transgender folks are able to be healthy and live free from violence.

The LGBT population must be included in healthcare reform. When considering the topic of healthcare reform, you must not ignore the great social injustice being suffered by the groups of greatest health disparity. Therefore, I call on you to ensure that any healthcare reform be inclusive of LGBT folks. For the past eight years, we have had to be present but have been invisible in the national health conversation.

By making healthcare reform inclusive of the LGBT community, healthcare settings could become safe, helpful places rather than venues

of shame, stigma and prejudice. Preventative practices and messages would be appropriate and inclusive, reducing the cost of reactionary treatment to preventable disease. We will not have to use the emergency room as our primary healthcare provider as so many of us without insurance are forced to do. Instead, we will know that providers have knowledge about our true risks, best practices for how to care for us, and how to be respectful of our families and identities.

The LGBT population must be included in data collection—so that we can understand the truths of our bodies and lives. The need for accurate, inclusive data is twofold: 1) If we don't know what is wrong in our community, we can't fix it, and 2) Data is the basis for all federal support and funding for health initiatives. Our national surveys don't include sexual-orientation and gender-identity questions. We need these tools to accurately understand what problems all of us face so we can solve them. Furthermore, without

data about health issues in our population, the LGBT population is consistently overlooked by federal programs.

By making healthcare reform and research LGBT-inclusive, we will be able to better care for the entire community. These reforms will affect the most vulnerable members of our community—those who can't choose a healthcare provider based on what their Web site profile says, but who delay care until crisis strikes. If healthcare reform is LGBT-inclusive, our doctors, nurses and staffs will be better able to care for all of their patients and our nation's health will improve.

Michael C. Cook  
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## GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by  
Joan  
Marcus

## RENT AND RAVE

Anthony Rapp (left) and Adam Pascal return to their original roles in *Rent*, here in Chicago March 31-April 12. See Spotlight, page 14.

## SPORTS

Ready or net.  
Page 22.

Photo by Darlene



## MOVIES

Simply the dress.  
Page 17.



## MUSIC

How many Clinks?  
Page 21.



Tina Landau.

## Tina in a 'Tempest'

Out director/playwright Tina Landau helms Steppenwolf Theatre's first stab at Shakespeare.

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Expectations are running high for Steppenwolf Theatre's production of *The Tempest*.

Not only is it Steppenwolf's first-ever Shakespeare production, but it features a plethora of acclaimed ensemble members in the cast (notably Tony Award-winning director and playwright Frank Galati as the exiled Prospero).

Tina Landau—a playwright, director and Steppenwolf Ensemble member since 1998—directs *The Tempest*. She recently took some time out of her busy rehearsal schedule to talk about her approach to setting Shakespeare on the Steppenwolf ensemble.

**Windy City Times:** Could you talk a bit about

how Steppenwolf chose to do its first full Shakespeare production?

Tina Landau: I think the genesis of *The Tempest* was in both [Artistic Director] Martha Lavey and the staff's determination to do a season about the imagination—coupled with a desire on the part of the ensemble to do Shakespeare.

I had actually put *The Tempest* on a list for Martha for projects to consider probably about five years ago because it has been one of my favorite plays and a play I've always wanted to do. And when I got a call from her, seemingly out of the blue, asking if I wanted to direct *The Tempest* in this season of the imagination, I did not miss half a second before I said, 'Yes.' And then that was only four to five [seconds] when she told me the idea of Frank playing Prospero.

**WCT:** Now when you see Shakespeare nowadays, you always wonder when and where it's going to be set. Is your approach going to be an eclectic approach with different time frames in terms of the look of the production?

TL: We're thinking of it as creating our own brave new world. And I'd say, "Yes," that might incorporate elements from different periods, but it is fundamentally in the theater, in the imagination of Prospero. So it's through the consciousness of a 21st-century brain re-imagining and reliving and bringing to life *The Tempest*.

**WCT:** Now we always think of Steppenwolf actors as being rough-and-tumble in jeans and stuff like that. How are the ensemble members tackling Shakespeare?

TL: You know, fantastically. It's what I had hoped and continue to hope as it goes into performance—which is there's such a fierce commitment to truth, honesty, spontaneity, danger and extremity on stage. All of which has served to awaken the text in ways that I never could have imagined. So rather than the Steppenwolf actors kind of kowtowing to a certain formality, they've just juiced it with a brand of fire that is very much Steppenwolf and I hope very organic without playing it naturalistically.

**WCT:** In the theater community, you're held

up as one of the more prominent women directors. Do you prefer to be seen just as a "director?"

TL: I never classify myself by gender, but I'm very aware that I'm a woman and I know that informs my work and how I perceive the world and material in front of me. But it is certainly on equal par with the fact that I'm gay and I'm Jewish and I play the piano and I was raised in New York and like sushi. [Laughs]

do Floyd because Steppenwolf at that time was not doing the musical thing. But I did another play, a Charles Mee play called *Time to Burn*, and the next year I wrote and directed a play called *SPACE*.

It was the day after *SPACE* that Martha invited me to be in the ensemble. I can't remember if Gary Sinise was there or if he had just seen the play the night before, but I really thought she was joking and making a mistake. I kept saying, "But Steppenwolf is actors." I couldn't believe it was true and that such good fortune would befall me.

**WCT:** How do you feel you fit in with the company?

TL: Oh, great. I was a long while ago when I first came here slightly worried. In regards to doing some training I do which is known as *The Viewpoints*. And I worried that my approach into material would be different than some preconception I had about this company. And it turns out that I have never felt more at home or in my element than I do here.

**WCT:** Do you value the creative freedom they've offered you?

TL: It's invaluable. It's a creative freedom and a creative bedrock and comfort and support system. For me it's both about being able to explore and also being able to feel safe and like you have a home. Whenever I think of this place I think of home with capital 'H.'

**WCT:** Now other than the imagination and the play's emphasis on forgiveness, is there something else about *The Tempest* that you wanted to touch upon?

TL: Just that I'm learning so much from the play. I feel blessed to be working on a play that feels like it gives me lessons every day about wonder and humility and it is a play about wonder and seeing things as if for the first time. And it's also a play I'm discovering more and more about our desire to control and the inevitability of having to let go. So I feel like's been an extraordinary experience working on it in terms of all those issues as an artist and a person.

WINDY CITY TIMES

## Spring Theater Issue

I do get asked often what it means or what it feels like to be woman director and I always don't know how to answer that—because I do think I am that and those things I said before, so it just feels like me.

**WCT:** Now Steppenwolf is famous for being founded as company of actors. When did you get invited to join the ensemble and what was that like?

TL: I think it was in 1996 and, in fact, it was Frank Galati who had seen a production I did in New York of a musical I co-wrote (with composer Adam Guettel) of Floyd Collins. Frank went to Martha and said we have to do this piece at our theater. So Martha invited me to come and direct something here. We decided not to

# Drag racing: Cross-dressing in spring plays

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

A buttoned-down physician whose scientific research transforms him into a libertine. A Swiss tourist traveling incognito, disguised as a student of Eastern theology. A German youth who undergoes surgery in order to legally marry his gay lover. A middle-aged Italian matron *delighted* to be your hostess. What this varied assortment of individuals have in common is that they are appearing onstage in Chicago this spring, and that they all involve the cross-gender turns more popularly known as “drag acts.”

Even *And Odd* Theatricals' premiere production of *Mrs. Hyde* and the Case of the Gaslight Buggers presents us with Dr. Henry Jekyll, whose inquiries—not into the nature of good and evil, as in the venerable novella by Robert Louis Stevenson—but into the very boundaries of male and female sensibilities, leads him to experiment on himself, to the dismay of his best friend, his fiancée, his valet and his cat. Duane Scott Cerny's ribald comedy features unlikely names (a Miss Emily Enema “of the Cornhole-on-Sussex Enemas”), bawdy double entendres (as when Jekyll commends his students “You seem to have a good grasp on your organs”) and irreverent anachronisms (a fatal elixir that “tastes like a Shirley Temple”) recalling the pioneering mid-20th-century farces of Charles Ludlam.

“Ludlam's plays were essentially vehicles for himself and his own theatre,” Cerny noted, “But *Mrs. Hyde* is an ensemble piece about the duality of the sexes. Each character has his/her own agenda of unfulfilled dreams ... the conflict of Jekyll-and-Hyde has always been black versus white, good versus evil. But life is about that shaky ground in the middle. Nowadays, it's almost become too easy to change one's sex, but



Mrs. Hyde...

only when he is “Mrs. Hyde” can Jekyll, as a heterosexual man of his day, connect with his sensual/sexual self—and challenge the others in his life to examine their own orientation. I wanted to spoof—but at the same time, debunk—the assumptions behind Jekyll's society.”

