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Gays Going Green

BY ANDREW DAVIS

With April being Earth Month and, more specifically, April 22 being Earth Day, Windy City Times is profiling two members of the LGBT community who are doing their part to keep Chicagoland green: Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) of Greater Chicago Commissioner Debra Shore and Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum biologist Doug Taron.

The Shore thing

Shore has been interested in the environment for decades.

"From a young age I enjoyed being in nature," Shore said. "My best friend's family was very active in the outdoors. We went on camping trips and, spurred by my friends, I participated in an Outward Bound [wilderness expedition] program when I was in college—hiking and camping."

That fascination with the environment has propelled her to volunteer to assist in restoring the forest preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River in Cook County for the past 15 years. Shore also is a founding editor of Chicago Wilderness Magazine, and she served on then-President John Stroger's Community Advisory Council on Land Management from 1997 to 2007 and is a founding board member of Friends of the Forest Preserves.

Shore decided to run for a MWRD commissioner's post—and won in 2006, becoming the first lesbian to hold a county position. The staff of nine commissioners is in charge of over 2,000 employees and the district serves 5.1 million

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History Lesson

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Former President Bill Clinton (above) delivered the keynote address at the grand opening of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie. Others who spoke (via video and in person) included President Barack Obama and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com)

Golden years: Couple marks 50 years

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

A couple who met outside of Kresge's dime store in Evanston celebrated their 50th anniversary together April 17. In April 1959, Rob Tackes saw Denis Moreen—at about 9:15 in the evening, he said, under a light rain ("I don't remember that at all," said Moreen)—and crossed the street to talk to him. After a first date that began outside of the music school at Northwestern University, where Moreen was an undergraduate, the couple was in a committed relationship within a month.

"Soon after our first date, we were talking in Rob's 1953 Studebaker and decided to make our relationship more permanent," said Moreen. They moved into an attic apartment in Evanston.

Though they've retired to Palm Springs, Calif.—after decades in San Francisco, where they moved in 1970—the couple has fond memories of the Chicago area, where both grew up. As gay men coming of age in the 1950s, Tackes and Moreen found a supportive, though quiet, community in Evanston. When Tackes approached Moreen, it was "just strictly a chance," he said. "I got the impression there were a lot of gay guys around." Much of Evanston's gay social life at the time revolved around meetings in public parks and in Northwestern's Deering Library.

The two also found community among the creative types who thrived in the urbane environment fomented by Northwestern. Moreen, a pianist, said, "Today's generation doesn't have

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Denis Moreen and Rob Tackes in Evanston in the 1960s.

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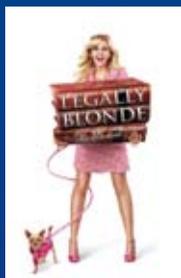
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WINDY CITY TIMES

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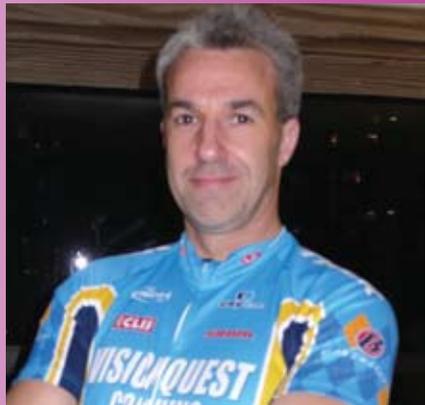


Catina Lowery (left) and John Pennycuff were among the adults supporting LGBTQ youth at the annual Night of Noise event April 17. See page 9.

Photo by Andrew Davis

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Alain Villeneuve (above) is one of the many Chicagoans competing for Outgames gold July 25-Aug. 2 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Find out more on page 22.

Photo courtesy of Alain Villeneuve

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Features include:

- State Sen. Heather Steans' LGBT reception
- National news
- An interview with Ray Simpson of the Village People (right)
- Ian Liberto of 'A Chorus Line'



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Bad taste lingers with Amazon ranking flap

BY TRACY BAIM

One week after Amazon.com claimed a computer "glitch" caused the de-ranking of tens of thousands of books, LGBT authors were cautious about the future of the dominating online company and its book sales. The company claimed it did not target LGBT books specifically, but previous letters to authors and the disproportionate impact on LGBT titles of all kinds, including children's books, meant not many people believed that was the full story behind the problems.

Tech experts were not impressed with Amazon's excuse, either. Columnist Mary Hodder wrote on techcrunch.com: "If all this seems like a problem, and it should, it's because Amazon is using algorithms, which rely on their classification system, with various statistics like 'Sales Rank' to rank products in search results on the site. These algorithms and classifications have points of view. Their point of view, revealed this week, is that 'positive references to sexual orientation—gay' is 'adult' in nature. And that classifications will be used in the algorithms to sort out what is shown and what does or does not get to have 'sales rank,' which then orders items in search results. And we all know search result order can lead to big sales, or invisibility." She then pointed out that a general search for 'homosexuality' instead came up with A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality.

Hodder suggested that Amazon.com, "because of its position in the market and power over both authors and publishers, as well as users and the intellectual marketplace of idea, ought to be doing a complete and public review of their classification and algorithm assumptions. Publishers and authors should push for it, and so should users."

Gay author Christopher Rice, president of the Lambda Literary Foundation board of directors, released this statement: "Lambda Literary Foundation applauds the diligent work of writers, bloggers and activists in calling attention to this deeply distressing turn of events. I have seen my first novel stripped of its sale ranking by this apparent computer glitch so I join other writers who are baffled to the point of anger. I take great solace in the quick mobilization of our community in response to this apparent marginalization of LGBT books; the grassroots power of the Internet has been placed on glorious display for all to see. Over the next few days, we at Lambda Literary will be monitoring the situation very closely. Amazon is one of our nation's largest general book retailers. In their commitment to creating and sustaining technological advances in the publishing industry, they have laid claim to the future of book distribution. As such, they have a pressing responsibility to create an unfettered exchange of stories and ideas."

Amazon.com, Inc., which is based in Seattle, has an 80% ranking on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index for 2008 and

2009. The two gaps it has are: The company does not ban discrimination based on gender identity or expression, and it does not provide diversity training on gender identity, nor does it have supportive gender transition guidelines. It does do the following: prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation; provides diversity training covering sexual orientation; offers trans-inclusive insurance coverage for at least

one type of benefit; offers partners health insurance; offers partners dental, vision, COBRA and dependent coverage benefits; offers at least three other "soft" benefits for partners; has employer-supported employee resources group or a firm-wide diversity council; "positively engages with the external community" (HRC's wording); and "exhibits responsible behavior toward the LGBT community; does not engage in action

that would undermine LGBT equality; employers found engaging in such activities will have 15 points removed from their scores."

It remains to be seen if HRC will dock Amazon.com on its 2010 Corporate Equality Index for this latest "glitch" in their dealings with the LGBT community. Will Amazon.com's HRC "ranking" suffer because of the damage done to LGBT rankings on their own site?

Jamaican LGBT group opposes boycott

BY REX WOCKNER

The Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays issued a letter April 12 opposing the U.S.-based boycott of Red Stripe beer, Myers' Rum and tourism to the island nation.

The boycott was launched by GLBT grassroots activists in San Francisco on March 28 and spread to New York City on April 15.

The U.S. activists were responding to a new U.S. State Department report detailing the island's gravely homophobic atmosphere, which includes, among much else, music by several internationally known dancehall artists that promotes anti-gay violence and murder.

J-FLAG Programs Manager Jason McFarlane took particular exception to the boycott of Red Stripe beer, saying the brewer has "unequivocally distanced itself from the hostility and violence typical of Jamaican music towards members of the LGBT community."

"In April 2008, Red Stripe took the brave and principled stance to cease sponsorship of music festivals that promoted hate and intolerance, including that against members of the LGBT community," McFarlane said. "The naming of Red Stripe, therefore, as a target of this boycott is extremely damaging to the cause of LGBT activists in Jamaica. ... The boycott call has now left us not only with our persistent day to day challenges but with a need to engage Red Stripe and attempt damage control as a result of actions that we did not take."

McFarlane chastised the boycott organizers for not getting approval from J-FLAG, Jamaica's leading gay organization, before launching the action.

"We believe that any overseas entity or organization seeking to agitate for change in a context with which it has only passing familiarity should first do its homework to ensure that it does not do harm ... to the cause of the local community whose interest it seeks to defend," he said.

Boycott organizers responded that J-FLAG doesn't speak for ordinary gay Jamaicans, and accused the group of being aligned with elements in the U.S. that sometimes have criticized the work of grassroots and street activists.

"For years, we have heard that the status quo will make the situation better in Jamaica," said Wayne Besen, an organizer of the New York arm of the boycott. "Yet, the most recent human

rights reports read like pages from a horror novel. ... For their own safety, J-FLAG members have no choice but to come out publicly against all boycotts—as their former leader Gareth Henry (has stated). We fully understand this—but we also believe that unless there is economic pressure from the outside, nothing will change in Jamaica."

"Human Rights Watch, IGLHRC (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission) and MCC (Metropolitan Community Churches) are working to undermine this boycott for political reasons," Besen charged. "They want to unveil their own Jamaica campaign in September—which could include a boycott."

Besen quoted former J-FLAG Co-chair Gareth Henry, who fled to Canada last year, as saying: "J-FLAG can't be seen to publicly support a boycott ... but the gays, lesbians and queers on the ground are supportive of a boycott. ... We have to hit people where it's going to hurt, where they'll feel it. In the Jamaican context talk is cheap."

Scott Long, head of Human Rights Watch's LGBT Rights Division, called the notion that HRW, IGLHRC and MCC are in cahoots with J-FLAG to undermine the boycott "nonsense."

"J-FLAG, with which we've worked since 2004, asked folks to forward what they wrote—that's all," he said.

And, on April 16, Henry attacked the boycott organizers for using words he wrote last year "to support your boycott issues of this year."

"I was part of the Canada-based attempts at a boycott last year," Henry said. "We learned numerous lessons from that attempt, not least among which is the fact that the lives of LGBT persons in Jamaica are at risk. I have therefore changed my strategy and will do nothing without the inclusion of my colleagues in Jamaica. ... This call for a boycott of Jamaica is outrageous and counter productive. The attack on Red Stripe is appalling and unacceptable."

Besen then responded: "The J-FLAG/MCC/Human Rights Watch/IGLHRC status quo has failed. ... If Scott Long had expended as much time on ending homophobia in Jamaica as he has attacking our campaign, there would have been no need to launch this effort in the first place. (I)f people don't like our boycott, they don't have to participate. There are millions of people, however, who don't want to spend their hard-earned money in the 'most homophobic place on earth.'"

International gay human-rights activists have routinely named Jamaica as one of the most homophobic nations in the world, and several dancehall stars have been blocked from performing in other countries because of lyrics that promote the killing of homosexuals.

The Department of State's "2008 Human Rights Report: Jamaica" says: "The law prohibits 'acts of gross indecency' (generally interpreted as any kind of physical intimacy) between men, in public or in private, which are punishable by 10 years in prison. ... J-FLAG continued to report human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, mob attacks, stabbings, harassment of homosexual patients by hospital and prison staff, and targeted shootings of homosexuals. Police often did not investigate such incidents."

The report continues: "J-FLAG members also suffered attacks on their property, home intrusions as people demanded to know the number of persons and beds in a home, and in one instance, a fire bombing at the home of two men that left one of them with burns on more than 60 percent of his body. In addition homosexuals faced death and arson threats, with some of these directed at the J-FLAG offices. J-FLAG did not publicize its location due to such threats, and its officials reported feeling unsafe having meetings with clients at the organization's office. ... Human rights NGOs and government entities agreed that brutality against homosexuals, primarily by private citizens, was widespread in the community."

To read the full gay section of the report, go to tinyurl.com/dhdmvc and search for the word "gay."

San Francisco activists launched the boycott March 28 at Harvey Milk Plaza at the intersection of Market and Castro streets. They dumped Red Stripe and Myers' Rum into the street.

City Supervisor Bevan Dufty attended the kickoff and promised to get the two Jamaican products out of all San Francisco gay bars within a month. Several bars, restaurants and community leaders announced support for the campaign.

For detailed information, visit boycottjamaica.org. J-FLAG's Web site is www.jflag.org.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Read the national roundup and more world news online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Among the subjects being covered this week are:

- A report that Iraqi executions of LGBT individuals have begun;
- The launch of the new gay Republican organization GOProud;
- Alan Keyes vs. Dick Cheney: What's going on; and
- How the D.C. marriage vote may to Congressional action

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Scott Hall: Downstate gay is new alderman

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Among the members of the LGBT community who prevailed during the April 7 elections around Illinois was Scott Hall, 37—who actually won some time earlier when he found out he was running unopposed for the 1st Ward Alderman seat in downstate Jacksonville (located in Morgan County). Windy City Times talked with Hall about Jacksonville and his plans once he is sworn in April 27.

Windy City Times: Could you tell me about Jacksonville? What is the LGBT presence there like?

