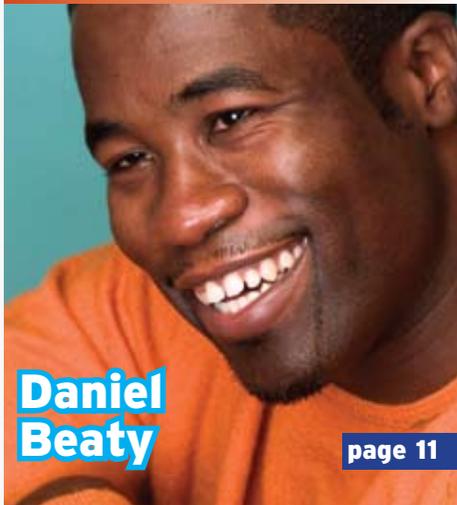




Hannah Free gala

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Daniel Beaty

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Chicago Freeze

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nightspots
pick it up
take it home

Deb Mell talks about politics, Blago

BY ANDREW DAVIS

To say that Deb Mell has had an intriguing first term as an Illinois state representative would be a huge understatement, having dealt with, among other things, voting on the impeachment of her brother-in-law, former Gov. Rod Blagojevich. In an exclusive, candid talk with Windy City Times, Mell—who made history as the first out lesbian General Assembly member in Illinois' history—discussed the lessons she's learned in Springfield, her opponent in next year's election and her motivation for being the only representative who voted in favor of Blagojevich back in January just after being sworn into office.

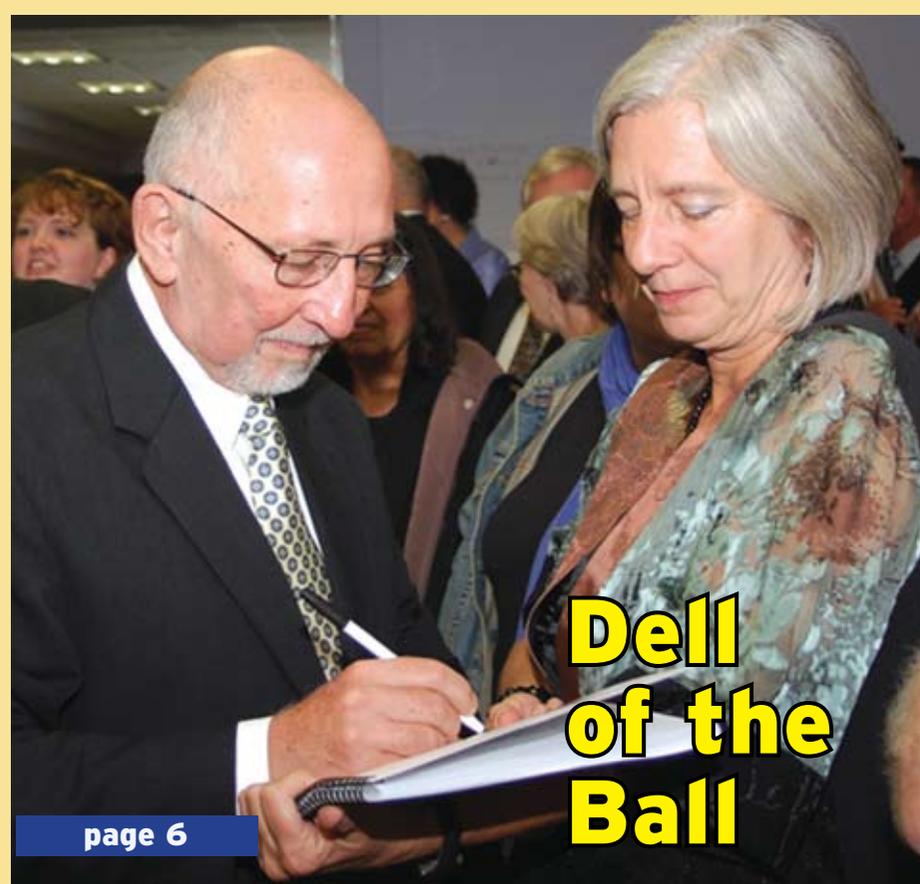
Windy City Times: How would you characterize your term so far?

Deb Mell: Well, it's been quite a freshman year. It's difficult for anyone to be in the General Assembly right now [because of] state budget issues, a change in leadership and elections coming up. Plus, you're a freshman and you're trying to learn things like where the bathrooms are. [Smiles]

WCT: I'm sure. You have to feel your way around, so to speak, and you have to learn how to work with people...

DM: You don't want to step on any toes. You don't want to push an issue that another representative has been doing for years. You want to be respectful.

Turn to page 8



Dell of the Ball

page 6

The Rev. Greg Dell (above), retired minister of Chicago's Broadway United Methodist Church, was honored at a Sept. 26 event that was the culmination of a weekend conference on "The Journey to Justice." Read more on page 6. Photo courtesy of Latoya Thorn

FALL ENTERTAINMENT SPECIAL

MOVIES

The foreign film *Eyes Wide Open* (left) is among this fall's LGBT offerings.