Isabelle Eberhardt, the heroine of Timberlake Wertenbaker's *New Anatomies*, was an actual historical figure, a radical academic's daughter who sought refuge from the repressive European society at the turn of the 19th century through excursions in French-occupied Algeria, traveling under the alias of Si Mahmoud, a rebellious youth who cursed, spit, smoked kif and engaged in copious man-boy sex. But Elizabeth Schwan-Rosenwald, artistic director of the 20% Theatre Company, disputed Eberhardt's transvestism as a purely sexual issue.

“[Isabelle's] decision to dress as a man was based in her desire to explore a world that required her to be someone else—specifically, a *male* someone else,” Schwan-Rosenwald said.

“The rigidity of a gender-segregated society, ironically, would have made it simpler to ‘pass’—incredibly dangerous if you were caught, but in a culture designed to accept a person's word as truth, only a flagrant offense would force people to see what they don't want to see. Isabelle and Si Mahmoud both existed within the same woman. Her men's clothes weren't a disguise, so much as the embodiment of her personality when wearing them.”

Man-to-woman or woman-to-man role transference is easy to understand, but Hansel, the title character in Stephen Trask and John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig And The Angry Inch*, is stranded somewhere between, thanks to a clumsily-executed sex-change operation that leaves him with the reproductive equipment of a Barbie—or is it Ken?—doll. The effects of this freakish physiognomy on the psychological orientation of its owner comprises the theme of the 1998 rock-and-roll musical.

“The most wonderful aspect of this story is its honesty,” insists American Theatre Company director P.J. Paparelli, “Ten years ago, *Hedwig* took the audience through a tremendous journey. But attitudes regarding acceptance or understanding—or even curiosity—of gay, lesbian or trans people have made us a fearful nation since then. That's why I wanted to do this show now, as our country begins to turn the page and once again embrace our diversity.”

Americans old enough to recall the furor over women wearing trousers with fly-fronts or men growing their hair long can testify to gender-equality advancements in our culture. So why hasn't cross-dressing as a dramatic device gone the way of minstrel shows and other motifs based in strict segregation of social factions? What is the enduring appeal of drag?

“I think our society still clings strongly to its views of how men and women should behave,” said Schwan-Rosenwald, “But I believe that the drag show has remained a part of our culture because there continues to be an attraction to the excitement and fun of becoming something you are not, if only for a moment.”

Cerny agreed: “Cross-dressing allows you to walk in another person's high heels—to be someone else for an evening or two,” while Paparelli added, “Anyone can put on a dress and get a laugh, but drag also deals with truth and intelligence, as well as entertainment.”

“People are drawn to illusion,” said Dale Calandra, creator of the persona known as Lola Cabana (“America's Favorite Aunt”) and an alumnus of *Hairspray*, playing the role of Edna Turnblad, “So often, ‘drag’ is equated solely with bar drag, but can't all actors be said to take on drag, whatever their task onstage? When the illusion is believable, and the character is based in their own inner truth, people will always cheer.”



The History Boys. Photo by Lara Goetsch

## ‘History Boys’ starts in April

TimeLine Theatre Company presents the Chicago premiere of the Tony- and Olivier Award-winning play *The History Boys* by Alan Bennett. Directed by TimeLine Company member Nick Bowling, *The History Boys* will open April 25 and run through June 21 (previews April 22-24) at TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington.

*The History Boys* follows a rambunctious group of clever young men in 1980s England as they pursue higher learning, games, sexual identity and a place at university under the guidance of three wildly different teachers and a headmaster obsessed with results.

Tickets are \$25-\$35; visit [www.timelinetheatre.com](http://www.timelinetheatre.com) or call 773-281-TIME (8463).

## Center hosting dance workshop

Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, is hosting a family-oriented interactive workshop with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Saturday, March 28, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., in the Billie Jean King Recreation Hall.

Registration, which includes a \$5 fee, ends Thursday, March 26. Call 312-850-9744 to RSVP; for more info, e-mail [tballentine@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:tballentine@centeronhalsted.org) or call 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

## 3Girls3 performing Manilow's hits

Chicago trio 3Girls3 (Heather Moran, Mary-Monica Thomas and Gail Becker) is taking a superstar's songs in the new show “This One's For You: The Music of Barry Manilow.”

The show will take place Saturday, April 4, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, April 5, at 2 p.m. at Skokie Theatre, 7924 N. Lincoln, Skokie. Tickets are \$25-\$30; call 847-677-7761 or e-mail [info@skokietheatre.com](mailto:info@skokietheatre.com).

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## CRITICS' PICS

**FRAT**, The New Colony at Dank-Haus, through April 4. Evan Linder's fraternity rush play may be fairly conventional, but Andrew Hobgood's environmental staging of the show makes it all a raucous eavesdropping experience. SCM

**Our Lady of the Underpass**, Teatro Vista at Greenhouse, through March 29. Like peeling onions, Tanya Sarracho reveals the inner cores of six souls in her brilliant monologs about faith and more, inspired by an iconic image at a Chicago viaduct. JA

**Rose and the Rime**, House Theatre of Chicago at Chopin Theatre, through April 11. The House may be out in the snow for now, but it still has magic up its sleeve—not to mention the charismatic Carolyn Defrin—to delight the most jaded home-town audiences. MSB

**Wait Until Dark**, Court Theatre, through April 5. Who's afraid of the dark? You will be watching a blind woman battling a stone-cold sociopath and his thugs over a doll stuffed with heroin. Director Ron OJ Parson packs Frederick Knott's deliciously suspenseful noir with more twisty thrills than a roller-coaster. CS

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan



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# Spring premieres

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Outside of a certain flying nanny now in residence in the Loop, Northlight and Writers' theaters have the don't-miss marquee premieres this spring, with (respectively) the Midwest debut of the Lieutenant of Inishmore and the first-ever opening of *The Minister's Wife*. But throughout Chicago—and even Berwyn—there are plenty of other brand-new (or new to the area) works to check out. Below, our picks for spring's most intriguing new offerings.

—**The Lieutenant of Inishmore** (Midwest premiere), April 29-June 7, Northlight Theatre, 9501 Skokie, Skokie. 847-673-6300. [www.northlight.org](http://www.northlight.org): There is no question that this is the don't-miss premiere of the season. Check out this killer cast: Matt DeCaro, John Judd, Cliff Chamberlain and Kelly O'Sullivan and Jamie Abelson. Better still, they're in the service of the Great and Terrible Martin McDonagh. This time, the author of *The Cripple of Inishmore* and the shoulda-won-the-Oscar *In Bruges* begins his twisted tale with the death of a hitman's beloved pet cat. Uh-oh. Expect equal parts stomach-turning violence and pitch-black humor.

—**The Minister's Wife** (world premiere), May 19 (previews through June 3)-July 19, Writers' Theatre, 325 Tudor, Glencoe, 847-242-6000. [www.writers theatre.org](http://www.writers theatre.org): Josh Schmidt, the composer of Writers' award-winning *The Adding Machine* has said he has no use for conventional musicals. So don't expect tidy chord structures and button endings as he turns his pen to George Bernard Shaw's "Candida." Also making this a must-see: Austin Pendleton ("Orson's Shadow") directs. With that kind of talent on board, the plot almost doesn't matter. But for those who crave details, the story deals with a young poet intent on rescuing the title character from what



Rohina, the playwright behind *Unveiled*.

he believes to be the tedium of her daily life.

—**Jimmy Gamble** (Midwest premiere), April 2-10, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Co. at Angel Island, 735 W. Sheridan, 773-871-0442, [www.maryarchie.com](http://www.maryarchie.com): Written, directed and starring Gary Bairos, Jimmy Gamble is a 70-minute, one-man show about the life and times of a man who lives to bet on horse races. A California native, Bairos' focuses on an obsession with playing

the ponies by a man who considers himself the greatest handicapper in the country. The winner of an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for his performance in *The Indian Wants The Bronx*, Bairos recently completed the feature film version of *Jimmy Gamble*.

—**Mrs. Hyde and the Case of the Gaslight Buggings** (Midwest premiere), April 2-26, Even and Odd Theatricals at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, 312-902-1500, [www.evenandoddtatricals.com](http://www.evenandoddtatricals.com): Of course, we know about the violent Mr. Hyde. Now meet the super-sexed Mrs. Hyde. Expect dragalicious gender-bending wackiness to ensue as Henry Jekyll's lab experiments unleash a Victorian cougar on 1880s London.