Scott Hall: Jacksonville is about 30 miles west of Springfield. The presence of the LGBT community is very scarce. I would say there's a lot more than what people realize, but it's a very closeted city. Growing up in a rural area 30 miles from here, I understand the mindset; you're under a lot of pressure in a highly religious community, so as you're growing up the expectations are that you graduate high school, you find a wife, you have kids—you live your life that way. So those who are homosexual tend to stay in the closet.

But when my partner [Joel Tinsley] and I moved here about two and a half years ago, we were a little concerned about what life would be like for us; there was no question we were going to be "out"—that's how we live. But we did discuss how we would approach negative things; however, much to our surprise, Jacksonville has welcomed us and we're very active in the community. He's the choir director in our church, and I've been very involved in civic activities since I've been here. Not one time have we had a comment that we've heard. Jacksonville has been very open to us.



Scott Hall. Photo courtesy of Hall

We have older friends who tell stories about how things weren't as easy when they were growing up. But Joel and I haven't had one single problem since moving here.

WCT: Some people feel that Downstate cities are very conservative.

SH: Right. We were actually here a year and half before we discovered that one of the churches here in town is open and affirming (a United Church of Christ), so that's been a haven for us.

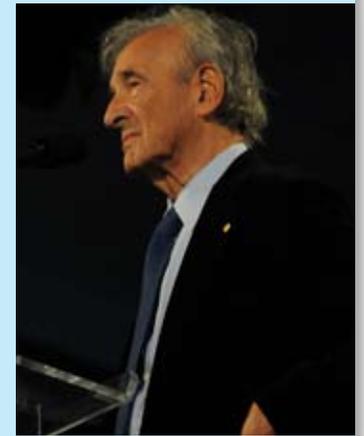
Jacksonville has always been a progressive city. Going back to slavery times, Jacksonville had a big population of abolitionists, so it's always had a progressive mindset. There were a few stops in the Underground Railroad here. So it's progressive, but it's still rural so there is a conservative mindset, too—but it hasn't reared its head at us.

WCT: What was your platform when you ran?

SH: My biggest platform was active leadership, and active leadership is being out in the community, expending your resources. I felt we had an alderman who had the job just because it was a status symbol or something like that.

Read the entire interview with Scott Hall online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

In remembrance



The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center held its grand opening at 9603 Woods, Skokie, with a April 19 ceremony featuring a keynote address by former President Bill Clinton. Special remarks were also given by Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel (lower right photo), U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, foreign dignitaries, Holocaust survivors and community leaders. (President Barack Obama, director Steven Spielberg and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton made videotaped presentations.) April 19 was selected because it is the anniversary of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising—the largest revolt by Jews against their Nazi captors—and the beginning of Holocaust Remembrance Week. Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); see more online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

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Mary Morten: Putting the 'active' in 'activist'

BY PAUL MARINKOVICH

Mary F. Morten is a lifelong activist. She is president of Morten Group, a Chicago-based consulting firm that specializes in social change through skills development, public policy and advocacy, and has dedicated her entire career to the betterment of women, people of color and the LGBT community.

"My primary influence was my mother, who was involved in local politics as well as a lot of community organizations," said Morten on her passion for social advocacy. "She always took me with her to all the meetings, so from a very early age I started listening to people discuss what they believed and why they believed a certain way. I just grew up in a family where you were very much part of the problem or you were part of the solution and we all had something we should be doing to give back."

For Morten, that message came in loud and clear. She was the first African-American president of the National Organization for Women's Chicago chapter, served as Mayor Richard M. Daley's connection to the LGBT community as the director of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, and was the host of Chicago's Lesbian Radio. Morten has received a myriad of acknowledgements including her induction into the 1996 Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.

With about 20 years experience under her belt, it seems fair to say that Morten knows a thing or two about working in the non-profit management world. One of her recent projects, with fellow business partner Laura McAlpine, is called the Executive Retreat for Women. This two-day workshop is designed to help women, who are in positions of leadership, work on their management skills while maintaining time to reflect.



Mary Morten.

"Laura and I realized that we could not find any opportunity for us to sit down and develop the business plans and develop goals for our business and to also focus on self care," said Morten. "We built a model that we used ourselves, so that we had time to work at our business, make goals and monitor them and to also do some self care. Women still are the primary care takers in their families and women who are in positions of leadership are really bombarded with a variety of challenges that often go unaddressed. We wanted to put something together for these women executive leaders that focused on work-life balance and gave women the opportunity to do self development for skill building, but also to do self care."

Morten is also currently working on a documentary inspired by the research of Cathy Cohen's work with the Black Youth Project, at the University of Chicago. The film is titled, "The New Blackness" and explores the attitudes, actions, and decisions of African-American youth.

"This is the first time that this kind of comprehensive report had ever been produced," said Morten. "I really felt that it would be fascinating to bring some stories about Black youth to life, to put a face on the real stories of Black

youth. So often, we speak for youth—we don't hear in their own words what they have to say and Black youth are often not portrayed well in the media. I thought it was certainly important to present the full range of experiences. Not just one or two experiences, but let's look at the full range of experiences across the continuum of what it is like to be a Black youth in this country. I should mention in the documentary, I do look at queer youth—I look at all youth. I have included queer youth as well because it is very important in terms of presenting the small picture."

Morten said she never looks at what she has accomplished; instead she finds it much more meaningful to look at what has to be done and to find her role in that work. She believes that her main focus will primarily be on her work with the media.

"I think the media is a powerful tool that is an under tapped resource. Anytime we can talk about issues, whether we're doing an interview on the radio, filming a documentary or using radio to make a presentation to policy makers, I think that we tell the story in a much more compelling way and I think many more people will hear it. I think that most of my goals will focus on media work."

Crossroads focuses on LGBTQ youth

BY JOHN FENOGLIO

Community organizers and members of the Crossroads Fund, a local nonprofit organization that supports other community organizations working on issues of social and economic justice in the Chicago area, met at a private residence in Lake View April 19 to discuss the needs of LGBTQ youth. The event included Crossroads Fund board members and panelists from the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Youth Pride Center and Broadway Youth Center.

With much attention as of late focused on the Pride Campus, the proposed public high school catering to Chicago's LGBTQ students, this event was meant to address more immediate business; namely violence.

"Progress for the Pride Campus is still underway, but what we're here to discuss, amongst other things, is how we can create conditions of safety for LGBTQ youth beyond one campus," said Chris Smith, a board member of the Crossroads Fund. "We need to talk about what we can do as activists to support initiatives that aid queer youth."

Forums like this one come at a pressing time, as LGBTQ-related youth violence has seen an increase across the nation, according to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). As reported last week in WCT, earlier this month 11-year old Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover hung himself after being bullied with anti-gay epithets at his Springfield, Mass., school.

A compelling moment was when the panelists honed in on issues of race, class and color affecting LGBTQ young people. "Let's face it: People in low-income communities of color are some of the most disenfranchised members of the LGBTQ community. Kids in those communities are often more isolated when they feel unwanted by their families and peers," said Lisa Alatorre of the Broadway Youth Center.

Shannon Sullivan, executive director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, added, "In our schools and on the streets, the word 'faggot' is being used as a weapon to humiliate and isolate anyone who is different, not just LGBTQ kids." She paused as the other panelists nodded their heads in affirmation. "You may not participate in it, but if you don't stop it when it happens you create the climate for it [violence] to flourish. That is a dangerous climate."

See www.illinoisafeschools.org and www.howardbrown.org for more info on LGBTQ youth resources. For information on the Crossroads Fund, visit www.crossroadsfund.org.

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6:15 p.m. Program

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Following the program, you are invited to About Face Theatre's annual Wonka Ball. Mention the code OUTCHM to receive a \$25 discount on tickets. For details, please visit www.aboutface theatre.com.

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Forum centers on older trans persons

BY YASMIN NAIR

When it comes to the issue of transgender people's health, the general perception might be that surgical-reassignment surgery is the most pressing concern. However, transgender people face a number of issues that are unique to the community, and these have a direct impact on their lives as they age. For instance, they tend to be disproportionately underemployed or unemployed because of societal stigma and/or because many of them may start careers over after transitioning and/or feel compelled to start new lives in new places.

These and other issues were addressed in a daylong trans aging forum April 17 at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. It was led by Loree Cook-Daniels, the founder of Transgender Aging Network and an aging policy analyst, advocate and trainer. The event was designed for social services providers, health care professionals and advocates, and was co-sponsored by FORGE (For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression), an umbrella organization that houses the network. According to Cook-Daniels, who spoke to Windy City Times, trans aging concerns are of special concern since "trans people are so vulnerable to discrimination and curiosity. I really want to train providers to think through what it is they need to know. My feeling is that most professionals want to do the right thing, they want to treat people respectfully even if they don't particularly like their lifestyle—and that means treating people respectfully. But if you don't know how to do that, you can really make mistakes."

The intensive included various group exercises where participants worked together to test their knowledge about transgender community and aging concerns. Statistics were eye-opening. For instance, while 10% of the general public have depression in a given year, that number ranges from 37%-52% among FTM (female-to-male) and MTF (male-to-female) transgender adults. Another specific concern for providers and advocates is the higher risk of HIV infection. Many transgender elders have transitioned relatively later in life, and have often been in marriages where they were not exposed to HIV-prevention education. In addition, given that negotiating disclosure about transition with new partners can in itself be very difficult, issues like condom negotiation can be even more so.

Overall, the intensive appeared to be both enlightening and useful for the participants. Jamie Woods, who identified as an MTF lesbian transgender woman, is a board member of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Community Church. She talked to Windy City Times about class and economic differences in the transgender community, saying that there are "people who can afford surgery versus people like myself who can't afford surgery." Woods pointed out that surgery was not the only health issue for transgender people, and expenses add up: "You need to see a doctor at least once or more often a year. You also need lab work, some doctors insist on that once a year, some more than once a year. They need to check to see that your liver and other organs are working properly, see what your hormone levels are, to see if the dosages need to be adjusted." She said that "in light of the growing number of poor people, we need some form of universal health care and that needs to address LGBT issues."

Kim Rogers, a master's student in the University of Chicago School of Social Services, echoed the concern about access to health care for transgender clients. She said she was there "to increase my knowledge about the transgender community as it's aging ... we need to understand how gender dynamics can be complicated."

Read the entire report about the intensive online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

GOLDEN from cover

any conception of the closeted climate" of the 1950s and 1960s.

Tackes, born and raised on the northwest side of Chicago, echoed Moreen: "Moving to Evanston was like nirvana for me." After working a number of unprofitable and unsatisfying jobs, Tackes raised enough money to purchase a house, which he turned around and re-sold. He obtained his agent's license and found employment in Evanston as a real estate agent.

In the meantime the couple bought a townhouse, where they would live until they left the area. Before they moved in, the landlord advised them, they should sort out the matter of who should keep the house in the event that one of the two got married—and was undoubtedly surprised when the supposed bachelors lived in the house for the ensuing nine years.

After nine years Moreen and Tackes moved to San Francisco. "We left Chicago because of the weather," said Tackes, although they were also drawn to the more open sexual attitudes found in California.

While Tackes pursued real estate in San Francisco, Moreen obtained his doctorate in music from Stanford University. From 1971 until his retirement in 2000, Moreen taught piano at the

College of Notre Dame (now known as Notre Dame de Namur University), where, he said, "it occurred to me that I had to be an open gay person." Particularly in the era of HIV, Moreen felt that he needed to open himself up to his students. "I'm a gay person," he remembered saying to them, "if you need a role model, I'm here."

It was important for Moreen and Tackes on a number of levels: Tackes was diagnosed with HIV in 1981. He became sick at the same time as the economic recession of the early 1980s, he said, and for him "the '80s were a lost decade. I thought I was going to die."

To mitigate the effects of the disease, Tackes cut back on his physical activity considerably, committing less to the ins-and-outs of his business and more to his own health. "Rob has taken his own directives," Moreen said. "That's what keeps him alive. It's not easy, but it's the difference between life and death."

The couple were, indeed, in the bulls'-eye of the era's AIDS crisis: Given his career in the arts, Moreen said, "I lost two-thirds of my colleagues."

The couple's support for one another, however, never wavered; among other things, both credit the open nature of their relationship—that is, their independent sexual relationships



Moreen and Tackes in Palm Springs, Calif., in 2009

with others—as being vital for its longevity. It was established early on that they would be non-monogamous. "We've got two lives going," said Tackes, "our lives separately and our lives together. We basically allow each other to live our own lives."

They established ground rules, which included being honest with one another—and "[i]t was really important that we'd eat dinner together," Moreen said.

For their anniversary, the couple planned a drive together to Cherry Valley, Calif. Afterwards they were to meet a group of friends at the coffee shop.

Affirmed. All Justices concur.

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Join us in saluting Lambda Legal at the Bon Foster Civil Rights Celebration

Thursday, April 23, 2009
Chicago History Museum
5:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Featuring Camilla Taylor, lead architect of Lambda Legal's victory in *Varnum v. Brien* and the first unanimous high court ruling in favor of marriage equality.