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MUSIC

Kylie Minogue (right), Janis Ian and Matt Alber are among the musicians spotlighted in this issue.

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Someone has been appointed to fill the seat of the late U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy (above). Read page 4.

DNCC/Jackson Solway photo



Dr. Richard Novak (above) talks about Project WISH, which is seeking candidates for an HIV-vaccine study. See page 6.

Photo courtesy of Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

Cover photos and credits (from top): Photo from Hannah Free gala by Kat Fitzgerald (MysticImagesPhotography.com); Daniel Beaty publicity photo; photo of Alvin Ty Law

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 Photo by graysong

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ONLINE INDEX

MUSICOLOGY

There are more music-related features online, including a review of Whitney Houston's (right) latest and an interview with singer Jessie James.



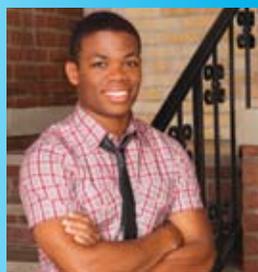
THE MAINE EVENT



In her latest Mombian column, Dana Rudolph (left) reflects on the fight for marriage equality in Maine.

IT'S 'GREEK' TO ME

Windy City Times talked with actor Paul James (right), who plays gay pledge Calvin in the ABC Family show Greek.



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Prop 8 déjà vu in Maine

NEWS ANALYSIS BY REX WOCKNER

Maine voters will decide Nov. 3 whether to veto a law passed by the legislature and signed by the governor that legalized same-sex marriage. The law has not yet taken effect pending the outcome of the election.

The TV ad war got under way Sept. 15, and it looks and smells like the Proposition 8 ad war last year in California. Some analysts believe gays lost marriage in California because the No on 8 campaign lost the TV ad war.

In one Maine ad, the anti-gay side even uses the same video it used in California of a horrified straight couple whose second-grader apparently learned about same-sex marriage at school in Massachusetts.

The anti-gay side's first ad said: "Special-interest groups got the Legislature to approve homosexual marriage and tried to prevent Mainers from voting. But Question 1 gives us our vote. Unless Question 1 passes, there will be real consequences for Mainers. Legal experts predict a flood of lawsuits against individuals, small businesses and religious groups. Church organizations could lose their tax exemption. Homosexual marriage taught in public schools, whether parents like it or not."

The anti-gay side's second ad said: "Opponents of Question 1 say that legalizing homosexual marriage has nothing to do with schools. But it has everything to do with schools. 'After Massachusetts legalized gay marriage, our son came home and told us the school taught him that boys can marry other boys. He's in second grade! We tried to stop public schools from teaching children about gay marriage, but the courts said we had no right to object or pull him out of class.' It's already happened in Massachusetts. Vote yes on Question 1 to prevent homosexual marriage from being taught in Maine schools."



Andrew Sullivan. Photo by Andrew Davis

The gay side in Maine—called NO on 1/Protect Maine Equality—has aired two response ads. The first one said: "Schools should be safe havens where children can learn and be accepted. In Maine, we protect all families, and we all want to keep our children safe. That's the Maine way. But outsiders are trying to harm our kids in schools by deceiving families about what's taught in Maine classrooms. It won't work, because in Maine all families put children first. I've been teaching in Maine schools since 1983. We teach respect and Maine values. That will never change. Vote no on 1 to protect Maine equality."

The second response ad, released Sept. 25, says: "In Maine, we're proud of every family and every child, regardless of who their parents are. That's the Maine way. But outsiders are trying to harm our kids and make them feel ashamed by making false claims about what's taught in Maine classrooms. They're baseless, untrue. It won't work. 'Schools should be safe havens for children, places where all children feel welcome, accepted and safe.' Vote no on 1 to protect marriage equality."

If the shocking language of the "yes" side sounds familiar, and the mild language of the "no" side sounds familiar, it should. It happened before. In California.

"The religious right is targeting marriage equality in Maine with big money and false at-

tacks, virtually identical to the fearmongering strategies in 2008's Proposition 8 campaign in California," said People for the American Way.

Said writer Andrew Sullivan: "The anti-gay forces are pounding Maine with exactly the same scare tactics that worked in California. Most of the pro-gay ads are as lame as they were in California as well."

Indeed, some activists are concerned that NO on 1/Protect Maine Equality is on a path to repeat the failed No on 8 campaign in California. Blogger Phillip Minton (unitethefight.org) summarized the concern Sept. 17.

"We knew (from the Prop 8 battle in California) what the opposition was going to say (in Maine)," Minton wrote. "Shouldn't we have had an ad on the air already addressing these specific concerns before the Yes on 1 opened their lying mouths? ... We need to kill their arguments before they even voice them. We need to tell Mainers: 'You're going to hear that marriage is going to be taught in schools, but you have the power to decide that yourself in your districts. You're going to hear that your church is going to be sued, but you already have protections in place by law. The other side is going to try and confuse this issue, to state things that are not in the law. They want to mislead you. They will lie to you. This is not about curriculum, not about religion. What this is about is civil marriage for all. It's about protecting families. It's about being fair.' But that's just a start. It's got to hit harder. Expose the lies as lies."