—**Parlour Song** (Chicago premiere), April 2-May 9, Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn, 312-458-0722, [www.steeptheatre.com](http://www.steeptheatre.com): A romantic triangle involving man who blows up buildings for a living, a woman inappropriately named Joy and a neighbor with a handy library of self-help sex tapes. What could possibly go wrong? Jez Butterworth's comedy deals with combustion that's sexual, emotional and demo-

lition-al as well as a husband who is "jumper than a crow on roadkill." Robin Witt, who drew kudos for her work helping Steep's *Breathing Corpses*, directs.

—**Disappearing Acts: Stories By Nikolai Gogol** (world premiere), April 25-May 31 (previews through April 26): Stephen Fedo has long been Piven Theatre's go-to guy for adaptations. Having done able work translating prose by Anton Chekhov, Bernard Malamud and Isaac Bashevis Singer into pieces for the stage, he now takes a turn at Gogol. Genre-defining masterpieces *The Nose* and *The Overcoat* established Gogol as the father of absurdity. "We all come out of Gogol's 'Overcoat,'" Dostyevsky reportedly said. He wasn't exaggerating. *The Nose* tells the story of a man who wakes up one morning to find his proboscis gone missing. *The Overcoat* is the cautionary comedy of a poor man who splurges—far more than he realizes—on a magnificent winter coat.

—**Unveiled** (world premiere), April 30-May 23, 16th Street Theatre, 6420 16th, Berwyn. 708-795-6704. [www.16thstreettheatre.org](http://www.16thstreettheatre.org): Amy Eaton directs the world premiere of a one-woman drama depicting five Muslim women. Playwright Rohina (no surname) includes a Pakistani woman, a white American woman, an Arab-American woman, a South-Asian Londoner and a Middle Eastern woman in a story of racism, love, culture and language that unspools as the women serve chocolate chai, mint tea of Morocco, Kashmiri Chai and Kahwe Saide. The piece is part of 16th Street's Words in Motion Festival.

—**Busman's Honeymoon** (world premiere), May 1-June 21 (previews through May 10), Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood, 773-761-4477. [www.lifelinetheatre.org](http://www.lifelinetheatre.org): Chicago's standard-bearers when it comes to literary adaptations, Lifeline revisits amateur sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey and novelist Harriet Vane in Frances Limoncelli's take on Dorothy L. Sayers' detective classic. Those who saw *Gaudy Night* know Limoncelli is a pip when it comes to transferring Sayers from page to stage. Count on crackling suspense, sparkling banter and the occasional corpse to keep things extra-interesting. Jenifer Tyler and Peter Greenberg reprise their roles as (respectively) as Harriet Lord Peter.

—**Love Person** (Midwest premiere), May 15-June 14, Victory Gardens Biograph Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, 773-871-3000. [www.victorygardens.org](http://www.victorygardens.org): Two lesbians walk into a bar... Not the most promising beginning for a love story, right? Think again. Playwright Adidit Brennan Kapil uses four languages, three cultures and two couples to tell an unconventional tale of barriers, romance and communication. Sandy Shinner directs the collage of English, Sanskrit, e-mail projections and American Sign Language.

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JUDITH JAMISON Photo © Jack Mitchell, 1976

## SPOTLIGHT



Now in their late 30s, Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp may be stretching believability as young East Village bohemians in Jonathan Larson's landmark 1996 musical *Rent*. But now that the show has closed on Broadway, seeing Pascal and Rapp, in their original respective roles of Roger and Mark (plus "Seasons of Love" soloist Gwen Stewart), on tour is a must for any diehard *Rent*head or lover of Broadway lore. *Rent* plays from March 31-April 12 at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph. Tickets are \$25-\$80; call 312-902-1400 or visit [www.broadwayinchicago.com](http://www.broadwayinchicago.com). Photo of Rapp (left) and Pascal by Joan Marcus

THEATER REVIEW

# Tallgrass Gothic/ The Changeling

**Playwright:** Melanie Marnich/  
Thomas Middleton and William Rowley  
**At:** Caffeine Theatre at the  
Raven Theatre Complex, 6157 N. Clark  
**Phone:** 312-409-4778; \$20  
(\$35 for both shows)  
**Runs through:** April 12

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Why hasn't someone thought to do this sooner? Author Melanie Marnich made no secret of her rural-noir shocker being anything but an updated revision of Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's 17th-century spine-chiller, *The Changeling* (not to be confused with the recent movie of the same title). So what could be more logical than for a single company to stage them together in repertory?

Our prototype is lurid enough: the haughty Beatrice favors a handsome stranger over her betrothed. Her solution is to persuade her misshapen servant, DeFlores, to murder the inconvenient fiancé—a deed that soon embroils beauty and beast in a labyrinth of betrayal, arson, mutilation of corpses, bedroom switches and poly-graphic magical potions. Theatrical conventions of the period also mandate that Middleton and Rowley provide us with a ribald scenario whose theme mirrors that of the main story—in this case, involving a physician at a lunatic asylum who fears for his pretty wife's fidelity, little realizing that his loyal helpmeet will prove more true than either protector or seducer.

*Tallgrass Gothic* sets us down in a corner of corn-country America so isolated as to be barely identifiable as the present day. Our bored babe declares her gearhead husband to be sexually repugnant, leading her to seek solace with her white-collar lover. Adultery may not be as ab-

horrent in 2009 as in 1622, but her decision to seduce one of the garage mechanics into killing the obstructive spouse is still criminal. The comic subplot has been excised entirely, what small humor now remaining supplied by our heroine's BFF—a beer-swilling, dope-smoking, pill-popping, possibly lesbian hoyden who swallows swords for amusement.

For the parallels between the two plays to be fully appreciated, both productions, ideally, would be commensurate in quality. Unfortunately, this ambitious project forces Caffeine Theatre to cast many roles with actors fresh out of the classroom—granted, classrooms affiliated with highly advanced training programs—but lending a decidedly academic ambience to the proceedings nevertheless. This is most evident in *The Changeling*, where otherwise capable young thespians struggle with their unfamiliar language. Where Restoration-era ruffs and laces are cobbled onto, rather than integrated with, contemporary fashions (listen closely and you'll recognize the pop songs arranged for chamber orchestra). And where clowns doggedly recite their bawdy witticisms with no apparent understanding of why they are supposed to be funny.

What rescues *The Changeling* from becoming a mere curtain-raiser, however, is company member Jeremy van Meter's performance as the sinister DeFlores. Amid scene-study apprentices adept only at connecting with their own characters' emotional progress, his deft phrasing keeps us apprised, not only of our "honest villain's" disposition, but how it fits into the dramatic scheme as a whole, commanding our attention even when he shares the stage with a nightie-clad vixen bleeding profusely from a fatal wound to the groin. And while the contrast in technique and experience is less pronounced in the more accessible *Tallgrass Gothic*—which features impressive work by Kaitlin Byrd as the neglected sidekick and Eric Schnitger as the rejected hubby—the action is still anchored by his presence in the role of the intense outsider determined to win the lady whose fair face con-

ceals a corrupt soul.

That *Tallgrass Gothic* emerges as the centerpiece in Caffeine's double-header should come as no surprise, however. The popular appeal of Jacobean tragedy (unless repackaged in modern decor) has been diluted over three centuries, while Marnich is rapidly taking the spotlight as one of our most talented new playwrights. If you haven't encountered her writing before, this is your chance to rectify that oversight.

THEATER REVIEW

# Pacific Overtures

**Playwright:** Stephen Sondheim  
(music and lyrics),  
John Weidman (book),  
additional material by Hugh Wheeler  
**At:** Porchlight Music Theatre Chicago  
at Theatre Building Chicago,  
1225 W. Belmont  
**Phone:** 773-327-5252; \$37  
**Runs through:** April 23

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Toward the end of the first act of Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*, an unexpected death dominates a scene that should be one of the musical's emotional lynchpins. But in Porchlight's production of the intricate musical, it contains only a wisp of truth. Instead of immersing the audience in anguish, the scene highlights the fundamental shortcoming of director L. Walter Stearn's ambitious staging.

Up until the death, Stearns has the cast playing it broad. A Japanese lord grimaces like Pop-eye when told there are foreign ships in Japanese waters. Two men scamper across the stage in a comic cardboard boat modeled after Fred Flintstone's foot-powered car. An elderly woman engages in a bit of tottering slapstick when she proclaims must be carried as her family flees the intruders. From all-powerful Shogun to lowly fisherman, emotions are depicted by mask-like

mugging (or actual masks, when Commodore Matthew Perry and other Western characters take the stage.) As the death scene commences with a keening Samurai, it feels like just another instance of exaggerated emoting.