Tickets are \$150 each; contact Jeff Souva at jsouva@lambdalegal.org or 312-663-4413.

eco-Andersonville launches

On Earth Day, April 22, Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood launched eco-Andersonville, which features a groundbreaking sustainable business-certification program that is geared specifically towards small, locally owned businesses.

eco-Andersonville-certified businesses adopt sustainable practices in three key impact areas: people, planet and prosperity. In order to be certified, each business must complete required action items within the impact areas. Businesses are rated with one, two, or three stars, which are promoted on decals in their windows.

Consumers can locate certified businesses by looking for the eco-Andersonville decal on businesses' windows, searching the new Andersonville Neighborhood Guide (available in June) or visiting www.eco-andersonville.org.

Attorney in Iowa win speaks April 23

Lambda Legal's annual Bon Foster civil-rights celebration, "Winning the Case for a More Perfect Union," will take place Thursday, April 23, at the Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark, 5:30-9 p.m.

Camilla Taylor, the Lambda Legal attorney who was the chief architect behind the recent Iowa same-sex marriage case *Varnum v. Brien*, will discuss the case.

Tickets are \$150 each. For more information, contact Jeff Souva at jsouva@lambdalegal.org or 312-663-4413, or purchase tickets at www.lambdalegal.org/bonfoster.

Black/White Men Together regional

The Midland Regional, an affiliate of the National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT), will convene in Chicago April 24-26.

The Midland Regional is composed of various chapters of the NABWMT that are located in the Midwest including: BWMT (Black & White Men Together), MACT (Men of All Colors Together), and PACT (People of All Colors Together). Activities will take place at such places as Exchequer Pub, 226 S. Wabash, and Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark.

Tickets are available, including a \$60 weekend pass. Visit www.mactchicago.org; e-mail mactchicago@sbcglobal.net; or call 773-784-7254.

GREEN from cover

people in an area of 872 square miles that encompasses Chicago and 124 suburban communities. And, if those numbers aren't impressive, consider that the treatment plant in Stickney—one of seven owned and operated by MWRD—is the largest wastewater treatment plant in the world.

The MWRD is constantly dealing with issues that could impact millions of individuals, including disinfection of Chicago's waterways. "We need to protect our waterways," Shore said while providing a detailed history of the treatment of various channels and canals. "Because we do not return the treated wastewater back to the lake [because it eventually ends up to the Gulf of Mexico], the district has not been required to treat it to the same level as drinking water. As a result, there's still a fair amount of bacteria in the wastewater we discharge into the rivers and streams.

"The issue of disinfection is that there are human pathogens in the effluent; they don't make fish sick—but there's the potential to make humans sick."

Shore and her partner, Kathleen Gillespie, live in a home in Skokie that "is on the path" to being green. "We did replace our toilets with dual-flush toilets, which are much more efficient. We also have compact fluorescent bulbs, and I have a rain barrel to capture rainwater. We also have a compost heap."

Shore added that people can buy compact fluorescent bulbs ("They are efficient and save money"), do their own energy audits and take public transportation. She suggested using manual items such as can openers and even pencil sharpeners, as opposed to their electrical counterparts. Shore added that people can purchase rain barrels through the district at www.MWRD.org. Her last suggestion is one that has special resonance: "Elect better leaders."

However, when asked about what she thought her biggest accomplishment is so far as a commissioner, Shore actually cited something that has a lot less to do with the environment than it does with family: "[Being part] of the movement to have health benefits to domestic partners of our employees was really important to me."

Find out more about the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago at www.mwrdd.org.

Buggin' out

You know you're in Taron's office at the Lincoln Park museum when you see the sign on his door of a caterpillar and the phrase "Frass hap-



Debra Shore and Doug Taron. Taron's photo courtesy of Lori Geller

pens" below it. ("Frass" is the technical term for insect excrement, and the sign is on the inside part of the door, where the kids can't see it.)

He said that he received "his first butterfly net from the Easter Bunny" at the age of six. "I would out butterfly collecting with my dad in Cape Ann, Mass. It was just part of growing up."

"I was working at the Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewardship Network—and this is something that I and my partner have been involved in," he said. "In the late 1980s, the conservancy started a program called the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network. Immediately, I signed up to be a monitor; I really wanted to be a monitor of Bluff Spring Fen [a 100-acre nature preserve in Elgin]. A year and a half later, the person running the program got very busy and they asked me if I would consider running it, and I did. It was a very successful endeavor—it grew from seven in 1987 and there are about 150 today.

"Because the program experienced so much growth, I started becoming known as somebody who did work with butterflies. Just around the time of my midlife crisis, I met Paul Heltne, who was then the president of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, our parent organization. When they were building the museum, Paul contacted me and asked if I would comment on the design for the new butterfly exhibit. I wasn't happy in my position, and about three weeks after our conversation, I noticed that this museum was being built and I thought that a butterfly conservation exhibit would be very attractive. I called Paul and said, 'My first comment is: Are you staffing?' About a month and a half later, I started working here."

Taron is particularly excited about a new lab at the museum that he hopes will help restore

the populations of rare butterfly species. "We have been doing this butterfly conservation program with a half-dozen species of regionally imperiled butterflies," he said.

The aforementioned prairie restoration also stirs his passion. "Illinois is called the Prairie State, but there's almost no prairie left," said Taron, who has a prairie in his yard at home. "It turns out that 99.93 percent of the prairie has been destroyed in Illinois, so those little remnants we have left are incredibly important. They're part of our national heritage and they're rich repositories of biological diversity. A lot of people in the Midwest are trying to protect, preserve and, in some cases, re-create these ecosystems."

As previously mentioned, Taron's partner is also into conservation. "[He] was the one who actually introduced me to Bluff Spring Fen," Taron said. "It's a joint project that we've done over the years, and it's a very rewarding experience."

When Taron was asked what the public can do to help save the environment, he immediately responded, "Oh, there's a whole bunch of stuff. One of the best things [people] can do is get out and visit some of these natural areas or remnants of native ecosystems, such as Bluff Spring Fen, North Park Village or the Peggy Notebaert Museum. There are all kinds of projects around the city and suburbs that use volunteers; people can go out on a Saturday and volunteer to cut brush, gather seeds and improve the health of these ecosystems."

Find out more about the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, 2430 N. Cannon, at www.naturemuseum.org. Read Doug Taron's blog, Gossamer Tapestry, at gtapestry.blogspot.com.

Read their full profiles online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Wednesday, April 29
7:00 p.m.
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Featuring editor David Peak, contributor Kathie Bergquist and others

Sunday, May 3
4:30 p.m.
Dorothy Allison and Thomas Glave



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Making some 'Noise'



The 13th Annual Day of Silence/Night of Noise Rally took place outside the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph, on April 17. Hundreds of students from Chicago and the suburbs gathered to remember people who have been harassed and bullied because of their sexual orientation. Shannon Sullivan, executive director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance—formed by the merger of the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation (CESO) and Creating Safe Schools for Illinois—told Windy City Times that “it’s the largest student-led action; the alliance supports over 100 high schools in Illinois. Night of Noise provides an opportunity for young people to come together, meet each other and see that there are so many other people who are active on these issues.” Catina Lowery of Lambda Legal, who is a board member of the alliance, said that she joined because “the alliance has [its] stuff together and the nature of the work is so critical. And it’s not just the students’ harassment of others; often, administrators participate or don’t get involved. You wouldn’t see that happen if it was something based on race or disability.” Photos and text by Andrew Davis

Officials address StreetWise crisis

The sight of people selling copies of StreetWise, the country’s oldest newspaper for the homeless, is common throughout Chicago—but those individuals may be gone soon.

Officials connected with the 16-year-old non-profit issued a press release April 14 acknowledging its current financial hardship and “impending closure.” The situation has become so critical that 1st Ward Alderman Manuel Flores introduced a resolution, heard at a city council hearing April 15, to call attention to StreetWise’s crisis.

During the hearing, Flores said the City Council is prepared to support StreetWise by using funds earmarked for workforce development and homeless prevention. StreetWise Editor Suzanne Hanney e-mailed Windy City Times that the newspaper’s staff members “were absolutely heartened by the aldermen’s response.”

Same-sex wedding expo April 26

The Chicago Same Love, Same Rights GLBTQ Wedding Expo will take place Sunday, April 26, 12:30-3 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, 350 W. Mart Center.

This first-ever expo will spotlight over 50 gay-friendly businesses, including wedding coordinators, travel professionals and floral designers.

See www.SameLoveSameRights.com.

Chorus’ musical April 24-25

Chicago Gay Men’s Chorus will stage its new musical comedy, *Bad Habits*, April 24 (8 p.m.) and April 25 (3 p.m. and 8 p.m.), at Athenaeum Theater, 2936 N. Southport.

Tickets are \$25-\$37 each; visit the Athenaeum box office, log on to www.ticketmaster.com or call 312-902-1500.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

“**OLD QUEENS GREW UP WITH VERY LITTLE GAY VISIBILITY IN THE MEDIA** and a heightened sense of gayness being something taboo and even (in society’s eyes) sinful and downright sick. They came of age feeling that gay was something to hide or to ‘get over,’ and often felt more attracted to anonymous, shame-based sex than to open, long-term connections. Those hoary attitudes still pop up, but mainly the younger gays have grown up with queer iconography everywhere they turn and with gay marriage seeming to become an

eventual reality as society progresses. They have healthier views about sex and seem unencumbered by the urgency to hide and slink around in dark alleys. In fact, they generally want long-term relationships more than their predecessors did (though they’ll gladly spice up those relationships with shameless online hookups, albeit often with their partner’s permission—or even inclusion. Compulsive anonymous sex is far from gone, it’s just a little more upfront.) In sum—if you’re still listening—the younger queers may have far less sense of history about them, but probably a far greater chance for happiness, due to mere luck of the draw. Of course these are all gross generalizations, but as an older queen, let me tell you, they are totally true!” — *Village Voice* columnist Michael Musto on his blog, March 30.

“**WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, WE BELIEVE THE ONLY LASTING QUESTION** about today’s events will be why it took us so long. It is a tough question to answer because treating everyone fairly is really a matter of Iowa common sense and Iowa common decency. Today, the Iowa Supreme Court has reaffirmed those Iowa values by ruling that gay and lesbian Iowans have all the same rights and responsibilities of citizenship as any other Iowan.” — *Iowa Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal and Iowa House Speaker Pat Murphy affirming April 3 that they will fight any efforts by legislators to amend the state constitution to override the state Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage. Any proposed amendment would have to pass two different sessions of the Legislature, then go to the voters in 2012, at the earliest. The weddings begin April 24.*

“**THE JAMAICA FORUM FOR LESBIANS, ALL SEXUALS, AND GAYS (J-FLAG) CONTINUED TO REPORT** human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, mob attacks, stabbings, harassment of homosexual patients by hospital and prison staff, and targeted shootings of homosexuals. Police often did not investigate such incidents. ... Human rights NGOs and government entities agreed that brutality against homosexuals, primarily by private citizens, was widespread in the community.” — *From the U.S. State Department’s recent “2008 Human Rights Report: Jamaica.” In response, a group of San Francisco gay activists, including city Supervisor Bevan Dufty, launched a boycott of the nation March 28.*

“**IT (THE MILITARY’S ‘DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL’ GAY BAN) CONTINUES TO BE** the law and any change in the policy would require a change in the law. We will follow the law whatever it is. That dialogue, though, has really not progressed very far at this point in the

administration. I think the president and I feel like we’ve got a lot on our plates right now, and let’s push that one down the road a little bit.” — *U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Fox News, March 29.*

“**I DO WATCH A LOT OF FOX NEWS.** I like Charles Krauthammer and Bill O’Reilly. ... If McCain had asked me to campaign for him, I would have.” — *Mary Tyler Moore to Parade magazine, March 22.*



My question is a very profound one: What the fuck is it to you?