NO on 1/Protect Maine Equality Campaign Manager Jesse Connolly doesn't seem worried, however.

Writing at Daily Kos on Sept. 18, he said: "We feel confident that we have the right strategy and we're running a Maine-based campaign. We have organized an unprecedented grassroots effort with organizers on the ground in every county, on every college campus, in towns and cities across Maine and reaching out to Maine people from Kittery to Fort Kent. Our campaign emphasizes Mainers talking to their friends, neighbors, coworkers and families to build the support we need to win on November 3rd."

If that sounds familiar, it should. That's how Harvey Milk and friends beat Proposition 6 in California in 1978. Prop 6 would have banned gays from teaching school.

But in the intervening 30 years, the anti-gay side has honed its rhetoric to near-perfect pitch. GLBT Californians watching the Maine campaign have a distinct feeling of déjà vu—if not one of dread.

Same-sex marriage is legal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts and Vermont. There also are 18,000 married same-sex couples in California, though voters have banned any more same-sex marriages. Same-sex marriage becomes legal in New Hampshire in January.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Ryan White and health reform

BY BOB ROEHR

The Ryan White CARE Act, which funds a large portion of HIV programs in the United States, did not expire Sept. 30 but was extended for another 30 days as part of a continuing resolution to fund all federal government operations. The resolution was necessary because once again Congress has not passed funding bills for federal agencies prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

The Senate health committee canceled a scheduled Sept. 23 meeting on Ryan White, later rescheduling it for Sept. 30. Their goal is to craft legislation that can be approved by unanimous consent and avoid a formal vote on the floor of the Senate; then have that accepted by the House.

While Ryan White has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in the past, and still does, the rules of the Senate make it possible for a single member to prevent unanimous consent. That means negotiations with Senators such as conserva-

tive Republican Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who may be seeking to include certain provisions on HIV testing, as well as changes to the formula for distribution of funds to better serve areas such as the South where the epidemic has grown more rapidly in recent years.

As of early September, seven states had waiting lists for their AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP) and five more are expected to join them shortly. They are primarily states with smaller caseloads that were hit by the epidemic later than epicenters such as New York and California. Funding for ADAP is primarily through the Ryan White program.

If a consensus agreement cannot be achieved, then it is likely that the legislation will be extended for one year in its current form, according to AIDS Action. AIDS advocates say local organizations need the stability of longer legislation to better plan their operations.

Those advocates have emphasized several themes in congressional debate over broader healthcare reform. They seek expansion of Medicaid coverage to all low-income individuals, including childless adults; a strong national public insurance option; affordable private health insurance; and an increased investment in prevention and the public health infrastructure.

They were disappointed when an amendment to eliminate the so called "donut hole" gap in Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage did not pass the Senate Finance Committee.

Ex-DNC chairman temporarily replaces Kennedy

BY LISA KEEN

KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Former Democratic National Committee Chairman Paul Kirk was sworn in Sept. 25 to the seat vacated last month when U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., died of brain cancer.

Kirk was a close friend of Kennedy and served as his special assistant in the Senate in the 1970s.

But few LGBT leaders know much about Kirk regarding LGBT-rights measures. Some remember that, in 1985, as chairman of the Democratic Party, Kirk declared that he didn't think gay-rights matters should become a priority for the party—characterizing them as "frivolous" issues. That remark, naturally, drew protests of anger from the community.

Longtime gay Democratic activist David Mixner says he does not think the remark counts for much, given the time. Kirk's remark came as Democrats were analyzing their loss in the presidential campaign of Walter Mondale versus incumbent President Ronald Reagan of every state but Minnesota and the District of Columbia. Under Kirk's chairmanship, from 1985 to 1989, the Democratic Party's platform language in support of gay rights shrank considerably.

Mixner says Kirk was "instrumental, along with Kennedy, in fighting many of the" hostile amendments proffered by then-Sen. Jesse Helms." And, Mixner said, Kirk was "fantastic" on efforts to pass a federal non-discrimination bill for gays.

Hilary Rosen, another longtime gay Democratic activist, said her experience with Kirk has been "very good."

"I think he takes his Kennedy legacy responsibilities really seriously," said Rosen. "I know he cares about our issues and I know he would vote just like Senator Kennedy did, would have."

Kirk has big shoes to fill now, given that Kennedy was widely seen as the Senate's strongest champion on LGBT rights and HIV matters. Kirk's appointment came by way of another gay-rights supporter—Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick.

But Kirk has pledged to hold the seat only until Massachusetts voters elect a new senator, during a special election in January. His appointment helps the Democrats hold onto an important filibuster-proof majority of 60 party members in the Senate.

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10:30 a.m.	Nikki Nikita
11:15 a.m.	Sit Means Sit Chicago
11:45 a.m.	Young Chicago Authors
12:00 p.m.	Latin Street Dancing
12:20 p.m.	The Windy City Cowboys
12:30 p.m.	Get Up For The Get Downs

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Group looks for vaccine-study candidates

BY CHASSE REHWINKEL

Project WISH, a research group that operates out of the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center, has announced that they are actively searching for candidates to participate in a new HIV vaccine study that will begin testing shortly.