Similar problems plague the whole production as Stearns unsuccessfully veers from the ridiculous to the sublime in depicting Japan's forced transition from isolated, floating kingdom to international trade hub. Using a pentatonic Asian scale, Sondheim etches the seismic changes that reshaped Japan after 1853, when Perry employed gun-barrel diplomacy in order to force the country to trade with the West. The story is rich, intricate and lovely, provocative history painted with complex and delicate strokes by Sondheim (music and lyrics) and John Weidman (book) with additional material by Hugh Wheeler. For Japan, the overpowering, abrupt influx of Western mores into a culture untouched by outsiders for centuries is both tragic and empowering.

Or it should be, anyway.

A series of aggressively unnatural-looking wigs also diminishes the possibility of the audience becoming fully immersed in *Pacific Overtures*. Yes, we understand that realistic hairpieces can be prohibitively expensive. But that doesn't change the fact that the aesthetics of helmet-hair sculptures distract mightily from the story at hand. It's difficult to take a climactic sword fight seriously when the Samurai involved are upstaged by glaringly fake follicles. Kimonos that evoke the linen closet of bargain hotel chain don't help the problematic visuals either.

It's not until the final musical number, "Next," that *Pacific Overtures* fully resonates. Wig-free and in contemporary black dance clothes, the cast delivers a thrilling, kinetic epilogue about the influences of modern-day Japan on the West and vice versa. If Stearns could instill the rest of the production with the spirit of that final scene, he'd have a winner here. As it is, *Pacific Overtures* remains unaffected.



# hedwig and the angry inch

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text by John Cameron Mitchell  
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A Perfect Wedding.

## THEATER REVIEW

## A Perfect Wedding

Playwright: Charles Mee

At: Circle Theatre,

7300 W. Madison, Forest Park

Phone: 708-771-0700; \$20-\$24

Runs through: May 3

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Charles Mee can be an infuriating playwright—especially for his first-time audiences.

But you can also see Mee as a loopy master of deconstructionist play writing that spoofs standard theatrical conventions.

Take, for instance, Mee's 2004 comedy *A Perfect Wedding*, now in its Midwest premiere at Circle Theatre. It's essentially a farce involving a nervous bride and groom, their two mismatched families, two grave diggers and a quartet of ultra-trendy gay wedding planners who could be cousins to the gurus from Bravo TV's canceled reality series *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

But instead of behaving like real people, Mee's characters are more apt to wander on and spout philosophical platitudes about relationships, marriage and death (and sing or dance with the slightest prod). Instead of keeping the subtext unspoken, characters come right out and say things that normal people would self-censor (for example, characters deliberately cite nature's pull in the woods to justify their partner-switching passions).

*A Perfect Wedding* fits the bill for adventurous audiences looking for something different. This unconventional piece is also timely since it is largely friendly—if slightly ambivalent—toward the message that all kinds of people should be

allowed to form long-lasting marriages (including gays and lesbians).

But if you only want a standard comedy, *A Perfect Wedding* will be a trying and aggravating experience.

Circle Theatre at least tempers any dissatisfaction with the play itself by putting on a largely diverting production. The large cast of 20 (!) scampers around with purpose and dedication under Joanie Schultz's competent direction, seemingly having a fun time throwing "mud" (damp scads of fabric) at each other and executing a complex Bollywood film dance number near the end.

Yet it's clear that some cast members are more adept at illustrating Mee's wacky style than others.

The weaker links are in the main roles of the bride and groom and the bride's parents (and their respective male lovers).

But don't fret, the more compelling actors in smaller roles barge on frequently to whip the audience into titters of laughter.

Though they play blatant gay stereotypes, John Taflan, Shawn Quinlan, Jackson Evans and Chris Daley steal every scene they're in as the wedding planners. More diverting work comes from Toni Lynice Fountain and D'wayne Taylor as the bickering groom's parents.

Costume designer Jessica Kuehnau keeps pace with Mee's multicultural costume demands, while Bob Knuth's panels of lace and white cut-out trees frame everything nicely.

*A Perfect Wedding* is sure to divide audiences due to Mee's unconventional approach and self-aware dialogue. Circle's production of *A Perfect Wedding* may not win over too many Mee converts, but it is definitely a good, solid effort.

## THEATER REVIEW

## Wings

Playwright: Jeffrey Lunden and Arthur Perlman

At: Apple Tree Theatre,

1850 Green Bay, Highland Park

Phone: 847-432-4335; \$38-\$48

Runs through: April 5

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

A stroke patient is an unusual subject for a musical but a surprisingly good one in *Wings*, a successful adaptation of Arthur Kopit's equally surprising play of the same title. If someone you love has had to learn again how to speak, eat or walk as a result of illness or injury, and if you helped feed him or her, or helped with speech or physical therapy, then you can relate to *Wings* and its central figure, Emily.

In her youth, Emily was an aviation daredevil who walked on wings in barn-storming exhibits with her family. Now, after suffering a stroke in late middle age, Emily is nearly helpless in a wheelchair as *Wings* opens, unable to speak, unable to remember words, fighting back from paralysis and aphasia. "Am I awake? Am I alive? Am I alone?" are her first thoughts. Even as she recovers, she finds herself repeatedly tapping her often-inexpressible internal sense memories and feelings—flying in her own inner space—in a journey that becomes joyously liberating in a surprising conclusion.

With just five performers and a four-piece orchestra (woodwinds, cello, flute and percussion), *Wings* retains the tremendous intimacy and directness of the Kopit play to which it is

so faithful. Composer Jeffrey Lunden and lyricist Arthur Perlman convey the disassociative nature of aphasia—think of a jumble of jigsaw puzzle pieces—through music that frequently is dissonant, angular and truncated at first. As Emily recovers her communications skills and the puzzle pieces fall back into place, the musical phrases gradually lengthen into melodies and the harmonies sweeten.

*Wings* is meant to be simply staged and director Mark E. Lococo respects the need. There's neither elaborate scenery and lighting nor extravagant musical staging. The four supporting players wheel a few items of furniture and hospital equipment on and off as needed, with a painted floor and a few gauzy curtains the main items in Tim Morrison's scenery (lit by Gina Patterson). Musical Director Doug Peck—Chicago's go-to man for small-scale musicals requiring taste—is up to his usual standards, weaving together the chamber music quartet of nearly classical instrumentation and the quintet of voices, both sung and spoken.

Veteran musical leading lady Mary Ernster is a natural for the role of Emily, which fits her like a glove. It's almost too easy to empathize with her, as well as with her caring therapist so capably played by Anne Sheridan Smith. Completing the ensemble as various other medical professionals and patients are John B. Leen, Rob Lindley and Heather Townsend, all of whom are warm and strong performers. As another aphasia patient who used to make cheesecake, Lindley has the pleasure of selling the most traditional "showbiz" number in *Wings* and makes the most of it.

## 7th Annual Windy City Gay Idol launches March 29

Windy City Gay Idol kicks off its seventh year featuring the best amateur gay and lesbian singers in the Chicago area. What started as a fun promotion with Windy City Media Group has become the largest and most highly anticipated annual event in Chicago's LGBT community. And you don't have to sing to be a part of it. Just come and vote!

The first event will be at Star Gaze bar in Andersonville Sunday, March 29.

Windy City Gay Idol 2009 includes preliminary competitions one night only at many different bar locations, where as many as 20 participants sing at each venue. All contestants compete for the chance to advance to the semifinals Saturday, May 30, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted. Results from every preliminary, semifinal and final event come from audience votes. Votes from friends, family and audience members hopefully land them on the stage at the Finals Saturday, June 13, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Premium sponsors this year are Miller Lite and Sky Vodka. Other co-sponsors include: American Airlines, Broadway in Chicago, Creaoke, Ravinia, and WCPT AM & FM: Chicago's Progressive Talk and Windy City Media Group.

With more than \$5,000 in cash and prizes, the road to the seventh anniversary of the Gay Idol finals is not easy. All contestants will face local celebrity judges that include cabaret and rock singers, local DJs, theatrical stars and others familiar with the performance arena.

Each winner collecting the most votes at a preliminary bar will win \$100 cash. Two winners from each bar will advance to the semifinals. Audience members at each bar also have the chance to win great prizes, such as Miller merchandise, Broadway in Chicago and Ravinia tickets, and much more.