—Kathy Griffin to Prop 8 supporters



“**I’VE GOT A FEW (QUESTIONS) FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORTED PROPOSITION 8.** ... My question is a very profound one: What the fuck is it to you? ... Why are people in this state, when we have so many things on our plate—we have a fiscal disaster going on—why is anyone even wasting their time with this issue? Why does anyone even care if gay people get married? ... You would never in a million years go up to a person of color and say: ‘Well, you know, I hear black people want to get married now. I mean, it’s fine if they live together.’ You would cringe, would you not? ‘I hear the Mexicans want to vote! There goes the neighborhood!’ Right? It would sound absolutely silly. And yet, across the state, people are having dinner conversations saying, ‘Well, do gay people really have the right to get married?’ Yes! A domestic union, domestic partnership is not the same.” — *Comedian Kathy Griffin speaking at an anti-Prop 8 rally in Sacramento, March 30.*

“**ONE DAY, WE RECEIVED A GLOSSY BROCHURE IN THE MAIL FEATURING SMILING PORTRAITS OF BARACK AND HIS WIFE MICHELLE, URGING US TO VOTE FOR PROPOSITION 8.** ... I knew that Obama was on record as being against the amendment. But his statement, ‘I believe that marriage is between a man and a woman,’ was emblazoned at the top of the brochure. At the same time, the ads opposing Proposition 8 seemed to convey an extreme wariness of offending anyone. ‘No matter how you feel about marriage... they began. And there were no glowing couples in the ads, which struck me like running a campaign against school segregation while being afraid to show any minority kids with textbooks in their hands. But the pro-8 ads went straight for the gut, linking marriages like ours with the rape of children and compulsory sex ed for kindergarteners.’ — *Wired magazine writer Steve Silberman in an article published in the May issue of the Buddhist magazine Shambhala Sun.*

“**I WOULDN’T WANT IT (GAY MARRIAGE) TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT** now because that homophobe Antonin Scalia has got too many votes on this current court.” — *U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to 365Gay.com, March 24.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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Summer daze for LGBT students

As the spring semester comes to an end for college students, many young adults will be returning home for summer employment to save money for the upcoming school year. For LGBT students, it may be creating anxiety and thoughts of distress of possibility returning to a homophobic environment. Going from an accepting area to an uncomfortable zone may cause students to become very depressed and think ill rational thoughts. Not being surrounded by your peers, could make for a long summer away from college. LGBT students may find themselves working more hours, being isolated from family and friends as well as not being able to enjoy summer. The emotions attached to homosexuality can cause a student to remain and the fear of controversy with loved ones. Here are some suggestions to help the LGBT students through the summer months:

—**Be yourself (have confidence in who you are as a person):** One of stressors for many LGBT students may be pressure to act a certain way in front of their family because of their views on homosexuality. The thought of having to portray oneself as straight, less feminine or butch can be very uncomfortable but because they want to keep the peace with the family. As a result, they feel obligated to keep up the charade.

—**Keep a journal:** If you have never kept a journal, it might be an excellent time to start one. Writing your thoughts down a regular basis can help LGBT students work through their anxiety and distress. Now, it does not have to be every day, but maybe a one or two times a week, jotting down a couple ideas down can really help students during challenging times.

—**Exercise regularly:** College students schedule can leave very little time for exercising on a regular basis. However, the summer months can be encouragement for LGBT students to start working out in activities such as weight training, walking and jogging. This can help relieve the anxiety and depression that can be caused by not being able to be yourself to family and friends. Now, I am not saying to become a bodybuilder or a fitness model, but rather, maintain a healthy lifestyle both physically and emotionally.

—**Have a supportive network:** In today's society, LGBT students have a vast array of avenues to stay connected to a supportive network such

as emails, cell phones, texting and IM's. Make a plan to talk regular to your friends to provide an emotional safe haven for yourselves. This may be helpful through the challenging times when family is not respecting you as a person as well as unable to keep their boundaries with privacy.

LGBT students have a stressful enough time during the summer with all the responsibilities, obligations and relatives to handle on a continue basis, which can cause anxiety, panic attacks and even depression. If depression is left untreated, it could potentially lead to thoughts of suicide, which is the leading cause of death among gay male, lesbians, bisexual and transsexual youth according to the most recent statistic (National Lambda Foundation, 2000). Therefore, it is vital that LGBT students surround themselves with love, encouragement and trusting during the summer days. Have a strong network can help young adults cope with the time away from college.

Barron Whited is the director of counseling services at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. He earned his degree from Duquesne University in Education in School Counseling and is Certified as a K-12 school counselor. He also holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown in biology and communication.



LETTERS

Gay Jamaica speaks

Dear Friends and Supporters:

We thank our international allies for their continued interest in the state of LGBT affairs in Jamaica. Your support over the years has strengthened our voice and made it possible for us to make progress where we hardly thought it possible. One of the most significant ventures in which our international allies have collaborated with us was the SMM campaign that started in 2004, and which culminated in a local debate about the appropriateness of violence and hate in Jamaican music played in public places. Despite the occasionally homophobic rant by rogue deejays, we have seen a general decline in the level of homophobia coming from new Jamaican artistes and in new music from Jamaica. We have also seen corporate sponsors withdrawing their support from music that promotes violence or discrimination against any group.

It with this in mind that we find it unfortunate that a campaign has been launched calling for the boycott of two Jamaican products, one marketed by a company that unequivocally distanced itself from the hostility and violence typical of Jamaican music towards members of the LGBT community. In April 2008, Red Stripe took the brave and principled stance to cease sponsorship of music festivals that promoted hate and intolerance, including that against members of the LGBT community. The naming of Red Stripe, therefore, as a target of this boycott is extremely damaging to the cause of LGBT activists in Jamaica.

In the global arena in which we operate today, events in one place can and do have repercussions in another. Concomitantly, information about occurrences in different places across the globe is easily accessible everywhere. We believe that any overseas entity or organisation seeking to agitate for change in a context with which it has only passing familiarity should first do its homework to ensure that it does not do harm to its credibility and ultimately to the cause of the local community whose interest it seeks to defend.

It is unfortunate that the organisers of the current campaign to boycott Jamaica have failed in the key area of fact-finding. The misguided targeting of Red Stripe does tremendous damage

to a process of change that we began almost 11 years ago. The boycott call has now left us not only with our persistent day to day challenges but with a need to engage Red Stripe and attempt damage control as a result of actions that we did not take. Against this background, we would like to reiterate that while we appreciate the support given by our international allies, and understand their impatience for change, we who live in Jamaica best know and understand the dynamics of our situation. We also know that change is a slow and tedious process and those engage in it must be patient.

Jamaica's deeply ingrained antipathy towards homosexuality and homosexuals is a social phenomenon that will not be undone by boycott campaigns or government dictate. It requires the painstaking effort of confronting the society and talking to social actors who can bring change in the way society sees LGBT people. We have been doing this through a small but growing group of increasingly aware opinion leaders who are concerned about the damage homophobia does to our society. We need those ears to continue being open to us and we need the relative safety that some of us have been given to speak to them.

It is important that our international allies understand the nature of our struggle and engage us in a respectful way about it. Unless they are willing and able to lead the struggle in the trenches as we have done, it is important that they be guided by us. To do otherwise would be to act in a manner that destroys the space for dialogue that we have managed to create over the past decade and to set back our struggle. It is for this reason that we urge those in the international arena who seek to act in our name and on our behalf to do so not only with the utmost care and responsibility but also with due consideration for our efforts and concerns as members of the local activist community.

*Sincerely,
Jason McFarlane
Programmes Manager
Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals & Gays*

Sex and religion

I am writing this letter in response to Pete Subkoviak of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), who had his view published online in Windy City Times' April 15 issue.

I define myself as a gay practicing Catholic because I believe in the proclamation of the Gospel narratives, the rite of initiation into Christ's death and resurrection, with regular Mass attendance on Sunday and support of ministries to the poor. This I believe is what defines me as Catholic.

The Church is the largest non-governmental organization in the world. It is the laity, not the hierarchy, that has created this, and they understood what membership in Christ implied, no matter the pronouncements coming from on high.

The Catholic approach has always understood what every other ethic had to be measured against: the Lord's central command to love each other and the stranger, his radical option in favor of the powerless over princes; service over empire. The Catholic response to HIV/AIDS dwarfs that of the AIDS Foundation: I make this observation as a matter of fact, and not as a put-down.

Sexually active people need to be given options—saying abstinence doesn't work is just as wrong as saying condoms don't work. When used properly, all approaches can help to bring the numbers of new HIV infections down. Getting the condoms-only message from AFC is just as wrong as getting the abstinence-only message from Bonaventure House. The focus needs to be on research and preventive behavior.

Finally, Mr. Subkoviak said, "And many people do not practice monogamy—whether their partners know it or not." Do you really believe that all LGBT couples operate on such a deceitful level? I practice monogamy, and I believe my lover of 29 years also practices it. Actually, we attribute monogamy to saving our lives.

It is not my intent to challenge any of the good the AFC does for our community, or to minimize the part Mr. Subkoviak plays in that effort. However, I firmly believe our view of HIV/AIDS must not be anchored to a bar mentality.

—Joe B. Murray, Rainbow Sash Movement

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



Photo by Hal Baim

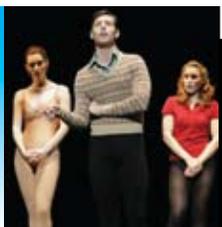
'FREE' TO BE

Kelli Strickland and Ann Hagemann get up close and personal in *Hannah Free*. Read about the film's world premiere on page 17.

THEATER

'Line' of vision.
Page 16.

Photo by Paul Kolnik



MOVIES

Sex, drugs and rock 'n roll.
Page 17.



SPORTS

Sky hopes.
Page 22.

Photo from the Chicago Sky



Measure for Measure

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

All things are go right now for Chicago Opera Theater (COT). After launching a new production of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* last weekend, COT is in the midst of readying two more operas to open next month.

The crush of opera openings is COT's first attempt at trying out a spring festival schedule. This plan allows for out-of-towners and local opera fanatics to see two different operas during two separate weekends.

"Perhaps we haven't pushed it as much as we should," said COT General Director Brian Dickie 10 days prior to opening night. Nervously eyeing the ticket sales, Dickie added that audiences are more willing to buy single tickets nowadays instead of investing as season subscribers.

Still, Dickie is encouraged that COT's move to a spring festival season has attracted some national press attention. (The Wall Street Journal is sending a reviewer for the first time, while other out-of-town journalists are also capitalizing on the two-opera weekends.)

During this busy time, COT is also commemorating two special anniversaries. This year is COT's 35th anniversary in addition to Dickie's 10th anniversary with the company.

For the occasion, COT is doing what it always does best as the Second City's second major opera company (after the Lyric Opera of Chicago). Old classics are looked with a fresh theatrical approach, while lesser-known operas usually passed over by the Lyric get an airing.

For instance, *La Clemenza di Tito* features Music of the Baroque's music director Jane Glover as conductor and Christopher Alden as director. Although local opera audiences still might not forgive Alden for his critically reviled Lyric production of *Rigoletto* in 2000, Alden has gone on to win critical plaudits his recent European work.



La Clemenza di Tito.
Photo by Chicago Opera Theater

"[Alden is] highly regarded in the business and he's much liked," Dickie said. "He isn't always approaching things in the most conventional way, but he does do it with an intellectual honesty and spirit of exploration into the meaning of the work."

Also on tap is Marius Constant, Peter Brook and Jean Claude Carriere's critically acclaimed adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* done by in the 1980s. Bizet's potboiler about a gypsy who is murdered by an ex-lover gets condensed in *La Tragédie de Carmen* to a cast of only four singers. Aside from having an enormous impact in the theater world at its debut, Dickie admitted that this *Carmen*'s compact casting helped his decision to choose it in these difficult economic times.

Rounding out the season is Owen Wingrave, gay composer Benjamin Britten's 1971 penultimate opera dealing with pacifism. Owen Wingrave is receiving its U.S. debut in a new chamber version that debuted at London's Royal Opera House in 2007.

"Because we're a smaller theater and only do five performances of each work, we can afford to do works that will interest just 6,000-8,000 people," Dickie said. "People who are enthused by opera will be enquiring to explore the wider ranges of the repertory that we can provide."

But aside from having an adventurous repertory and approach to staging, COT also has a proven track record of showcasing new talent.

"It's always been a place where up-and-coming young singers have found early opportuni-

ties for their careers," Dickie said. "The secret to attracting them is to get really exciting and authoritative directors and conductors."

Indeed, some recent stars who were first seen locally at COT before going onto bigger success include soprano Danielle de Niese and the contralto Meredith Arwady. (Both starred in COT's inaugural Harris Theatre staging of *The Coronation of Poppea* in 2004.)

Dickie said early music conductor Emmanuelle Haïm's work on COT's *Agrippina* in 2003 helped to get her engaged for the Lyric's *Julius Caesar* in 2007, plus Dickie engaged director Diane Paulus for several seasons before she became artistic director of American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Mass. (and before Paulus directed the current hit revival of *Hair on Broadway*).

After prominent careers with the Canadian Opera Company and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the United Kingdom, Dickie has been more than happy to build upon COT's legacy this past decade.

"It's been a great joy and a great privilege," Dickie said. "It's not without its frustrations, but it's always difficult to put on opera because it's such a complicated and expensive art form."

La Clemenza di Tito continues at 3 p.m. April 26 and 7:30 p.m. April 29 and May 1. Sung in Italian with English surtitles.

La Tragédie de Carmen plays 7:30 p.m. May 2, 5, 13 and 15 and 3 p.m. May 10. Sung in French with English surtitles.

Owen Wingrave plays 7:30 p.m. May 16, 20, 22

and 26 and 3 p.m. May 24. Sung in English with English subtitles.

All Chicago Opera Theater performances are at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph. Tickets are \$30-\$120 each, with two-opera subscriptions available for \$60-\$230. Call 312-704-8414 or 312-334-7777, or visit www.chicagooperatheater.org.