Project WISH is looking to test eventually 80 participants and is putting specific emphasis on attracting HIV negative African-American and Latino gay males.

Called HVTN (HIV Vaccine Trials Network) 505, the study will be part of a national effort by the network to test a new preventative vaccine that could slow the progression of the HIV virus.

"This study is not looking at how to prevent HIV, but how to slow the virus's growth," stated Dr. Richard Novak, Project WISH's principal investigator for the HVTN 505 study. "This is not a unique concept in vaccines; actually the polio vaccine works in the same way. The polio vaccine doesn't stop someone from becoming infected it just prevents them from getting sick from the disease and it is our hope that this study will show the same can be done with HIV."

The vaccine works by employing a so-called "prime-boost approach" which incorporates two different vaccines working in tandem to increase the amount of anti-bodies and overall bodily reaction to the HIV virus. This would theoretically decrease the viral load, a measurement of the severity of a viral infection, which would in turn slow the development of the HIV virus.

This new study comes in the wake of the failed STEP study, a vaccine trial that was abandoned after it was unable to effectively lower the viral loads in its participants.

The STEP study received some unwanted atten-



Dr. Richard Novak.

tion following its demise when initially the HVTN reported that some of the study's data suggested that the vaccine "might have an increased susceptibility to acquiring HIV infection."

However, Novak explained that the negative effects of the STEP study vaccine eventually "washed out" and that the HVTN 505 study will have added precautions to decrease the risk of the same problem reoccurring.

"We do not want to take any chances in taking people that are at an increased risk or may develop an increased risk from the vaccine with our study," Novak said. "We are taking what we learned from the STEP study and applying it to our precautions with the 505 study."

The HVTN 505 study also follows the controversial GeoVax trials, a study that encountered heavy resistances from the HIV community when it was purposed that it would operate out of the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center. A situation that boiled over Aug. 25 when CORE Center supporters protested Cook County Board President Todd Stroger for his decision to push for the trial at a town hall meeting held at the Center on Halstead.

Project WISH officials assure, however, that the GeoVax trial is very different from their upcoming study, stating that the 505 vaccine is not a therapeutic one designed for already HIV

infected individuals, like the one used in the GeoVax study, and therefore does not require any HIV infected individuals to stop taking their medication, a major issue held by many opponents of the GeoVax trial.

"The 505 study is very different than the GeoVax proposal," stated Project WISH research coordinator Justin Franz. "Because of this we are confident that the community as a whole will receive this vaccine study with a much better light than the GeoVax trial at the CORE Center did."

In order to help avoid the problems that darkened the GeoVax trial, efforts have been made by Project WISH to keep the Chicago community informed about the HVTN 505 study through monthly meetings with a community advisory board. A teleconference has also been purposed for September 29, where further community out-

reach events, such as a town hall meeting, will be discussed.

In spite of the recent negativity surrounding some HIV vaccine studies, Novak is still confident that Chicago will ultimately support the HVTN 505 study.

"There is some skepticism out there that a HIV vaccine will not work, but I have to believe this is an iterative process," stated Novak. "Through rounds of analysis we gain more knowledge of how to prevent HIV and the 505 study is the next step in this process. I think Chicago understands this and will appreciate the study."

Advertising for the study is already underway, with announcements slated to appear soon in bars, popular entertainment hangouts and on the CTA Red Line.

For more information, visit www.hopetake-saction.org or call 312-413-5897.

Dell is honored



The Church Within a Church Movement held "Living in the Now: The Journey to Justice"—symposia and tributes honoring the Rev. Greg Dell—Sept. 25-26. The weekend culminated in an award ceremony held Sept. 26 at the Ramada Chicago Hotel, 4900 S. Lake Shore. At the event, Dell received the Gilbert H. Caldwell Justice Ministry Award. Dell made headlines a decade ago after he officiated a same-sex marriage ceremony; the United Methodist Church subsequently suspended him for a year. Read articles about Dell in the Sept. 9 and 16 online issues at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Photo courtesy of LaToya Thorn

PASSAGES

Dean Matthews

Dean Burton Matthews, who made a memorable impression in the world of visual art, passed away Aug. 10. He was 60.

Matthews was born in Davenport, Iowa, and grew up in Genoa, Ill., son of Frank and Georgia Belle (Burton) Matthews. He leaves behind two beloved god children, Zoe Olivia Engling and Stephen Serrano. The list of his dear friends is too lengthy to mention, but includes a diaspora that crosses the continent and the British Isles.

He graduated from Genoa Kingston High School in 1967, attended Albion College in Michigan (hated it), Chicago Academy of the Fine Arts (from which he earned a two-year certificate in industrial design in 1970), and studied theatre at Northern Illinois University.

Matthews, one of the undiscovered gems of the Chicago art world, leaves a rich legacy of creativity and love. Never one for self-promotion, Dean created a huge oeuvre of visual art, never having sought the acclaim the work deserved. Moving from early pen and ink pieces astounding in their capture of human emotion in a comic style to his final large and small abstract collages, he created brilliant art the way most people breathe and eat: simply as a matter of course. He was part of no movement, co-op or collective, he subscribed to no -isms; he merely expressed his own eccentric vision. Along the way, he invented an alphabet to include his writings in his work, provided hundreds of museum-worthy illustrations for Student Lawyer magazine, the Chicago Tribune and World Book Encyclopedia, and left a 17-volume journal of writings, drawings and multimedia collage, of which many pages are small masterpieces.