The finals include big prizes for audience members as well as the top three contestants, including weekend stays at downtown hotels, travel packages and theater tickets to top Chicago theaters and concert venues.

The winner of the entire event at Sidetrack will walk with \$1,000 in cash, airline tickets from American Airlines and much more, not to mention the coveted title of Windy City Gay Idol 2009. The event is open to all amateur singers age 21 and above, regardless of sexual orientation. There is a \$10 signup fee for singers, and a \$5 fee for audience members at all preliminary events. There is a \$10 cover at the semifinals and finals at Sidetrack.

## The 2009 schedule:

—Sunday, March 29: Star Gaze, 5419 N. Clark, 6 p.m. sign up, 7 p.m. start.

—Tuesday, April 7: Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark, 9 p.m. sign up, 10 p.m. start.

—Thursday, April 16: Spin, 800 W. Belmont, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Tuesday, April 21: Crew, 4804 N. Broadway, 7 p.m. sign up, 8 p.m. start.

—Wed., April 29: Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Wed., May 20: @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark, 8 p.m. sign up, 9 p.m. start.

—Thursday, May 28: (Wild card) Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted, 9 p.m. door opens, 10 p.m. start. Invited guests plus open slots for new singers.

—Saturday, May 30: (Semifinals) Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 2 p.m. door opens, 4 p.m. start.

—Saturday, June 13: (Finals) Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, 2 p.m. door, 4 p.m. start/

Additional bars may be added. Check [www.windycitymediagroup.com](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com) for details and rules.

For more information or photos, contact Cynthia Holmes at 773-871-7610, ext. 301, or [cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com). Complete rules and regulations at [www.WindyCityMedia-Group.com](http://www.WindyCityMedia-Group.com).



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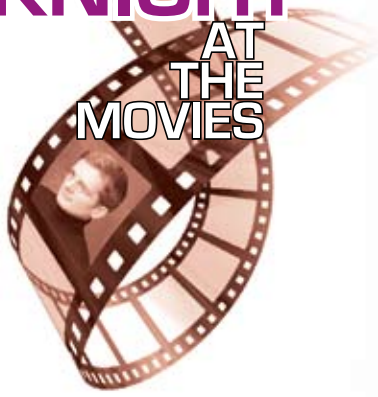


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# KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



## Valentino; I Love You, Man; Film note

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

A peek inside an unimaginably lavish lifestyle, a rare insider's look at the world of *haute couture*, a thoughtful depiction of a fashion doyenne *par excellence*, and—overriding everything else—an enduring, endearing portrait of two men entering their fifth decade as business partners and as a couple. That's **Valentino: The Last Emperor**, the impressive documentary portrait by Vanity Fair special correspondent Matt Tyrnauer, who makes his directorial debut with this marvelously entertaining film.

The openly gay Tyrnauer's movie follows Italian fashion designer Valentino and his longtime business and life partner, Giancarlo Giammetti, as they work in tandem on what turned out to be the designer's last two collections. Given unprecedented access to the elusive Valentino, Tyrnauer and his team capture a genius at work sketching and kvetching (constantly) while his partner handles the details of Valentino's business and runway shows. Ensnared in a lavish bubble, traveling by private Lear jet with their six pugs between a chateau in Paris, an Italian villa in Rome, a ski chalet in Gstaad and a luxurious yacht, the sumptuousness of their lifestyle provides the movie with enough visual eye candy for a dozen films. But the settings are simply stage sets for an intimate look at a couple who have longed learned to take the trappings for granted. The focus is on creating a shared vision of something beautiful (and in Valentino's clothes, beauty becomes tangible).

As we follow Valentino through his last two years of designing and Giammetti working behind the scenes—from the spring/summer collection of 2006 to the star-studded 45th-anniversary celebration that capped his career—we get a lovely sense of the dynamics of the relationship between the two (which dates back to 1960). Valentino, it quickly becomes obvious, is used to having the final say on everything, and these two micromanagers gently disagree on many things. At one point Giammetti mutters to the camera under his breath, "It gets worse every day," but then when Valentino receives the Legion of Honor he finishes his speech with a very moving—and public—tribute to Giammetti. Tyrnauer cuts back and forth between the two men, each in tears and it's not just a very moving moment: It's the emotional peak of the film.

The film then moves on to the opulent July 2007 celebration festivities and focuses on whether Valentino will continue to design. At 75 with his contract expiring, the bottom line has changed—couture is no longer as in demand and few can afford \$100,000 hand-stitched dresses. It's the ancillary products, with their lucrative licensing fees, that have long become more important to the bottom line. When Karl Lagerfeld, walking hand in hand with Valentino during the celebration, gazes upon a retrospective of Valentino gowns and comments, "Compared to us,

the rest are making rugs," you realize he's right and a sadness momentarily hangs over the celebration.

But unlike the icy Lagerfeld, who didn't give off much in his insider documentary, Lagerfeld Confidential (a fascinating counterpart to this movie), Tyrnauer pulls off the delightful feat of humanizing the designer and his counterpart. Artistic genius and business acumen aside, in bringing the relationship of the two men front and center Valentino: The Last Emperor has given the world—and LGBT audiences in particular—a beautifully observed portrait of a gay power couple that is as entertaining as it is illuminating.

**I Love You, Man**—the likeable comedy that stars pudgy, sweet-faced Paul Rudd and the easygoing Jason Segel—continues the new, enlightened direction that "guy" movies have been taking as of late. These movies have now passed the "dude don't touch me faggot" phase and have instead taken to heart the importance of male bonding without all the dreary sexual hang-ups. I love that the term "bromance" has entered the lexicon, and here is yet another comedy that says it's okay for straight guys to get cozy and intimate with one another. And they won't lose an ounce of testosterone if they admit to liking a hardcore chick flick like *Chocolat*. That's just one of the funny gags in *I Love You, Man*, a movie that's sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

Everyone in the movie—a batch of crude talkers—is a master/mistress of snark (especially the ladies, who trash talk like grown-up versions of the Heathers). Everyone that is except Rudd, who does his best to be hip but can't quite join the cynical parade of humanity around him. Andy Samberg plays his gay younger brother, a gym trainer with a thing for straight guys and the dad, played by J.K. Simmons, affirms that Andy's his best friend; the gay character is again shown as an example for the straight ones to look up to and emulate (another trend that's quite heartening to see).

The plot revolves around Rudd, who only has women friends, trying to find a best man for his impending nuptials. By chance he meets up with Segel, and the two improbably become best buds. (Their bonding over the arena-rock group Rush is hilarious.) With all the characters spewing snark left and right, the movie really brightens considerably when Segel enters the picture. He's a big, shambling guy—one of those guys who's completely comfortable in his own skin; he's so laid-back and cool you can't help but like him.

Though the comedy bits in the movie are rather hit-or-miss (relying too heavily on Rudd's unflinching ability to get laughs with his nerdish line readings), the relationship between the two friends is enough to put *I Love You, Man* in the plus column.

### Film note:

On Saturday, March 27, at 7 p.m., Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N. Clark, will present the Chicago premiere of **State Legislature**, the latest film from master documentarian Frederick Wiseman. Wiseman, who has chronicled everything from department stores to high schools—and first came to prominence 40 years ago with his exposure of horrid conditions in a mental hospital in Titicut Follies—presents his often-lengthy films (this one's three and a half hours) without narration or comment. (Think C-SPAN with much more judicious cutting.) *State Legislature* sounds like classic Wiseman—a bird's-eye view of Idaho lawmakers at work on a myriad of social issues. [www.chicagofilmmakers.org](http://www.chicagofilmmakers.org)

Check out my archived reviews at [www.windycitytimes.com](http://www.windycitytimes.com) or [www.knightatthemovies.com](http://www.knightatthemovies.com). Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.

## Matt Tyrnauer: Valentino's Day

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

As a special correspondent for Vanity Fair, Matt Tyrnauer has profiled a lot of big names. But he struck gold when he profiled the Italian fashion design legend Valentino. Not only did the elusive designer open up about his private life to Tyrnauer; after the article was published, he took the unprecedented step of allowing Tyrnauer and his cameras to follow him and his business and life partner, Giancarlo Giammetti, around for the last two years before his retirement.

The resulting film, *Valentino: The Last Emperor* (opening this Friday at the Landmark Century), is an enthralling glimpse into a private world of sumptuous luxury, a behind-the-scenes look at couture fashion, and most endearingly, a warm portrait of the decades-long relationship of Valentino and Giancarlo—a true gay power couple.