CRITICS' PICS

Horses at the Window, Trap Door, through April 25. Eastern European absurdism doesn't tickle the American mass audience's fancy, but if you do have a taste for it you'll find few better renditions than this contemporary anti-war comedy. Closes soon. JA

Parlour Song, Steep Theater, through May 9. Suburban sprawl can be hell on marriages—in England, as in America—but director Robin Witt and her trio of intensely focused actors lend fresh poignancy to midlife marital angst in this intimate account of eroding affections. MSB

The Tempest, Steppenwolf Theatre, through May 31. Tina Landau's staging of Steppenwolf's first-ever Shakespeare production is a dazzling theatrical marvel. Plus, it features plenty of shirtless male eye candy (if you're into that sort of thing). SCM

Twelfth Night, through June 7. Add 7,000 gallons of H₂O to the mythical isle of Illyria and you get a waterworld worth visiting. But for all its high-tech splashing, director Josie Rourke roots Shakespeare's romance in solid, good-old-fashioned stagecraft and storytelling. Bonus: A sopping, shirtless Scott Jaek in Scene I. CS

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan

World famous Amish built fireplace mantles now being given away free

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By ERIKA ESPRIELLA
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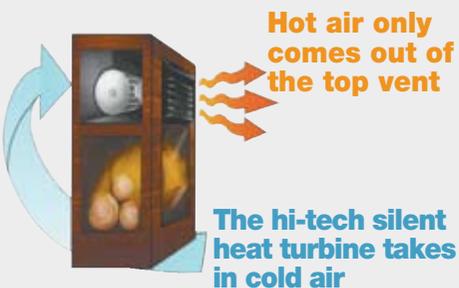
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Ghostwritten. Photo by Peter Wynn Thompson

THEATER REVIEW Ghostwritten

Playwright: Naomi Iizuka

At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn

Phone: 312-443-3800; \$15-\$39

Runs through: May 3

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The close of Ghostwritten has Eurasian Beatrice, carrying her infant child, torn between images of her Vietnamese birth mother and her white American half-sister who has raised her as a daughter. With which race does Beatrice identify? With which culture? Can she choose between them? That her birth mother also is a demon (whose name can only be sung) further complicates matters in this intriguing world premiere work of magic realism.

In her prolific 20-year career, playwright Naomi Iizuka—an Asian Latina who has made her life in the United States—has returned time and

again to issues of racial and cultural identity. For Ghostwritten, Iizuka draws inspiration from the Brothers Grimm fairy tale of Rumpelstiltskin in which a dwarf performs magical feats that save the heroine's life, in exchange for her first-born child. Indeed, the play's opening line is "Once upon a time..." This line and other passages are repeated several times during the play to establish an intentional, ironic sense of *déjà vu* and to indicate the possibly cyclical nature of a tale rich in metaphysical layers as well as primal fears and longings.

Linear in time but fluid in space, Ghostwritten is highly theatrical and is given a marvelous, engaging staging by Lisa Portes, who establishes the perfect balance between mystery, menace and comedy. Her unbeatable cast (even the understudies have depth) is dominated by Chicago veteran Lisa Tejero as the Woman From Vietnam, the play's mesmerizing but threatening antagonist. Emphatically, however, Tejero is the first among equals in a six-person ensemble of matched strength among whom physical work

(dance-like movement and a short, violent fight) are as important as vocal passages.

The play, which I expect will be widely produced, is not without several imperfections. The most notable is that two of the three men are ciphers, merely present as for purposes of plot mechanics. Chad (played by Dieterich Gray)—Beatrice's boyfriend—is the most obviously so, but even the meatier role of Beatrice's Uncle Martin (Dan Waller) is more of a tangent than a necessity to the play. The extended subplot in which he is involved can be reduced, thereby shortening and more tightly focusing the play in a healthy way. The fact is, Ghostwritten is a women's story and the men—even the demon's Vietnamese servant Linh (Arthur Acuna)—are

quite secondary albeit well-played by this company (completed by Tiffany Villarin as Bea and Kim Martin-Cotten as her sister).

Linda Buchanan's towering and deep-hued set on a thrust stage, Keith Parham's mottled lighting, Rachel Anne Healy's witty costumes (love the Woodsman's attire, echoing Bert Lahr's classic vaudeville outfit) and Andre J. Pluess' sometimes-eerie music and sound add substantially to the magic side of this magic realism.

SPOTLIGHT



While touring with the queer New Wave rock group Waves on Waves, Kevin Thornton began piecing together an autobiographical show about his fundamentalist religious upbringing. **Sex, Dreams & Self Control!** is the resulting late-night show, featuring an acoustic guitar score, some stand-up comedy and lots of divulging by Thornton about his sexual past (and present, we'll guess). Sex, Dreams & Self Control! plays 11:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays until May 9 at the BoHo Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood. Tickets are \$10; see www.sexdreamsandselfcontrol.com. Photo of Thornton by Chris Wage

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THEATER REVIEW

Hedwig and the Angry Inch

Playwright: Book by John Cameron Mitchell, music and lyrics by Stephen Trask
At: American Theatre Company, 1909 W. Byron
Phone: 773-409-4125; \$35-\$40
Runs through: May 17

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Here's a paradox: The American Theatre Company space is unrecognizable, but audience members at Hedwig and the Angry Inch may get a sense of *déjà vu* as Nick Garrison opens the show with the hard-rocking "Tear Me Down."

This is Garrison's seventh production of Hedwig. His previous outings in the title role include a 2001 Chicago stint that was a critical hit and, reportedly, a financial bomb. As a substitute for Yeast Nation (originally slated as part of ATC's season), Hedwig is a baffling choice. Why bring back the same actor to re-do something that didn't do well the first time around?

Retread or no, Garrison is superb as Hedwig, that slip of an East German girly-boy who grows up to become an internationally ignored glamazon pop superstar. Drawing on such icons as David Bowie, Iggy Pop, Tina Turner and the emcee in Cabaret, Garrison creates his own force-of-nature, one-of-a-kind Miss Midnight Checkout Queen. He's every inch Hedwig, razor-tongued raconteur, chanteuse, accidental transgendered MTF and broken-hearted survivor.

Director PJ Paparelli is also no stranger to John Cameron Mitchell's text and Stephen Trask's music and lyrics. Like most of his other directorial endeavors at ATC (Speech and Debate, The People's Temple), he's done this show before. And that speaks to the context that Hedwig is mired in. The production is fine, but glaringly highlights the fact that Paparelli continues to



Hedwig and the Angry Inch. Photo by Michael Brosilow

rely on recycling his past work and to select shows that aren't exactly conducive to nurturing an ensemble.

When Speech and Debate opened a year ago, we wrote, "There's but a single adult character in the cast, one played by the sole ATC company member in the cast. As engaging as the piece is, one hopes it isn't a harbinger of the new direction Paparelli has promised for ATC."

Alas, it was a harbinger. As most people know by now, all but four of ATC's company members walked out several weeks ago, citing artistic and administrative differences with Paparelli. In the unlikely event they return for Hedwig, they might not recognize the space they literally built from the ground up. Not only has Paparelli lost three-quarters of his ensemble; he's altered the very look of their former theater. Instead of entering on Byron for Hedwig, Paparelli has the audience following signs down an alley to "The American Underground" (a cheesy invocation of the Velvet Underground) and entering through a side door. The interior is plastered with tat-

tered rock posters and seats have been ripped up and replaced with mismatched, fraying sofas. Hedwig's band—dressed like drugstore Halloween-costume versions of Sid Vicious—lurks and scowls while warming up.

Hedwig's funny/tragic story unspools between gorgeously realized musical numbers. Born in East Germany, he escapes by undergoing a botched sex-change operation (hence the angry inch) and marrying an American G.I. Stranded in a Junction City Kansas trailer park after the G.I. leaves him, Hedwig's search for love and completion evokes the power of Greek myth (Plato's Symposium, specifically), the entrepreneurial can-do spirit that defines the American Dream ("I scraped by on odd jobs. Mostly the jobs they call blow.") and trashy tabloid scandal.

Garrison is wickedly funny, bantering with the audience in the most politically incorrect terms imaginable, launching power ballads into the stratosphere and ultimately, stripping down to near nakedness and absolute vulnerability.

Not so successful is the very miscast Sadieh Rifai (one of ATC's remaining ensemble members) as Yitzhak, a former drag queen who gave up everything to tour with Hedwig. In her big solo ("Gigolo"), Rifai struggles to stay on pitch while her anthemic finale in "Midnight Radio" is louder than it is tuneful. Even more problematic than the troubled vocals? She's not believable in a crucial, transformative scene that is supposed to showcase Yitzhak's extraordinary drag persona. Note to the costume designer: Drag queens in full performance regalia don't generally don shapeless black work shirts over their sequined minis.

If you missed Garrison's Hedwig in 2001, he's absolutely worth the price of a ticket. But as fine as he is, there's no denying the fact that the production is essentially a rerun.

Man competes in bars for About Face

Benjamin Sprunger is wearing a jock strap in public and even lube-wrestling—to help About Face Theatre with its financial crisis.

Has Anybody Seen My Dignity? (aka April: The Month I Became a Whore) will see Sprunger competing in every Chicago gay bar contest (with a cash prize) there is, with any and all of that money being directly donated to the theatre. Should he win all the contests, he will win \$1,300 for About Face.

Sprunger has already been in the Basket Competition at Hydrate (April 11) and the Underwear Competition at Jackhammer (April 18).

He's set to appear in the Hot Jock Strap competition at Crew, 4804 N. Broadway (April 24); the Wet Boxers contest at Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted (April 30); and the Lube Wrestling event at Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted (May 1).

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A Chorus Line. Photo by Paul Kolnik

THEATER REVIEWS

A Chorus Line

Authors: James Kirkwood, Nicholas Dante, Marvin Hamlisch and Edward Kleban

At: Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph
Phone: 312-902-1400; \$18-\$85
Runs through May 3

Snow White and the Seven Drag Queens

Playwright: Tony Lewis
At: MidTangent Productions at Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted
Phone: 773-835-0420 or hydratechicago.com; \$10
Runs through May 9

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

For anyone revisiting A Chorus Line via its national tour, the experience will be a mixture of happiness and critical tut-tuting.

There is a warm nostalgia that many in the gay community have for this groundbreaking 1975 musical. Originally directed and choreographed by the late Michael Bennett (who passed away from AIDS-related causes in 1987), A Chorus Line had no bones about depicting the lives of Broadway dancers—including the openly gay ones.

But more than that, the show speaks to everyone who has strived to be loved and noticed. Marvin Hamlisch and Edward Kleban's score combined with James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante's script can still emotionally sucker-punch you to tears.

A Chorus Line also amazingly anticipated our

current national craze for elimination reality TV shows (although the auditioning Broadway gypsies here are supremely more talented than today's TV contestants).

But where this tour can't compete is with our own A Chorus Line memories. Since director Bob Avian and choreographer Baayork Lee have so painstakingly recreated Bennett's original staging, you tend to compare and contrast the current cast with ones of the past.

Unfortunately for me, this cast as a whole didn't live up to the show's 20th-anniversary tour. No doubt some of the immediacy was lost by playing in a bigger theater, compared to a cozier space like the former Shubert Theatre.

Yet these comparisons are really unfair, since the polished cast executes the numbers fairly flawlessly (although the opening-night vocals in "At the Ballet" were a mess, while the cast could enunciate its lyrics more crisply).

But if you have never seen A Chorus Line live, by all means go right now! The horrid 1985 film version captures none of the vivacity or depth of

the stage original. Plus, you won't see A Chorus Line embodied this well for a long time.

One jarring reminder of how much A Chorus Line is a 1970s period piece is how the character of Paul is so ashamed of his drag queen past. For a more modern celebratory look at drag, head north to Hydrate to see MidTangent Productions' Snow White and the Seven Drag Queens.

The show is essentially an hour-long sketch routine. Parodied and lip-synched hits by the likes of RuPaul, Britney Spears, Cher and Fergie are inserted à la Mamma Mia! into a Chicago-centric retelling of the fairy tale by director/playwright Tony Lewis.

It all could have gone on another 30 minutes, if only the cast was up to the campy ironic skills of Emily Rogers' blissfully air-headed Snow White and Madame X's über-bitchy witch of Millicent Duville. (Only Omicha House's Grumpy Hangover, Jennings Wynn's Happy Rosebud and David Leff's Bashful Bubbles came close.)

Snow White is nothing more than a fun drag romp, so go and have a gay old time.

THEATER REVIEW

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Playwright: adapted by Jay Presson Allen from the novel by Muriel Spark
At: Signal Ensemble at the Chopin, 1543 W. Division
Phone: 773-347-1350; \$15-\$20
Runs through: May 16

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Adolescent crushes are a troublesome but unavoidable rite-of-passage, not unlike measles. Heroic mentors, with their mysterious hints of a world beyond our own mundane experience, ignite our imaginations, compelling us to deeds essayed in hopes of bringing us closer to their exalted status—and how can there be any harm in youngsters striving for excellence, whatever their motive? It's only when the objects of adoration are, themselves, enamored of the scenario imposed on them that they become a hazard to their immediate acquaintances.