Early in his life, Dean was an actor who helped to establish one of the cornerstones of the contemporary Chicago theatre scene: Theatre Building Chicago at 1225 W. Belmont.

Dean was a company member with the Luther Burbank Dingleberry Festival, a name later shortened to Dinglefest, which converted the building from a warehouse to its current state as a three-theatre venue that has hosted some of the most memorable productions Chicago has seen over the past three decades. Dean performed in the first show to ever grace the venue: Cap Streeter, an original production created by Dean and his ensemble mates. During these years, audiences and reviewers delighted in his quirky comic presence, most notably as the title character in the Jeff award winning Tom Swift and His..., a performance for which one reviewer memorably called him a "rubber faced sap."

An only child who recognized his gay identity early, Matthews never married or fathered children, but he formed deep friendships with many who considered him the very best of friends. An accepting confidant, a delightful companion with a gentle wit and seemingly bottomless knowledge of cheesy popular culture, he created a family of friends. He was a man who inspired such affection that when he became stricken with cancer, a wide circle of friends rushed in to give him the support and aid one usually expects from immediate family. In that, Matthews found his final, fatal disease to be something of a blessing. He discovered the depth of his friendships to be more profound than even he had suspected.

Matthews' depth of talent remains largely uncelebrated outside of his circle of beloved friends. His collected works remain undiscovered treasures. He leaves this world much too early, but confessed himself to be satisfied with his life.

Matthews' ashes will be scattered at Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont, at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, followed at 5 p.m. by a memorial celebration at the People's Music School, where Dean worked for many years, at 931 W. Eastwood. Call 847-847-1759 for information; an RSVP is requested.

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By Peter Sinn Nachtrieb

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Amy Matheny at the auction. Image by Emmanuel Garcia

Hall of Fame 'sales' on

BY EMMANUEL GARCIA

The Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues (ACLGBTI) held its 17th annual Celebrity Auction on Wed., Sept. 22, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

The event is one of two the council hosts each year to raise funds, which are primarily used to host the induction ceremony held in November.

Since 1991, the Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame (GLHF) has recognized over 200 LGBT individuals who have contributed to the advancement of the LGBT community in Chicago.

Israel Wright—he newly appointed associate director for the GLHF and a 2000 inductee—explained, "It helps coming out. It helps [to] take a pride in your sexuality if you can actually see other people that have done great things—not necessarily gay things, but contributions to the city of Chicago."

Attendees skimmed through the program that listed 78 donated items up for a bid. Every donation counted for the GLHF, because the main event—which is free and open to the public—has become increasingly costly every year. Last year more than 500 people attended the last induction ceremony, hosted by Mayor Richard Daley at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Amy Matheny, host of Windy City Queercast;

Matthew Harvat (also known as Circuit Mom); and Catfight's lead singer, Molly Callinan, hosted the live portion of the auction.

Some items included were a private party for 25 guests at Sidetrack; a meet-and-greet with Emmy Award winner and Hannah Free star Sharon Gless; and two tickets to a Cubs game with State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz.

The highest grossing item was dinner and show for 10 people at Drury Lane Theatre in Oak Brook that sold for \$500, with a starting bid of \$150. According to Wright, the auction raised approximately \$12,000.

This year 11 LGBT individuals, a friend of the community (straight ally) and one organization will be inducted into the GLHF. The ceremony is scheduled to take place Thursday, Nov. 12, in the Sidney Yates Gallery of the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph. Visit www.GLHofFame.org. For video of the event, see www.QueerTV-Network.com.

Gov. Quinn visits Howard Brown

BY JOHN FENOGLIO

Gov. Pat Quinn, along with a cavalry of other legislators, held a press conference at the Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan, Sept. 26 to emphasize the need for affordable and accessible healthcare that includes a public option.

"This is the battle of our lifetime. We must win healthcare reform," Quinn said.

"If you want to see how to do it right then come here. This fine institution, for more than three decades, has been reaching out to the community to help people whether you have the money to pay for it or not. Howard Brown is there for you. I wanted to come here to thank all those involved in this mission," said Quinn.

Read more about Quinn's visit at www.Windy-CityMediaGroup.com.

HIV foundation under scrutiny

The Let's Talk, Let's Test Foundation (LTLTF), a local HIV/AIDS organization, is under state and federal scrutiny as authorities investigate the spending of \$523,545, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

LTLTF—started by State Rep. Connie Howard, D-Chicago—had convinced state lawmakers to give it \$1.2 million back in 2005. Now, federal and state officials are looking into how the money was allocated. Documents have revealed,

among other things, that executive director Lloyd Kelly received a \$50,000 bonus and one-time employee Carlos Estes got \$30,000 extra; and that more than \$5,000 was spent for tickets and a skybox to a local college-football game.