**Windy City Times: You must be on cloud nine after the huge boost that Oprah gave to the movie—I mean she did three detailed segments on it—wow.**

Matt Tyrnauer: I think we were all blown away; Valentino, Giancarlo and I were very surprised and we were honored. It was almost an out-of-body experience. [Laughs] The power of Oprah—we were flooded with so many e-mails the next day that our system did, of course, crash a few times. [Laughs]

**WCT: Ironically, with all this Prop 8 stuff, their relationship almost seems an argument against gay marriage. Like who needs it when you can build something like what they have? Did they ever discuss the topic with you?**

MT: It's coming up in all the press we're doing and I'm glad it is and I'm glad that you just



Matt Tyrnauer.

asked that question because I agree with you. Let me first say that Proposition 8 is toxic and it must be repealed. People should be able to do whatever they want and everyone should be protected equally under the law. However, this movie does show—because it examines what could be called a proto gay marriage that two people—in this case, two men—can really go—especially in the city of the Vatican [Laughs] in a country that is 99 percent Catholic—for 50+ years without being married. They are not really interested in the concept of gay marriage. It's not that they reject it; it's just that it's not in their worldview. I mean, look at the generation—they came of age in the 50s, they're Italian [and] Giancarlo and Valentino lived with their mothers until the mothers died.

Filmmaker Matt Tyrnauer will be in Chicago March 27-28 for a Q&A after the 7 p.m. show at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark.

Please read the entire interview with Matt Tyrnauer at [www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com](http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com).



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## WHAT TO DO?

**Wednesday, Mar. 25**

**Book Release Party** The Adventures of Cancer Bitch by S.L. Wisenberg 7:30 p.m. Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N. Clark 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

**Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce** Mix n Mingle networking event 6 - 9 p.m. \$20/\$30 Wild Pug 4810 N. Broadway 773-303-0167 www.glchamber.org/

**Sharon Bridgforth**, Lambda Award winning RedBone Press author, will read from her performance text, Delta Dandi on Black American experience through a soul's journey through the middle passage, the Jim Crow south and jooking blues. \$5. Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. 773-472-6469 x 237 www.centeronhalsted.org.

**Thursday, Mar. 26**

**Asians and Friends junior league** (Gay Yakuza) hosts Mahjong (Learn and play!) before Wild Pug's Gaysian evening, 7-9 p.m. Wild Pug, 4810 N. Broadway

**Defending the Human Rights of LGBT and HIV-Positive Immigrants & Refugees conference** 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. two venues: March 26- Northwestern University Law School, 375 East Chicago Avenue; March 27- McDermott, Will & Emery, 227 W. Monroe Street, 44th Floor, www.immigrantjustice.org/lgbtimmigrationconference

**LGBT Aging Service Network** fundraising event, introduction to services. No cover, silent auction, snacks, and cash bar. RSVP to prelaunclgbt@gmail.com. Info 773-354-5855

**Marc Bamuthi Joseph: The Break/s: A Mixtape for the Stage**, hip-hop with humor, candor and poetic storytelling about black authenticity, identity, sex, ego, class. \$25. Through March 28. Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave. www.mcachicago.org

**Sharon Bridgforth**, Lambda Award winning RedBone Press, author of Delta Dandi on Black American experience through a soul's journey through the middle passage, and the Jim Crow south, will join E. Patrick Johnson at OUT at CHM, Chicago History Museum, Speaking Out Down south 5:30 p.m.

www.chicagohistory.org

**Friday, Mar. 27**

**6th Annual Chicago Modernism Show** and Sale through March 29. Sixty national and international dealers present all 20th Century design movements. Preview tix \$80 advance/\$100 door. Admission \$10 for all weekend. 1422 N. Kingsbury. www.chicagomodernism.net or 954-563-6747

**SNL's Julia Sweeney** in The Jill and Julia Show with Jill Sobule \$25 - \$30, 7:30 p.m. Lakeshore Theater 3175 N. Broadway www.lakeshoretheater.com

**Illinois Gay Rodeo Association**, Dollar Dance fundraiser, two step lessons 8 p.m. with Stina; DJ Michael B spins country and our Dollar Dance (walk up to anyone and ask "Would you like to dance for a dollar?") 9 p.m. Charlie's Chicago, 3726 N Broadway St 773-871-8887

**Milwaukee Gay Arts Center**, Kevin Thornton: Sex, Dreams, & Self Control, fusion of music, spoken word, and standup comedy, original alternative folk rock score \$10. 8 p.m. www.sex-dreamsandsselfcontrol.com

**Rachel Shteir author Gypsy: The Art of the Tease** A true icon Gypsy Rose Lee was the first and the only stripper to become a household name. 7:30 p.m. Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N. Clark 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

**Sentimental Journey: the Music of Doris Day** starring Laura Freeman with musical director Beckie Menzie. Celebration of Doris Day's music on Day's 87th birthday. \$15. Davenport's Piano Bar, 1383 Milwaukee Ave. 773-278-183, www.laurafreemansings.com

**Threat Level**, bimonthly queer short film series: Nine.5, Keith Wilson; Artist Statement, Daniel Barrow; New Bike, Stephanie Yang Hey Fox; Tessa Siddle; Hannah Free (trailer), Tracy Baim; So-Called Living, Cyra Polizzi; Rosebud, Ricky Kelley & Scott Ross; Self Control, Latham Zearfoss 7:30 p.m. \$5-10 sliding scale. Elegant Mr. Gallery, 1355 N. Milwaukee 3rd FLR

**Saturday, Mar. 28**

**Book Release party**, open mic fundraiser with Josefina Lopez, author of Real Women Have Curves, the movie that introduced America Ferrera. Celebrate the debut of her first novel, Hungry Woman in Paris, sponsored by Josefina Lopez, Mercury Cafe and Amigas Latinas 7 p.m. Mercury Cafe 1505 W Chicago Ave

**Center on Halsted Women's Advisory Council** on Community and Cultural Programs first organizational meeting. 1 p.m. Info or RSVP: Tom Ballentine, Director of Community and Cultural Programs, tballentine@centeronhalsted.org or 73-472-6469 X245 www.centeronhalsted.org

**Center on Halsted** free LGBT Health Care planning seminar on powers of attorney, hospital rights and health care surrogacy protections for LGBTs. 1 - 2:30 p.m. Center on Halsted, at 3656 N. Halsted. www.centeronhalsted.org

**Every Woman, On the Edge of Each Others Battles: The Vision of Audre Lorde** 3 - 6 p.m. Film Forum panel, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 5710 W. Midway Park, Chicago. 773-378-8111

**Lincoln Park Lagooners** Candlelight Bowl 8:30 p.m. www.lincolnparklagooners.org/candle

**Qrew Chicago** new name launch party. New name, logo and colors will be revealed. 7-10 p.m. \$30/\$10. Wild Pug Broadway at Lawrence. www.qrewchicago.org

**WSGA Dance Party** at Fabian & Tom's in Bartlett 8 p.m. \$5 guests/free members. www.wsga.com

**Sunday, Mar. 29**

**Jon-Henri Damski award** to Dean Ogren 2 - 4 p.m. complimentary light brunch from David Sanborn of the Polo Cafe and Catering, in Bridgeport. Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St

**Chicago Shakespeare Theater's Twelfth Night** Courtyard Theater through June 7. www.chicagosakes.com

**Windy City Gay Idol** kick off, Chicago's biggest GLBT contest, eight rounds in eight bars over coming weeks, over \$5,000 in cash and prizes. 7 p.m. \$5 cover. Singers sign up 6 p.m. \$10 fee. Star Gaze 5419 N. Clark. www.windycitymediagroup.com/Idol2009.html

**Tuesday, Mar. 31**

**Chicago 2016 public meeting** on Chicago's bid, the status of the process, plans to involve Chicago's diverse communities. Q&A follows presentation. Hosts: Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago, City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on LGBT Issues 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted St. Info: Bill Greaves 312-744-7911

**OUTmusic Queer Open Mic**. Mostly Acoustic queer music last Tuesday of every month. Urban Café, 1467 W. Irving Park 773-327-9427 www.urbancafechicago.com

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**Rent**, starring original Broadway cast members Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp, through April 12. Ford Center. www.ticketmaster.com

**Wednesday, Apr. 1**

**Dinah Shore Week** 2009 Palm Springs www.dinahshoreweekend.com

**Women on Wednesdays (WOW)** is a monthly social networking night for women to meet other women in a relaxed and welcoming bar-alternative atmosphere. Interactive, fun, delicious night with out lesbian Chef Jenny Urban. 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. \$15. BYOB. Urban Café, 1467 W. Irving Park Rd. www.urbancafechicago.com

**Thursday, Apr. 2**

**AVER, GLBT veterans** monthly meeting at the Center on Halsted. 3656 N. Halsted. 773-472-6469

**The Alliance, gay/straight sketch group**, debut show, Gayrilla Warfare, runs every Thursday 7:30 p.m. through April. \$10. Mary's Attic 5400 N. Clark; www.thealliancecomedy.wordpress.com.