The title character in Muriel Spark's novel, adapted for the stage by Jay Presson Allen, is just such a contradiction. The freethinking instructor at the Marcia Blaine Women's Academy enlivens her pupils' lessons with anecdotes of personal adventure tailor-made for appeal to hormone-driven girlish fancies—her lost sweetheart, slain in the recent great war, for example, or her speculative alliances with two of her male colleagues. Over time, it becomes apparent that Miss Brodie's first loyalty is to her own egotistical ideologies, other people serving as mere props to be manipulated into sharing in her

casuistic machinations. But despite the forces of common sense marshaled against her, her spurned admirers—from the neglected disciple hungry for attention to the ex-lover wise enough to see through the game—know that they will never be free of her influence.

Allen's play is usually staged as a star vehicle for a patrician leading lady, making director Ronan Marra's choice of Patricia Austin—an actress more "sonsie" (as Brodie's fellow Scots might say) than statuesque—to play the dazzling schoolmistress a curious one. But as with all larger-than-life personalities, her credibility is less the product of her persona's own achievements than the responses of those surrounding her. However absurd her initial posturing may strike us, the obsessive fascination of her companions soon infects the most emotionally detached spectator with sufficient zeal to make us pity her inevitable comeuppance, even as we acknowledge its necessity.

The supporting cast assembled for this Signal Ensemble production—notably, Joseph Stearns and Aaron Snook as the befuddled swains, Brigitte Ditmars as the school's stern chief administrator, and a covey of young women, led by the always-beguiling Simone Roos—execute their responsibilities with insightful aplomb. Assisted by Elise Kauzlaric's phoneme-perfect dialects, their performances invoke both horror at the exploitation—however unconscious—of gullible children and rueful memories of our own reluctant farewells to false idols.



Read an interview with Ian Liberto (above) of A Chorus Line online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

ONLINE THIS WEEK...
THEATER REVIEW OF:
—Pumpgirl
www.windycitymediagroup.com

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

The Informers; Film notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

The Beautiful People that populate Bret Easton Ellis' novels and the movies made from them—Less Than Zero, American Psycho, The Rules of Attraction and, now, **The Informers**—are some of the most vapid, immoral, hedonistic, narcissistic and sick-at-the-soul folks one would ever hope to encounter. Bored, icy, sexually ambiguous, physically gorgeous and emotionally detached, Ellis' people often seem nothing more than exquisite, empty facades as they tool around Los Angeles in their fancy sports cars dressed to the nines, lounge endlessly poolside or visit the latest nightclub during the Me Decade (Ellis' urban landscape and time period of choice). Few of his characters have any redeeming qualities, some are outright psychopaths and it's no surprise that they're an acquired taste but I love 'em. More than that—the somnambulant bunch that populate *The Informers*, the latest Ellis novel to hit the screen—his most venal yet—are just about my favorites (Christian Bale as the serial killer in *American Psycho* is still unbeatable).

The movie is set in Ellisland, a.k.a. Los Angeles 1983. (The soundtrack, costumes and hair alone are worth the price of admission.) It follows a group of disparate characters—those on the highest rungs of the ladder (Billy Bob Thornton, Kim Basinger, Winona Ryder, Chris Isaak and a Rat Pack's worth of new Hollywood trash) to those scrambling down below (Brad Renfro, in his last role, and Mickey Rourke)—in a revolving series of stories *a la* *Short Cuts*. “You can't make it in this town unless you're willing to do some awful things—and I'm willing,” Renfro, an anxiety-stricken doorman, tells one of his impossibly gorgeous tenants, Graham (Jon Foster), the son of a studio executive (Thornton). That's more or less the message and the plot of this stylish, glacial film—and it helps explain why these rotten folks who can't enjoy all they've been given are such fun to watch. They're so awful that their audacious selfishness becomes funny, so screwed up in spite of all their wealth the audience gets to feel superior. And let's not forget the voyeuristic pleasures to be had in gazing upon such a spectacular group of beauties from afar.

The story is narrated by Graham, whose mother (Basinger) is sleeping with the same hustler/drug dealer/music-video director that he is. But then, so is his blonde-bombshell girlfriend Christie (Amber Heard), who assures him after they can't even be bothered to finish a love-making session (scored to Wang Chung's “Dance Hall Days”) that the fact they're both sleeping



The Informers.

with Martin (Austin Nichols) is no big deal. The film alternates between Graham and his pleasure-seeking friends; an attempted marital reconciliation between Thornton and Basinger (though Thornton still has a thing for Winona Ryder as a newscaster); a trip to Hawaii by one of the golden lads with his wealthy, horn-dog of a father (Isaak); and the anxious doorman (Renfro) and his lowlife father (Rourke), who kidnaps a child off the street, parking him at Renfro's apartment.

There's also a British rock star, Bryan Metro (Mel Radio), lead singer of *The Informers*, a goth-rock New Wave band (think Bauhaus and The Cult) whose concert is one of the few things that momentarily excites the other characters. Bryan—who can't keep away from drugs, vodka and underage girls and boys—is such a mess that he can't even be bothered to stay onstage through the opening number of his concert.

Though the characters have trysts of many different sexual variations and with multiple partners, pleasure proves to be elusive. Christie complains to Graham about a bruise on her arm and her foot, and AIDS—the silent spectator standing in the background, waiting to emerge from the shadows—suddenly comes front and center. The movie turns into a daisy chain of death, which the film's ending emphasizes. Alone on the beach under a suddenly mottled gray sky, Christie—now dying, her once-beautiful body riddled with Kaposi Sarcoma lesions—lies on a beach towel in her bikini refusing to see a doctor, insisting that all she needs is a little sun to get well. “There's no more sun,” Graham tells the dying girl as the cold sets in, and the camera pulls back revealing the bleak expanse as far as the eye can see. A crack has formed in the ceiling of the pleasure dome and, in its conclusion, *The Informers* takes on the air of ancient, decadent Rome just before the fall. It's a chilling end to a chilling, brutal film that is a lot more than the sum of its one-dimensional parts would suggest.

Film notes:

—**Anvil! The Story of Anvil**, opening Friday, April 24, at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport, is Sacha Gervasi's delightful documentary look at a little-known Canadian metal band that briefly tasted glory in the early '80s and have since tenaciously tried to recapture it. Fronted by best friends Robb Reiner and Steve “Lips” Kudlow, their story is an inspiration to any struggling musician who refuses to let age or economic circumstances subvert their dreams of musical glory. The friendship of the two men, the disappointments and tantalizing moments they share and the promise of finally achieving glory is extraordinarily entertaining to witness. The movie's a real-life *Spinal Tap*—with talent and heart. *Anvil* the band plays at the Cabaret Metro April 22 and will appear at the Music Box on opening weekend. www.musicboxtheatre.com

—**Queer Cinema 101**—the five-week LGBT film series hosted by local gay film critics—continues Monday, April 27, with the 1968 lesbian camp classic *The Killing of Sister George*. The film was directed by Robert Aldrich, who also helmed gay favorites *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* and *Hush*, *Hush Sweet Charlotte*. The screening, hosted by Gay Chicago film critic Charlie Shoquist, will be followed by a Q&A with audience members. The series is being partly sponsored by Sidetrack and by www.HannahFree.com, and there will be a showing of the trailer for the forthcoming lesbian-themed film *Hannah Free* starring Sharon Gless. The screening is at 7 p.m. at the Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, in the Hoover-Leppen Theatre. Seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis. A \$5 suggested donation is requested. Visit www.centeronhalsted.org or 773-472-6469, ext. 245.

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



Sharon Gless (left) and Maureen Gallagher in *Hannah Free*. Photo by Hal Baim

'Hannah Free' to premiere in San Fran

Hannah Free, a film shot in Chicago last November, will have its world premiere as the closing-night featured film at Frameline, the world's oldest LGBT film festival. The screening will be Sunday, June 28, at the 1,400-seat Castro Theatre, on Pride Sunday in San Francisco, the 40th anniversary of Stonewall.

The film stars Sharon Gless and is based on a play by Claudia Allen that debuted in Chicago in the early 1990s. Allen adapted her play for the screen, and Wendy Jo Carlton directed the cast, which includes well-known Chicago actors Taylor Miller (*All My Children*), Maureen Gallagher, Ann Hagemann, Kelli Strickland, Jacqui Jackson, Meg Thalken, Patricia Kane, Elaine Carlson, Les Hinderyckx, and Bev Spangler.

Hannah Free tells the story of a decades-long love affair between two women who are separated near the end of their lives in a nursing home. Told through flashbacks, three genera-

tions of actors play Hannah and Rachel over the course of more than 50 years. The film was shot on location on the South Side of Chicago and in Beecher, Ill.

Music director is Martie Marro, editor Sharon Zurek, and the cinematographer was Gretchen Warthen. Production designer was Rick Paul and wardrobe designer Iris Bainum-Houle. Jillian Erickson was the makeup designer, with Budd Bird on hair.

Tracy Baim and Claudia Allen are executive producers of *Hannah Free*, which is being produced by Ripe Fruit Films.

After its world premiere in San Francisco, *Hannah Free* will play at film festivals across the country, as well as music festivals and other venues. It will open in Chicago later this summer. See www.HannahFree.com for a trailer and updates, or join the *Hannah Free* film Facebook group. For details on tickets to the World Premiere, which will feature a Q&A with the cast, including Sharon Gless, see www.frame-line.org.

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—Michael Cieply, *The New York Times*

“Impresses with style.”
—Troy Patterson, *SPIN*

“Electrifying performances!”
—Dennis Dermody, *PAPER Magazine*

“A totally faithful adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis' novel. Delivers guilty pleasures aplenty.”
—Rob Nelson, *Variety*

JON AMBER RHYS CHRIS AUSTIN LOU TAYLOR MEL BRAD
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SELECT ENGAGEMENTS START FRIDAY, APRIL 24

WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, April 22

4 Women Only offers the only show in Chicago dedicated to new women artists. Hosted by Kat Fitzgerald 9 p.m. Uncommon Ground 1401 Devon Ave. 773-465-9801

Leather 101 series, Leatherman Mark Austin (Finalist, 2007 IML) and Mistress Joanne Gaddy (retired Mistress of IML) on important eras in leather history. \$5. 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Center on Halsted, 773/472-6469, ext. 178

Thursday, April 23

Lambda Legal's Bon Foster Celebration, celebrate another year of Lambda Legal's work with an evening of food, drink, live music. 6 to 10 p.m. Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark. Info Jeff Souva, 312-663-4413. Tix, www.lambdalegal.org/bonfoster

Friday, April 24

9th Annual Chicago Anarchist Film Festival showcases radical and anarchist film, 7 to 10 p.m. through Sunday April 26. \$5-10 per festival day is requested with no one turned away for lack of funds. 800 South Halsted, at Jane Addams Hull House (UIC Campus) http://home.comcast.net/~more_about_it/

Cats, musical story of the Jellicle Cats' annual Jellicle Ball. 7:30 p.m. through May 2. \$17 at door/\$15advance. Harper College J Theater, 1200 W. Algonquin Rd, Palatine 630-808-5852 www.artreachspotlite.com

Center on Halsted Niki Nolan and Maureen Seaton art show opens. Opening reception: 3rd floor Art Gallery sponsored by Joey's Brickhouse. Runs through May 31.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus stages its new musical comedy, **Bad Habits**. A young man joins a monastery only to discover he may have made a wrong turn, with cast of more than 100 monks and nuns singing and dancing, 8 p.m. through April 25. \$25/\$37 at Ticketmaster.com Athenaeum Theater, 2933 N. Southport Ave. www.cgmc.org

Najwa Dance Corps presents Tell it Like it Is-Knowledge is King 7:30 p.m. \$20/\$23 Hayden Center for the Arts, Malcolm X college, 1900 W. Van Buran, 312-850-7224 www.najwadance.org

Men of All Colors...Together Midland Regional Celebration. A weekend of parties and special events. \$55 or Individual event Tickets: Fri. Reception, 6 p.m. Northend Bar, \$10. 773-784-7254 www.mactchicago.org

Recognizing Gay Marriage in Iowa: Lead counsel Camilla Taylor, senior staff attorney, Midwest Regional Office, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund., discusses the Varnum decision. 12:15 p.m., at Miller, Shakman & Beem LLP, 180 North La Salle Street, Suite 3600, Chicago, IL. Free. RSVP www.acslaw.org/chapters/lawyer/chicago/rsvp/3

Snow White and the Seven Drag Queens by MidTangent Productions and Hydrate. Last night at Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted. Tix \$10 at www.midtangent.tix.com or at door.