Kelly is claiming that LTLTF is almost \$1 million in debt; in addition, he and Howard are claiming that the organization's problems are the fault of state health authorities.

Last year, Windy City Times reported that over \$1 million in state funding for LTLTF were being held while the Illinois Department of Public Health reviewed how the foundation spent its money.

Up for grabs



Fabulous food and fantastic items were up for grabs as Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted, held its Silent & Live Auction Brunch Sept. 27. The tasty buffet was prepared by the Youth Culinary Program. Live music and cocktails were supplied on a deck with a rooftop view. The auction raised money for the Center's variety of programs. Items included a year supply of Levi jeans, a plasma television and airline packages for trips around the world. Visit www.centeronhalsted.org for more information about programs and future events. Photos and text by Jerry Nunn

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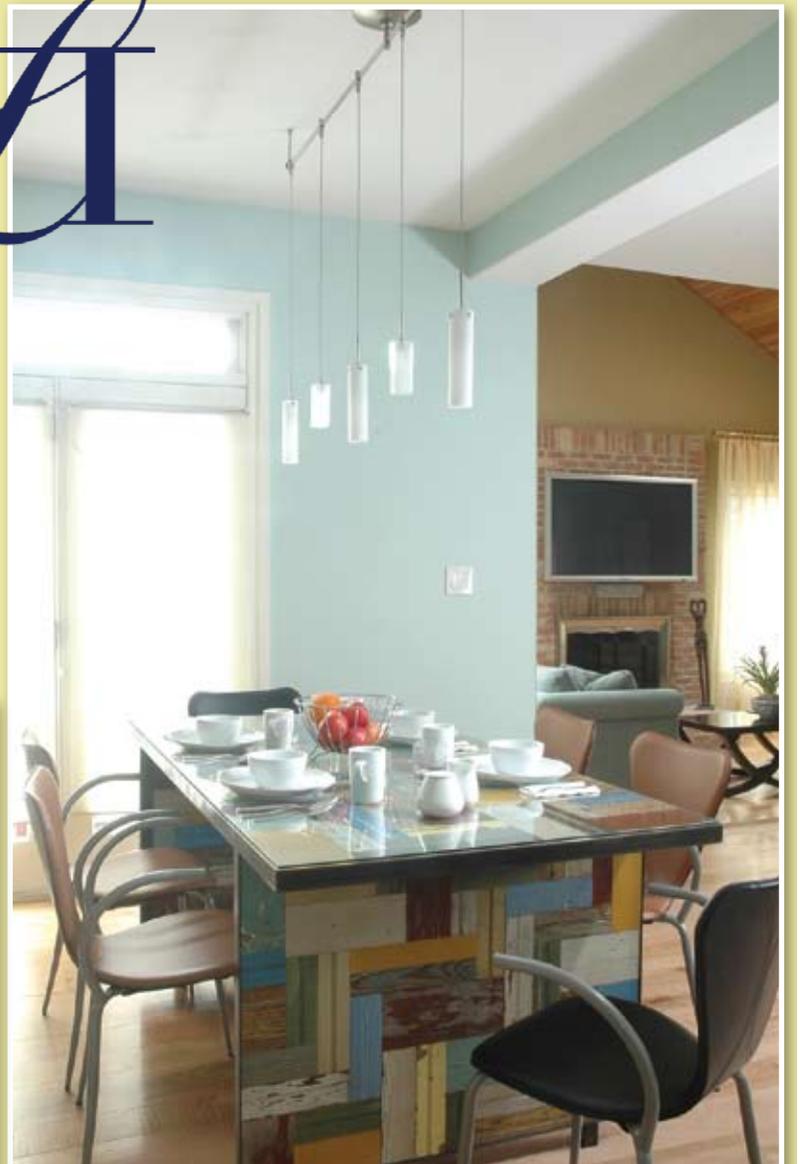
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Gerber/Hart gala Oct. 3

Gerber/Hart Library celebrates the 40th anniversary of Stonewall at its annual benefit Saturday, Oct. 3, at the Swedish American Museum Center, 5211 N. Clark, at 7 p.m. The keynote speaker will be David Carter, who wrote Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked The Gay Revolution.

Admission tickets for \$75 include a dinner buffet, silent auction, open bar and entertainment. Benefactor tickets for \$135 include a 6 p.m. champagne pre-reception with Carter, an autographed copy of Stonewall, special admission to museum exhibits (6-7 p.m.) and acknowledgment in the benefit program booklet.

Tickets can be purchased through PayPal at www.gerberhart.org; by calling Gerber/Hart at 773-381-8030; or by stopping by the library at 1127 W. Granville.

Local activist finalist in March contest

Jerry Pritikin, a Chicago activist who once lived in San Francisco and was an associate of the late gay politician Harvey Milk, is a finalist in a National Equality March-related contest.

Pritikin's video is a finalist in the Equality Idol contest. The winner will be flown to Washington, D.C., on the weekend of the march (Oct. 10-11) and will speak at the event.

Winners will be decided by YouTube star ratings and Facebook thumbs-ups. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c4mEccocqEU.