**Thursday, March 26****SOUTHERN COMFORT**

E. Patrick Johnson will provide a gay Black male perspective of the South at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark.

Photo by Yasmin Nair

**Saturday, March 28****ROWIN' ON THE RIVER**

LGBTQ rowing club **Qrew Chicago** will reveal its new name and logo at a party at the Wild Pug, 4810 N. Broadway.

Photo courtesy of Qrew Chicago

See our online calendar: [www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar](http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/calendar)

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The junior board of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago held a kick-off party for "Make a Statement: Design for the Cure" at Me&Ro, 61 E. Oak, on March 12 with a champagne reception. The organizers' signature event is slated for Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at the River East Art Center, 435 E. Illinois. Anyone purchasing tickets before March 31 will receive a discounted price of \$50 and \$125 VIP admission for this fashion show and cocktail party. For more information, visit [www.aidschicago.org](http://www.aidschicago.org). Photos and text by Jerry Nunn

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# BILLY MASTERS

"The hardest part was trying to do it doggie-style."—Twilight hunk Robert Pattinson talks about filming a gay sex scene for Little Ashes, where he plays the lover of artist Salvador Dali. Just relax and breathe. It gets easier (or so I've been told).



Will Todd Herzog's (above) relationship with Spencer Duham survive?

I should cut my niece some slack—she's a typical teenager. Still, I was surprised when I noted on her Facebook page that she just became a fan of Chris Brown. This was well after the Rihanna situation went public. One of her cousins responded, "That's gross—he's a woman beater". Then a friend retorted, "Get over it". Apparently my niece is not alone. A survey of 200 Boston area 12-19-year-olds (my niece's demographic) shows 51 percent saying the "incident" was Chris Brown's fault, but 46 percent still blame Rihanna. Forty-four percent added that fighting is just a normal part of any relationship. I'm starting to fear my family could someday end up the subject of a made-for-Lifetime movie!

Sexy Eric Nies managed an amazing feat—he saved a dog's life AND showed off his naked body. Eric saw a dog chase some geese onto a partially frozen lake in Bear Mountain, NY. The dog fell through the thin ice and was drowning, so Eric made a dash to save the pup—but not

before taking off ALL of his clothes. As a former lifeguard, I commend Nies for knowing that if he ended up in the water, having clothes on would not only weigh him down, but also make him colder. Still, why did he take off his undies? If, of course, he was wearing any. Pics have surfaced of Eric gingerly making his way across the ice doggie-style (I'm noting a trend here). He ultimately entered the frigid water, swam out to the dog, helped it onto the ice, and then hoisted himself up and out. Alas, the photos that have surfaced thus far have his naughty bits censored ... although that may be a blessing. Shrinkage, you know. If they turn up, you know I'll post 'em. To compensate, I will run an earlier nude photo of Eric from Bruce Weber's book "Bear Pond." That pic shows that, when it comes to shrinkage, Eric doesn't have a square to spare. Either way, you can see Nies from the knees up on BillyMasters.com.

Don't look for Heather Locklear to join the new version of Melrose Place. She's already nixed the plan because the powers-that-be didn't have any idea how to bring back her character of Amanda. The producers might want to talk to another former cast member, Lisa Rinna—she's full of ideas. Mrs. Hamlin has launched an all-out campaign to get cast on the new show, including walking up and down the real-life Melrose Place (steps away from Billy Masters West) wearing a placard that said, "Honk for Lisa Rinna on the new 'Melrose Place'". It was the quietest day in years! She's also posing nude for "Playboy" this summer. Put those two ideas together, and she might be onto something—walking nude on Melrose Place would probably get some horny men honking!

Spencer on "Survivor: Tocantins" has a secret—at least on the show. When another contestant asked him about the type of woman he likes, he changed the subject deftly. In a video confessional, he said, "My tribemates are not aware that I'm gay. I haven't told them. Only because in the culture that we live in, there's nothing really to gain, or not much to gain from people finding out that you are gay. I don't like hiding it though." One thing that we can reveal is who he's dating—"Survivor: China" winner Todd Herzog. Todd doesn't want to say too much because, "he's still on the show, but we met about a month before his season began. We're doing the 'take it slow' thing which I find to be really nice. Usually guys are in search for one thing, but it's refreshing to see that Spencer is different." Different enough to win? Time will tell...

Many of my fans are watching Real World: Brooklyn solely to catch a flash of sexy Scott Herman's sizzling flesh. We just got some sexy stills from Halloween when he dressed up like he should be working at Caesars Palace. He called it a Spartan outfit. I dunno about all that, but it sure was sparse on material—and big on flesh. Enough flesh to land on BillyMasters.com. And he's got a rock-hard codpiece...but that's another story.

Continuing this trend of hot naked guys, our "Ask Billy" question this week comes from Robert in San Diego: "I just saw 'Watchmen' and couldn't believe I was looking at a blue penis for two hours. Was that really Billy Crudup? And did you catch Patrick Wilson's ass? HAWT"

I have never missed an opportunity to ogle a naked Patrick Wilson, especially after seeing him on Broadway in The Full Monty. Since his wife is expecting their second baby, I suppose he wouldn't mind being called a hot daddy ... with a helluva hot ass. As to Billy Crudup, you realize that he's been at least partially CGI-generated, right? That said, from other pics we have of his penis, I'm willing to believe that blue appendage

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Leave it to a true queen to upstage the fashionable first lady. The Queen of Soul, **Aretha Franklin**, did just that at the presidential inauguration as she wore the crown with a ribbon that quickly became "the hat." The legend, who is afraid to fly, cancelled her March 28 concert at Roberts Stadium in Evansville, Ind. She is due to return to the area with a date at The Venue, 777 Casino Center, Hammond, Ind., on April 3.

Franklin is one of the many artists to be featured in the Legacy Recordings collection From the Heart. Here, love songs from the Detroit diva's catalog are pieced together, including the obvious choices like the upbeat 1985 club chart-topper "Freeway of Love" and the Lauryn Hill-produced "A Rose Is Still a Rose." Other highlights assembled on From the Heart are a spin on Nat King Cole's "Unforgettable," her pairing with James Brown on "Gimme Your Love" and the heavenly "Until You Say You Love Me." Having been in the industry for six decades, it is impossible to capture all of the Queen's greatest moments, but this compilation is a step in the right direction.

Beyonce ruffled Franklin's feathers at 2008 Grammy's when the "If I Were a Boy" superstar referred to Tina Turner as the queen. Since then, Beyonce has irked **Etta James** by singing her signature song "At Last" during the Obamas' first dance at the Neighborhood Ball. Ms. Knowles, wise up: You portrayed James in the film Cadillac Records, so you should know what a fiery woman this Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame inductee is.

Don't worry: Beyonce's voice does not have the depth to properly take on this classic; however, Cyndi Lauper and Christina Aguilera both have done worthy remakes of "At Last." James' style can be heard in the younger generations. Big-voiced Grammy winners Aguilera and Adele cite her as a major influence.

James also has a collection with the From the Heart series, which features her covering favorites like "I'll Be Seeing You" and "My Funny Valentine" with her trademark vocal delivery. On this set, Miss Peaches blends R&B with jazz and blues, making these songs her own. James will be performing at the House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, Thursday, April 30. Cadillac Records, which loosely chronicles the rise of the R&B

scene in Chicago, is out now on DVD.

Having seen **The Cliks** three times in concert, it is no wonder this group had been hand-picked by Cyndi Lauper and The Cult to open for their respective tours. The Canadian outfit will be returning to Chicago Thursday, April 9, with a show at Subterranean, 2011 W. North. Here, the trio will be previewing material from the forthcoming album *Dirty King*. The Cliks's previous hits, "Oh Yeah" and "Complicated," were staples on Logo and a rocking interpretation of

Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River" is a live favorite.

On top of appearing on the tattoo-themed reality show *L.A. Ink*, trans-frontman Lucas Silveria joins Lauper for a duet of the '80s jam "Money Changes Everything," which is available on iTunes as part *The True Colors Live 2008 EP*. Silveria also makes a cameo in Lauper's energetic video for "Into the Nightlife." The Cliks's second outing, *Dirty King*, is due out June 23 on Tommy Boy's LGBT imprint Silver Label.