Tony Kushner's The Illusion through May 3. \$20/\$18. Theatre and Interpretation Center of Northwestern University's Josephine Louis Theater, 20 Arts Circle Dr. Evanston www.tic.northwestern.edu

Windy City Gay Naturists dinner before or after Chicago Gay Men's Chorus Spring Concert RSVP 312-494-2654

Saturday, April 25

Gerber/Hart Library presents An Afternoon With Rita Mae Brown: Making History, Telling HerStory. 4 to 6 p.m. \$25. Location: Center on Halsted. www.gerberhart.org

Love Revolution, Not State Delusion, Homotopia screening, part of 9th Annual Chicago Anarchist Film Festival with radical and anarchist film, 7 to 10 p.m. \$5-10 per festival day is requested with no one turned away for lack of funds. Jane Addams Hull House (UIC Campus) 800 South Halsted. http://www.homotopiafilm.net/index.php/homotopia/

Retro Disco Party with The Village People live and in concert in a 1926 Vaudeville theatre The Arcada, St. Charles 847-795-1800 www.oshows.com

Sunday, April 26

KICKS Against Breast Cancer collegiate soccer invitational showcasing the best in women's soccer. \$10 includes access to Fan Zone. 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Soldier Field. www.kicksagainstbreastcancer.org

Midland Regional, an affiliate of the National Association of Black and White Men Together (NABWMT) convenes a weekend gathering for business and celebration. Morning business meeting at the Center on Halsted; informal lunch, Exchequer Restaurant on S. Wabash. 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. party at Jackhammer Bar on North Clark St. 73-784-7254 www.mactchicago.org

Same Love, Same Rights GLBTQ Wedding Expo, an afternoon of elegance, joy, music, activism 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza 350 W. Mart Center Dr. www.SameLove-SameRights.com

Sacred activism: change yourself, heal the world. Workshop on compassion and transformation 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. \$50 Welcoming and affirming church. Lake Street Church. 607 Lake, Evanston 847-864-2181; transformation@lakestreet.org.

Monday, April 27

Vice President Joe Biden keynote a forum at the University of Illinois at Chicago on the cities' leading role in the global economic recovery. \$25 www.rjurbanforum.uic.edu.

The Killing of Sister George screening, part of Queer Cinema 101, five week film series through May 11, the best of gay cinema chosen and hosted by gay film critics, this week Hosted by Charlie Shoquist, Gay Chicago. Partially sponsored by www.HannahFree.com, the forthcoming lesbian themed film shot in Chicago and starring Sharon Gless (trailer shown before screenings). \$5. 7 p.m. Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. 773-472-6469 www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, April 28

Actress Angela Bassett honored DePaul University's 21st Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts, 6-9 p.m. Benefit tix \$500/\$5,000. Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware. 312-553-2000

Britney Spears, Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim, Rosemont, 8 p.m.

You Know Different, a youth-driven campaign to promote HIV testing among youth. Informational session hosted by Center on Halsted, Connect 2 Protect at Children's Memorial Hospital, Project VIDA and BEHIV 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. The Gary Comer Youth Center, 7200 S. Ingleside Ave.

Wednesday, April 29

Civil Union lobby day, Equality Illinois. Buses depart Center on Halsted 3656 N. Halsted St at 7 a.m. and from Oak Park at 7 a.m., stopping briefly in Bolingbrook from 8 to 8:20 a.m. Equality Illinois 773-477-7173 or info@eqil.org

Equality Illinois Spring Wine Tasting Party \$20 at door. 6 to 9 p.m. Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted; www.eqil.org

Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Mix and Mingle. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. \$20.00/\$30. Embassy Suites Chicago-Downtown, 600 N. State. Contact: Christina Pinson 773-303-0167

Ghost Factory Reading & Release Party featuring editor David Peak, contributors Kathie Bergquist, Christina Correa, Jesse Morrison, Maggie Ritchie, and Jessica Young. 7 p.m. Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

Sapphic Adventures, 7 p.m. La Touche French Bistro, 1475 W. Balmoral www.meetup.com/sapphicadventures

Windy City Gay Idol, Chicago's biggest GLBT contest, eight rounds in eight bars, over \$5,000 in cash and prizes. 8 p.m. signup/9 p.m. start Mary's Attic 5500 N. Clark cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com www.windycitymediagroup.com/Idol2009.html

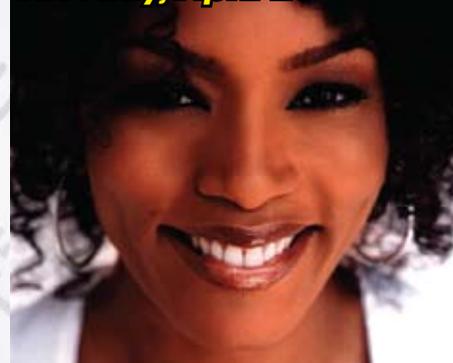
Thursday, April 30

16th Annual Dining Out for Life benefits AIDSCARE and spreads awareness. Reserve at www.diningoutforlife.com/Chicago

Friday, May 1

Janeane Garofalo with special guest Marc Maron. 7:30 and 10 p.m. \$29.50. Lakeshore Theater 3175 N. Broadway www.lakeshoretheater.com

Tuesday, April 28

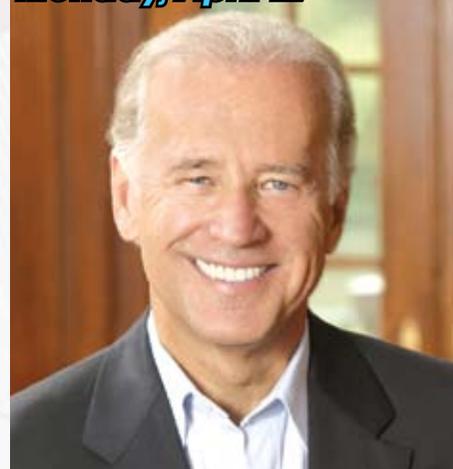


YOUR HONOR

Angela Bassett will be honored by DePaul University at the Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware.

Photo courtesy of Andrea Tichy

Monday, April 27



BIDEN HIS TIME

Vice President Joe Biden will present the keynote address at the fifth annual Richard J. Daley Urban Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt.

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



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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 or 847-677-8163.** (4/22/09-8)

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BILLY MASTERS

"It's hard to talk when you're teabagging."—Anderson Cooper shares a bit too much on CNN.

This week, it's the ladies who are front and center. While I was in Boston, I got a last-minute invite to a show Kathy Griffin was doing at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. Not only was my invite last-minute, so was the show! She hasn't performed at the Center since 2006, and even that show was a rarity. Her reality series was beginning to take off and we were told that since she was scheduled to be playing huge venues like Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, seeing her in an intimate setting would soon be a thing of the past.

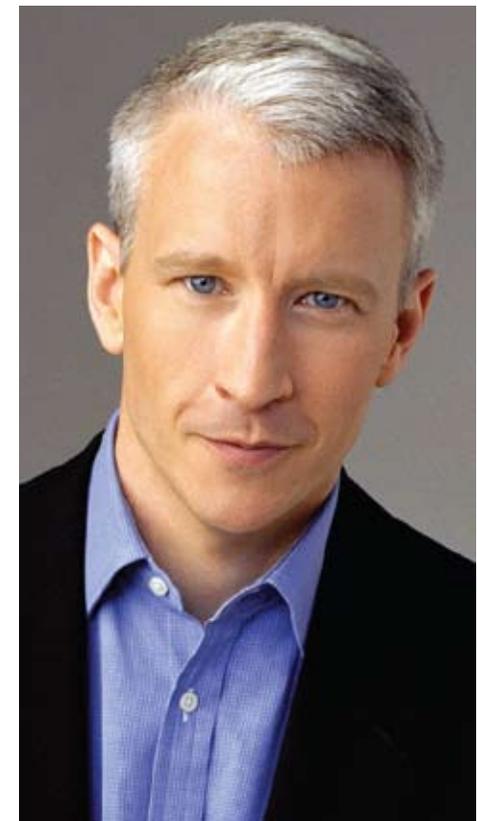
Cut to a month ago. The head of the Center called Kathy and told her that with budget cut-backs and a sagging economy, they could use some help. Griffin (who is sympathetic to anything sagging) was sympathetic and said she'd do a fundraiser for them on two conditions: 1) that they charge as much as they could for tickets and raise lots of money for the Center and 2) that she film the experience for her reality show. In fact, she got together with volunteers from the Center and went door-to-door in Pasadena to promote "marriage equality". All that footage will fill an episode of "My Life on the D-List." BTW, the actual show raised close to \$30K. She hung out at the party afterwards and shmoozed with the gays—just like old times.

Sticking with the ladies, let's talk about a real queen—as in Latifah. The long-rumored family member could find herself inadvertently outed—in court! Two of her former employees are suing for close to a million dollars in alleged unpaid wages. In papers filed in court, the ladies claim they are willing to discuss everyone around Latifah—including her "trainer" Jeanette Jenkins. You know what doesn't help those rumors? Wearing a flannel man's shirt on "Dancing with the Stars"!

Moving to the boys, let's talk about gays on "American Idol". No, this isn't about Adam Lambert—at least not directly. It's about last season's gay blade, David Hernandez. The diminutive dude was ejected the same week pics of him stripping in gay bars circulated on the web. At the time, Hernandez did what he could to distance himself from the photos, and continued to play it straight—so to speak. My sister-in-gossip, Michael Musto, ran into Davey at a tres gay outing, and asked him about his Idol experience. "It wasn't the stripper thing. It was the gay thing. That's Middle America for you." And yet, these are the same people voting for La Lambert—who is more demonstrative of his sexual orientation than Hernandez was...or is.

Showtime has announced that "The Tudors" will wrap at the end of next season. Why? Because by then, Henry VIII will have run out of wives! If you've been watching this season, you

just saw a completely naked Jonathan Rhys-Meyers lying face up on his bed during an examination. Granted, there was the tiniest bit of a washcloth betwixt his legs, but that won't stop us from running a pic...and the video, too. Check out BillyMasters.com to see him writhing in agony...and it should be added that there's a fine line between agony and ecstasy.



Always the proponent of good manners, Anderson Cooper warns against talking with one's mouth full.

Have you been wondering why Michael Jackson was working so hard to keep the contents of Neverland off the auction block? Because the estate was filled with "art works" depicting young boys in various positions—including one intriguingly titled "Boy Milking Goat", which I believe is illegal in most states! Among the items is a "boy upper body mannequin". Actually there are two of these—in case he wanted to play "three-way", no doubt. I believe this subject was tackled in an old Kim Cattrall movie. Anyhoo, he made a deal with the auction house, and they will exhibit the pieces. But nothing will be sold. So Michael can happily anticipate many more nights alone with his boy mannequins.

This week's "Ask Billy" question comes from Victor in San Francisco: "I know this probably isn't your specialty, but growing up I was a huge fan of Joe Montana [Billy's note—Joe was a football player who primarily played with the SF 49ers]. I heard his son Nate is like a younger, hotter version of his dad. Do you know anything about him?"

You're right—this certainly ain't my department. But hot guys are. Nate Montana is quite a looker. Being born in 1987, he's certainly too young for me (but at least he can go into a bar). Like his dad, he's playing football and is a quarterback at Notre Dame with hopes of a pro career (I say that like I know what I'm talking about). Recently, a series of photos surfaced of him and his famous dad at the beach. Judging from the shirtless pics of Nate (including some of him touching his nether regions), he's very hot indeed. I'll post a number of these pics on BillyMasters.com.

Could it be that a certain former heartthrob has left his wife for someone of the same sex?

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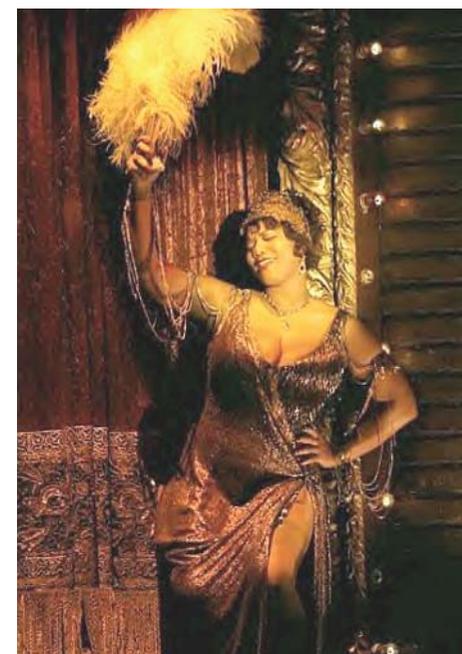
WINDY CITY GAY IDOL 7th ANNUAL

Two more talented singers snagged spots at the semi-finals with their performances at Spin's leg of Windy City Gay Idol. James (above, left) and Tedd (below, left) will move on to the semi-final round at Sidetrack on May 30. Catch the next preliminary round Thursday, April 29 at Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark St. Photos by Christopher Mirovaliev

BILLY from page 20

Well, there are so many contenders for this one. In the past couple months, three guys on the down low have announced separations. The one we're talking about, however, is a case of life imitating art since he's played gay before—notoriously. Of course, this was before his marriage, before he got famous (well, kinda around the same time)...but after he was pushed back into the closet. What goes in, despite the good intentions, must eventually come out. And in and out!

When I'm giving you something to chew on, it's time to end yet another column. I'm finally leaving Boston and off to Fort Lauderdale. While I'm enjoying the sun and surf of South Florida, I'll still be dispensing dish on www.BillyMasters.com and pouring over your letters. So feel free to write me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Michael Jackson is caught with a goat! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Queen Latifah: Who's been stroking Mama?

Streisand 3-DVD set out April 28

Barbra Streisand fans will be ecstatic to know that Streisand The Concerts—a new 3-disc DVD showcasing some of her most memorable concerts; special exclusives, including 17 songs never released on DVD; and behind-the-scenes moments—will be available for sale April 28.