Chicago holding rally for March

There will be a rally in Chicago for the National Equality March on Sunday, Oct. 11—the same day the actual Washington, D.C., event is slated to take place. The rally will be held in Daley Plaza (on Washington between Clark and Dearborn) at 1 p.m.

According to its Facebook page, the organization hosting the local event, LGBT Change, is "calling on LGBTQ of every race, class, faith, and from every community to come together here in Chicago to show your support for the National Equality March and make just one simple demand: Federal protection against LGBT inequities in all 50 states."

E-mail info@lgbtchange.org or visit www.LGBTChange.org.

MELL from cover

I did a lot of listening, and I asked a lot of questions. And there are some things I don't like about Springfield; I don't like the way things go sometimes.

[For example,] you get invited by lobbyists to go out to dinner—and, at first, I did that and I let them pay. Then, I just didn't like it; it just didn't feel right. So I started paying for my own dinners, but then it can become uncomfortable. At this one dinner, I pulled out my money and, in front of everyone, [the lobbyist] was like, "What's this for?" I said, "It's for my meal. We can have a nice conversation but you don't need to pay for me." So now I don't go out to dinner. So the first year is basically like that: getting your feet wet, learning when to speak up and not to speak up.

WCT: What's been the biggest surprise for you so far?

DM: The biggest surprise has been how quickly things happen. At first, it's a [wait-and-see], but when they happen, they happen quickly.

Also—and I'll be quite honest—I didn't know that I voted to tax Twizzlers, which have flour in them, at a different rate than Hershey's, which don't have flour. We raised taxes on candy, and the difference between candy and food is flour. It was in the bill, but the bill is huge—about 50 pages. You don't have time and staff; you have one staff person you share with reps, and then you have another secretary who schedules and things like that. There's a lot of stuff in those bills. You do the best you can—seeing who's voting.

I've really been talking with a lot of female reps down [in Springfield], like Julie Hamos, Elaine Nekritz and Kathy Ryg, who's moved on to Voices for Illinois Children. They're independent, thoughtful legislators.

WCT: How do you feel about the civil-unions bill? Do you feel it might pass soon?

DM: My whole attitude has been—and I haven't been quiet about it—is that we should just go for marriage in Illinois. I think it's [about] technique. I've been asked to go talk with another representative, and I'll try to put my legislator hat on, but I can't; it's just so personal to me. They'll tell me they can't vote for it and I'm like, "Why not?"

If you [were heterosexual and married], and you died in office, [your wife] would get the rest of your pay for that year. Christin [Baker, Mell's partner] gets nothing. I feel like we should go for marriage.

WCT: And it's interesting how we have this state-by-state battle instead of having the



Deb Mell.

federal approach. You're glad about what happened in Iowa, but you look over at California, which some see as this bastion of liberalism...

DM: I was recently in Los Angeles, and there were people with their clipboards saying, "Let's get marriage," and I'm like, "You shouldn't have lost it." I'm upset with California. I think they took it for granted.

WCT: It was interesting because the movement against [anti-same-sex-marriage initiative] Proposition 8 had more money than the movement for it.



DM: They didn't employ the right people. I wasn't asked for money; I wasn't asked to help. You would think that you'd approach an open—I don't know. It was a bummer, though, to [find out about Prop 8 passing] after Obama's election.

I think it's good to have [openly gay State Rep.] Greg [Harris] and I down there on the floor as a visible presence.

When you're in session, you can only have immediate family members down on the floor with you, but they let Christin in. It was the first time in history that [a same-sex] partner was on the floor of the House. And people saw it—and the more you see it, the more you become accustomed to it.

I'm very hopeful. I think it's like the [women's] suffrage movement, with the state-by-state approach and then, it just happened.

WCT: What accomplishment are you proudest of?

DM: I have a huge interest in drug-treatment programs; [I believe in] treating alcoholics and

drug addicts like they're sick instead of criminals. I found out that it's up to the prison to allow recovery meetings in their prisons. My bill—and I'm really proud of this because it's a bill I thought of myself—says that all prisons have to open its doors once a week for at least an hour so these meetings can take place. Let's just start getting recovery in the heads of addicts and alcoholics. Plus, it doesn't cost the state a cent—and the community is there once the prisoner gets out. It's the most proven way to stay sober.

The governor signed it into law this summer; now, I'm going to work with the prison community to make sure they do it.

I was also proud of [Public Act 096-0574, which requires institutions of higher education to put up posters stating sexual harassment laws and policies]. I'm also happy that I voted against the income-tax increase, because I got a lot of pressure to vote for it. I felt that it was wrong to ask people we represent—without taking any steps at all, without making any cuts [and] without asking me to take a pay cut—for more money. I got picketed, and got [letters] and phone calls from the union.

WCT: I do feel compelled to ask about the former governor, Rod Blagojevich. Why did you decide to vote against his impeachment instead of just voting "present?"

DM: I thought a lot about that vote. One of things is that I didn't want my first vote out of the box to be a "present" vote. I try really hard not to do any "present" votes; I've done three, maybe.

Also, I truly felt that a "yes" vote [to impeach] wasn't the vote to make. What's interesting is that people came up to me afterwards and [indicated] they were happy I did that. Then, I heard from people in my district. Not everyone thinks that Rod Blagojevich is guilty, especially in this district.