The recent remake of Wes Craven's **The Last House on the Left** superbly uses music in the trailer and in the movie. The teaser features a minimalist version of Gun N Roses' '80s classic "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Taken by Trees. Singer Victoria Bergsman is formerly of the Swedish outfit The Concretes and chimes in on Peter, Bjorn and John's crossover hit "Young Folks." Forget Sheryl Crow's remake of "Sweet Child O' Mine" from the Adam Sandler comedy *Big Daddy*. The Taken by Trees version is eerie and compliments this violent thriller's storyline perfectly. Just as the film's end credits are about to roll, I immediately recognized Death in Vegas's "Dirge." This gem features one of my favorites Dot Allison on vocals. Throughout the entire song, Allison coos "la-la-la," as the music develops from a simple strumming of a guitar into a frenzy filled with basslines, drums and electronic elements. Allison would later team with the duo on the celestial "Diving Horses." A variety of vocalists have worked with Death in Vegas, including Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval, Oasis's Liam Gallagher and Iggy Pop. "Dirge" originally appeared on the 1999 opus *The Contino Sessions* and again on the retrospective *Milk It*. Films *D.E.B.S.* and *Lost in Translation* feature Death in Vegas's chill out masterpiece "Girls." A soundtrack to *The Last House on the Left* is due out April 14.

On Saturday, April 4, Bluegrass The American Legion Music Hall, 1030 Central, Evanston, will host **The First Annual Chicago Bluegrass Festival—Chapter 1**. This showcase offers an all ages, family-oriented performance of Chicago-area musicians. The line-up consists of Tangleweed, Whiskey Hollow Bluegrass Band, Henhouse Prowlers, Chicago Bluegrass Band and James Creek Road. See [www.chicagobluegrass.com](http://www.chicagobluegrass.com).



The Cliks.

## Entertainment news

The world premiere of **Pedro**—a film about the life of former *Real World* resident **Pedro Zamora**—will run on MTV April 1. Written by Dustin Lance Black, the Oscar winning screenwriter of *Milk*, the film portrays the true story of Pedro Zamora, an openly gay, Cuban-American, HIV-positive AIDS educator who became famous for his activism, testimony before Congress and the TV show.

Singer/actress LeAnn Rimes has been taking heat for reportedly having an affair with actor Eddie Cibrian, but **Rimes' husband, Dean Sheremet, has allegedly been in an affair himself—with another man**. According to *TheDirty.com*, witnesses have seen Sheremet making out with and performing fellatio on make-up artist Neil Robertson. In addition, some of Sheremet's friends and family called in to a Michigan radio

show to say he's not into women, according to *Softpedia.com*.

## Natasha Richardson dies

Natasha Richardson, an actress whose career highlights included the film *Nell* and a Tony-winning performance for her role in *Cabaret*, died March 18 after suffering a head injury during a beginners' ski lesson. She was 45.

Richardson was married to actor Liam Neeson (of the films *Kinsey* and *Taken*). She leaves behind two sons: Micheal, 13, and Daniel, 12. Her mother is acting veteran Vanessa Redgrave and her sister is actress Joely Richardson (of TV's *Nip/Tuck*). Her father, the director Tony Richardson, was bisexual and died of AIDS in 1991, according to the *New York Times*.

Family and friends said their final goodbyes March 22 at St. Peter's Church in Millbrook, N.Y., *People.com* reported.

## BILLY from page 20



Did you see Billy Crudup in *Watchmen*? "Blue" your mind, huh?

was real. You can check it out from the comfort of your own home, since we've obtained not only some hi-res pics, but also video footage! Head to [BillyMasters.com](http://BillyMasters.com).

When Crudup has a blue penis and Nies has blue balls, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Apropos of mentioning Bobby Clark, this weekend I'm off to San Francisco for the annual GayVN Awards. The best and brightest in gay porn will be on hand—perhaps even my hand! If there's any dish, I will be sure to write all about it on [www.BillyMasters.com](http://www.BillyMasters.com), the only choice for the discriminating gossip connoisseur. But I don't discriminate when it comes to answering your letters. Submit your queries to [Billy@BillyMasters.com](mailto:Billy@BillyMasters.com) and I promise to get back to you before Crudup and Nies team up for a special episode of "Blue's Clues"! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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## SPORTS/RECREATION

## CMSA Hall of Fame March 28

The Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA) annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place Saturday, March 28, at Spyners, 4623 N. Western, at 6:30 p.m.

This year's inductees are:

—**Mike McHale:** Former Open Sunday softball league commissioner and Chicago MSA board member;

—**Early Quintana:** Bowler for almost three decades, former secretary/treasurer of league, Chicago Pride Invitation tournaments, International Gay Bowling Organization board, director for bowling for Gay Games VII; and

—**Nancy "Mac" MacKenzie:** Women's softball, league commissioner, North American Gay Amateur Athletic Association rep and sports director for Gay Games VII.

See [www.ChicagoMSA.org](http://www.ChicagoMSA.org) or e-mail [HallofFame@chicagomsa.org](mailto:HallofFame@chicagomsa.org).

## Team Chicago meeting April 4

Team Chicago will meet Saturday, April 4, 5-7 p.m., at Big Chicks, 5024 N. Sheridan.

Scheduled topics for discussion include the 2009 Outgames in Copenhagen, Denmark; the 2010 Gay Games in Cologne, Germany; scholarship availability connected to both events; and helping with the NAGVA Volleyball Tournament, taking place in late May at Navy Pier.

See [www.teamchicago.org](http://www.teamchicago.org).

## Qrew Chicago to unveil new name, logo

LGBTQ rowing team Qrew Chicago is unveiling its new name, logo and colors at its New Name Launch Party Saturday, March 28, 7-10 p.m. in the party room of the Wild Pug, 4810 N. Broadway.

Tickets are \$10-\$30. See [www.qrewchicago.org](http://www.qrewchicago.org).

## Legal analyst to talk Obama and sports

On Wed., April 1, Newberry Library's Wednesday Club will hold a forum entitled "President Obama Changes Sports." The reception will take place at the library, 60 E. Walton, at 5:30 p.m.; the presentation will start at 6:15 p.m.

Lester Munson, a senior writer and legal analyst for ESPN, will discuss the Obama Administration's impact on sports, including a possible Chicago Olympics, taxation of the wealthy, increased power for player unions and gender equity in college sports.

See [www.newberry.org](http://www.newberry.org).

## Chicago 2016 meeting at Circuit

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Chicago and the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues are inviting members of the

LGBT community to a public meeting where information will be shared by representatives of Chicago 2016.

The meeting will take place Tuesday, March 31, 6:30-8 p.m., at Circuit Nightclub, 3641 N. Halsted. For more info, call 312-744-7911.

## Chicago Force season starts April 11

The 2008 Eastern Conference Champion Chicago Force has announced the 2009 schedule, which will start off at the Iowa Crush. The regular season will conclude at home June 13 against the Detroit Demolition.

Home games are played at Holmgren Athletic Complex, 3225 W. Foster, on the campus of North Park University.

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

## AIDS Marathon working with steakhouse

Beginning every Friday in April, the Chicago AIDS Marathon will host the opening month of *Raices Fridays* at Las Tablas Colombian Steakhouse, 2942 N. Lincoln.

The night is a weekly showcase of some of Chicago's finest traditional Afro-Latin music ensembles and will benefit a different charity every month. Proceeds of every Friday night over the course of the month will go to the pre-selected charity, including every sale of Las Tablas' famous sangria.

For more, see [www.lastablas.com](http://www.lastablas.com).

## Net loss



Lesbian tennis player Amelie Mauresmo is shown practicing at Indian Wells, Calif., the site of the BNP Paribas Open tournament that concluded March 22. The Frenchwoman, formerly ranked number one in the world, lost to China's Li Na 7-5, 6-2 in the third round. Photo by Darlene

## CLASSIFIEDS

## ARTISTS

**CALL FOR ARTISTS:** Skokie Art Guild's 48th Annual Art Fair July 11 & 12, 2009. Fine art held on the Village Green Oakton St., downtown Skokie, IL. Prizes and awards. For applications or information, contact: [skokieart@aol.com](mailto:skokieart@aol.com) or 847-677-8163. (4/22/09-8)

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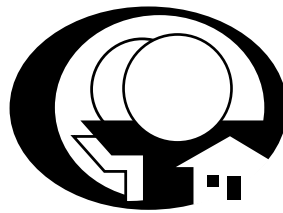
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