Disc #1 captures the record-breaking, 2006 North American tour from the sold-out Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., show. Disc #2 allows fans to experience the unforgettable 1994 concert Live at Arrowhead Pond in Anaheim, Calif. The third disc is "Putting It Together: The Making of the Broadway Album."

Ravinia fundraiser May 2 in Chicago

Ravinia Associates will hold its 17th annual fundraiser, Festa Ravinia 2009, Saturday, May 2, at the Ravenswood Billboard Factory, 4025 N. Ravenswood. Cocktails start at 6:30 p.m.

This year's event will honor Ravinia Trustee Jean Berghoff, who was key in launching and establishing the organization's education and community partnerships programs.

The black-tie event will feature the theme "Drive-In" and will include dinner, entertainment, raffle, dancing and live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$195 each. E-mail associates@ravinia.org, call 847-266-5089 or visit www.ravinia.org/festa09.

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Alain Villeneuve. Photo courtesy of subject

SPORTS/RECREATION

Chicagoan goes for Outgames gold

BY ROSS FORMAN

Alain Villeneuve will be competing in two events this summer at the 2009 World Outgames, but has only one goal: win the gold medal.

In both events, of course.

Villeneuve, 42, a patent attorney who was born in Montreal and has been living in Chicago since 2001, will be competing in the 25-mile cycling time trials and the triathlon, the demanding event that incorporates swimming, bicycling and running—in that order.

"I want to win gold. It's like buying a lottery ticket; you want to win the jackpot," said Villeneuve, who will be joined in Copenhagen by his partner of seven years, Tzu-Kai Lo. "If I do my personal best, I might stand on the podium [as the gold-medal winner]."

Villeneuve competed in eight triathlons in 2008—several sprint distances and some the longer Olympic distance. The Outgames will involve the latter version, which encompasses a 1.5-kilometer swim, a 40-kilometer bike race and then a 10-kilometer run.

He is aiming for a time of two hours and 15 minutes in the triathlon, and his strength is the biking.

"I lived in Europe for a decade and Denmark was one of the places I never went, but I know how wonderful the Danish people are," Villeneuve said. "This is my only vacation this year; I couldn't be more exciting."

"What will be absolutely wonderful is, the 2006 European Triathlon Championship was [held] in Copenhagen, and I think we'll be doing the same course."

Villeneuve was second in his age group (40-44) in the 2008 Proud To Run race in Chicago, held in late June.

In 2009, he will compete in 10 triathlons, though only two will involve Olympic-distance races: the Chicago Triathlon and the Outgames.

"Since Chicago hosted the Gay Games, I think many Chicagoans are set to go back to the Gay Games in Cologne in 2010. But I really encourage Chicagoans to go to the Outgames," Villeneuve said. "Countries such as Denmark are really open to the LGBT community and I really feel like the city of Copenhagen truly will be happy that the Outgames is happening in their city. I really think the Outgames will be a big deal in Denmark."

More from Alain Villeneuve...

—**About his partner, Tzu-Kai Lo:** "He's a perfect cook and likes to shop." The two will be going to Belgium after the Outgames because Lo is looking for the wares of the high-fashion designers, Villeneuve said.

—**Price of his bicycle:** \$8,000

—**Price to bring his bicycle on the airplane:** \$300

—**It's a fact:** Is a member of the Chicago Razors, a predominantly-gay triathlon club

—**On gay athletes:** "At the Beijing Olympics, I think there was only one openly gay athlete out of about 11,000 participants. But I cannot believe that [Australia's gold medal-winning diver Matthew Mitcham] was the only gay ath-

lete in the Beijing Olympics. Some people just assume gays are not good athletes, but I think they are absolutely wrong. I think the Outgames will show that gays can in fact be very, very good athletes. Plus, we put a fun dimension to the event that only gay people can. These games always have a social, fun component that is very important. Think about tailgating before a football game. Many think the tailgating is a very integral part of an NFL game."

Red Stars tie Sky Blue

The women's pro soccer team known as the Chicago Red Stars played Sky Blue FC to a 0-0 tie in its home opener before 5,824 fans at Bridgeway's Toyota Park April 19.

In a statement, Red Stars coach Emma Hayes said, "Our game plan was to use as much width as we can. We've been struggling of late to create opportunities out wide. I thought we did a

great job of that. The girls executed the game plan and the performance was considerably better than the last two games."

Chicago will host the Boston Breakers April 25 at 7:30 p.m. Call 866-WPS-2009 for tickets.

AIDS Walk/Run registration starts

Online registration for AIDS Run & Walk Chicago 2009 is now open at www.aidsrunwalk.org.

To participate alongside thousands of supporters Saturday, Oct. 3, in Grant Park, visit www.aidsrunwalk.org and click "Register Now." E-mail runwalk@aidschicago.org if there are any questions.

AIDS Run & Walk Chicago 2008 raised more than \$500,000. To further support these local organizations, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) will give 100 percent of all money raised by CommunityDirect teams back to the participating HIV/AIDS service organizations.

Sky-high ambitions

BY ROSS FORMAN

Steve Key is convinced 2009 will be the best season in the Chicago Sky's brief history.

"I keep hearing people say that we could be the surprise team this season," said Key, in his second season as the team's head coach.

The Sky, founded in 2006, finished 12-22 in 2008—and is preparing for the 2009 season-opener on Saturday, June 6, at Minnesota. Chicago's home opener at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine, is Friday, June 12, against the Atlanta Dream, followed two nights later by a home game against the Seattle Storm.

"We have everything here. We have all of the components to be more than just a playoff team. I think we can compete once we get in the playoffs," Key said. "I think we have the talent to do so and also are backing it up with experience. We lost 11 games last year by anywhere from 1 to 6 points. The positive thing [about those losses] is, we're right there; we just need to learn how to win; we need to come up with more discipline throughout the game to put us in a better position to turn the corner [and win those close games.] This is a big year for us to try to step up and do that."

"I definitely think this could be one of the best Sky teams ever."

The Sky struggled miserably in its 2006 WNBA debut season, finishing with a 5-29 record under head coach Dave Cowens, himself a basketball Hall of Famer. Chicago went 14-20 in 2007.

So will 2009 be the Sky's season?

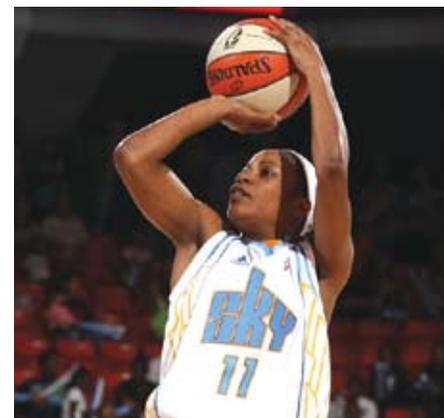
"I'm more optimistic for this season than in the past," Key said. "None of us are satisfied where we ended up last year. None of us are using or making excuses."

"I think there will be a noticeable difference in our togetherness, our team cohesiveness and how, win or lose, we'll always stick together and it will be a hard-fought effort for anyone to beat us, at home or on the road."

The Sky is led by Jia Perkins, Candice Dupree and Sylvia Fowles, all of whom averaged in double digits in scoring in 2008. Dupree was the team's top rebounder (270 in 34 games), while Perkins had 137 and Fowles grabbed 127 in only 17 games.

"I think Jia Perkins can be a breakout player—for everyone else around the league to finally acknowledge what we already know about her and her play," Key said. "I think she had an All-Star year in a year with no All-Star Game. I think she's going to continue doing what she's been doing for the past two years."

And this season, Perkins has solid, experienced newcomers as teammates, namely guard Erin Thorn, who has six years of experience in the WNBA, and forward Shyra Ely, who has been in the league for four years and hails from col-



Jia Perkins. Photo from the Chicago Sky

legiate powerhouse Tennessee.

"We're going to rely on Erin's experience and her outside shooting," Key said. "Shyra Ely ... I think her time has come. This is her fifth year in the league and she's going to get the opportunity to play more minutes this season than she has in her entire WNBA career combined. We're going to look to her for big things, be it as a starter or reserve. Her experience being on two championship-caliber teams in San Antonio and Seattle will pay huge dividends for us to help the younger players turn the corner."

Key Sky players also include Dominique Canty (who played at Chicago's Whitney Young High School), Brooke Wyckoff and Armintie Price.

"We were last in the league in scoring and points per game [last season], but we were fourth in field goal percentage, which tells me that we need to get more possessions so we can use that [high field goal percentage] to our favor," Key said.

Key tagged the defending WNBA Champion Detroit Shock as the team to beat once again, but he certainly isn't afraid to face his Eastern Conference foe.

"Detroit hasn't changed its roster in, oh, about five years, which is quite evident by the fact they've won three of the last six championships," Key said. "But it's encouraging to us because we defeated them two or three times last year."

And in a 2008 game against Detroit, the Sky overcame a 23-point halftime deficit and ultimately only lost by three points. "I think that game was a great indicator that we're right there, that we can play on a championship level," Key said.

San Antonio, which lost to Detroit in the 2008 finals, is the cream of the crop in the Western Conference, Key said, especially with a roster featuring guard Shanna Crossley, center Bernadette Ngoyisa and forward Belinda Snell.

The Sky has one home preseason game: Friday, May 22, against Detroit.

"[The preseason] is a good chance to evaluate talent, to find out which combinations might work, see who plays well together," Key said. "We don't care too much about wins and losses in a preseason."

See www.wnba.com/sky.

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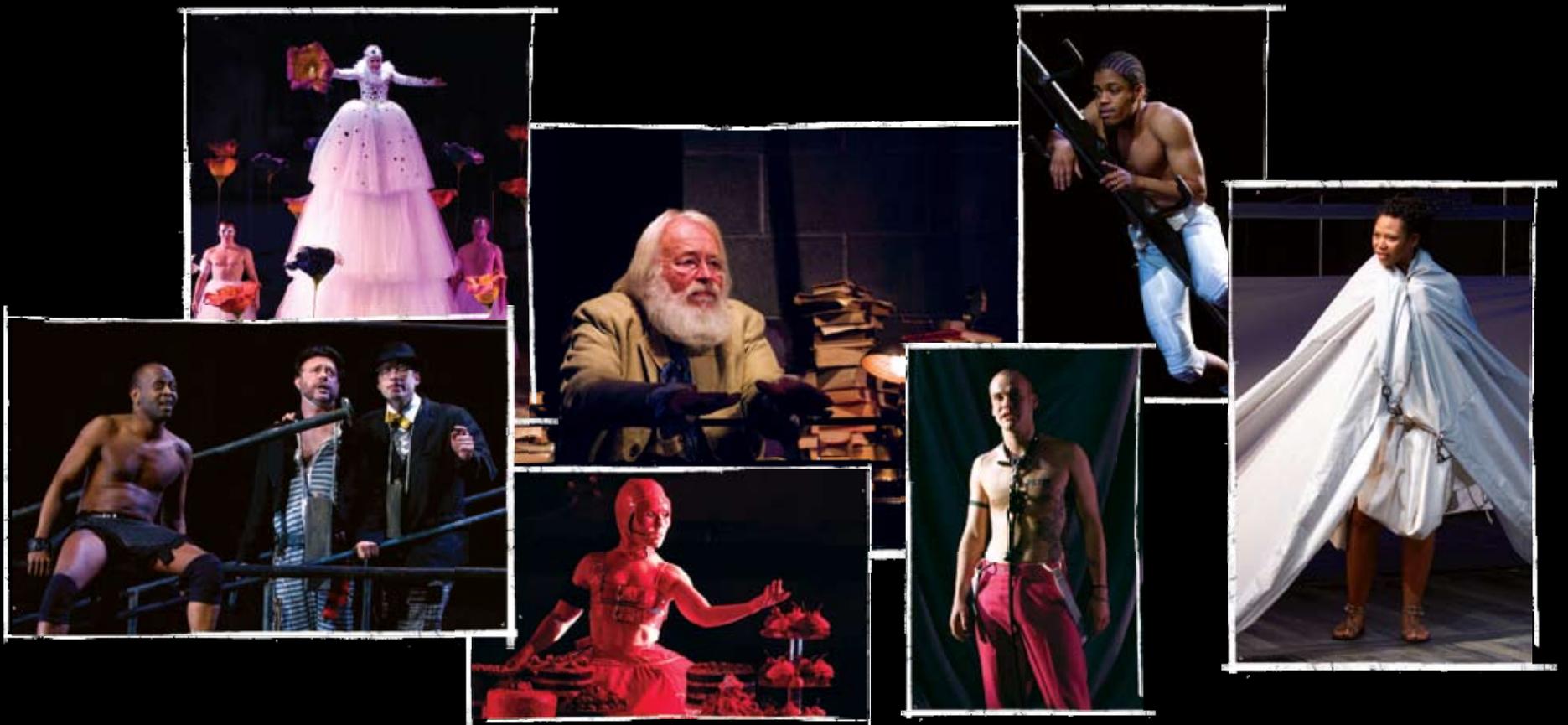
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