Now you can argue that people wanted me to vote "yes," and I heard from people—but not many from my area. The day I made that vote, the Rod I knew and the Rod they were talking about didn't match up. [So, it was] the input from the district, coupled with the fact that he's my brother-in-law and I felt I should give him the benefit of the doubt. Someone said, "I think that's the hardest first vote anyone's had to make."

But that vote was so long ago, and I've taken many more votes on [issues] I feel are much more important. I've been walking the district, and I feel pretty comfortable with how the [Blagojevich] vote's been taken. And if anyone wrote or e-mailed me, I immediately [contacted] and spoke with them, because I thought that was important.

We'll see how it all plays out. ... People are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

WCT: Have you read [Blagojevich's] book [entitled The Governor]?

DM: No, I haven't. Have you?

WCT: Not yet. How much do you know about your opponent in this race [Joe Laiacona]?

DM: I know very little about him. I read his bio, and I know through other people that he was a writer for [a gay publication].

The funny thing is that he came down for Equality Lobby Days. I said "hi" to him—and this was before I knew he was running against me—and he said that he was a constituent in my district. I asked, "How do you think I'm doing?" and he said, "I think you're doing good." I invited people for a community advisory panel—and then I find out he's running against me.

Deb Mell will hold a reception Thursday, Oct. 22, 6-9 p.m., at Chief O'Neill's Pub & Restaurant, 3471 N. Elston, complete with "BFF," "Twitter" and "Facebook" contribution levels. See www.debmell.org.

To find out other things Mell discussed—including the politician she is endorsing and what she feels the biggest misunderstanding is regarding her—read the entire interview online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Saturday, Oct. 3
Women & Children First
30th Anniversary Gala
Featuring special guests
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Gala 7-10 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 10
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WORLD ROUNDUP

BY REX WOCKNER

Gays protest Australian 'gay conversion' confab

Twenty people staged a protest outside a "gay conversion" conference in suburban Melbourne, Australia, on Sept. 19.

They carried signs reading "Hands off queer kids" and "You can't straighten me out," and had a heated debate with conference organizers.

"Teaching young people to suppress their sexuality and pretend to be straight is detrimental to their well-being," said protester Tim Wright. "If their church won't accept them for who they are, they should find a church that does."

"The idea that you can convert gays to heterosexuality ... has been completely discredited by science, yet a small handful of fanatics continue to advance it," Wright said. "It's not likely that the conversion movement will ever gain traction in Australia as it has in the United States, but this event is a reminder that we must remain vigilant."

U.S. gays wed in Canada have trouble divorcing

Some U.S. gay couples who get married in Canada and then later want to divorce find themselves in a pickle, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported Sept. 25.

Forty-two U.S. states do not recognize same-sex marriage and, therefore, it is not possible for a same-sex couple to divorce in many or all of those states.

A couple could return to Canada to end the marriage, but that presents its own problem: Canadian divorce law requires that at least one of the spouses has lived in Canada for the 12 months before a divorce is granted.

The CBC said similar divorce requirements exist in U.S. states that recognize gay marriage.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

Read more world news and the national roundup online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Among this week's items are:

- the cancellation of Serbia's pride parade;
- the solving of a 32-year-old murder; and
- the NFL player who supports gay marriage.

More world news

In South Africa, there was a mixed verdict in the trial of three men accused of raping and murdering soccer star Eudy Simelane in April 2008 as one man received life in prison while the two others were acquitted, although Judge Ratha Mokgoathleng said they might have to answer to God someday, according to the New York Times. The man who was found guilty, 24-year-old Themba Mvubu, actually left the courtroom smiling, telling a reporter, "I'm not sorry at all."

In what some have called the world's largest HIV vaccine trial ever, researchers have discovered that people who received a prime and booster vaccines were approximately 30 percent less likely to get HIV (compared to those who received a placebo), according to CNN.com. The study was conducted in Thailand, with more than 16,000 younger adults (18-30). Almost 8,200 received a placebo and a comparable number received six vaccines over six months; the subjects were evaluated over a period of three years.

—Andrew Davis

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"WE WERE OVERCONFIDENT (ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE) IN CALIFORNIA. In Maine, there is no illusion of easy victory. This one will be hard fought, and conservative forces will once again spend with little abandon to delay the inevitable. They can read the polls as well, and they see that their most favorable constituency is dying off, and that younger generations are too tolerant for their hateful brand of bigotry." — *Daily Kos Publisher Markos Moulitsas Zúniga ("Kos"), Sept. 18. A new Kos poll shows gays losing marriage in Maine 48 percent to 46 percent.*

"WE NEED AN ACT UP CONSTANTLY AND ALWAYS. ACT UP at its peak of success had several hundred chapters all over the world, and it's because of ACT UP that every single one of those AIDS treatments is out there. We hammered and protested and put our lives on the lines and stormed the NIH (National Institutes of Health) and broke into drug companies. And we taught ourselves everything there was to know about how the system worked, and we worked it. And that's how those drugs are out there. And as soon as we got the drugs, ACT UP sort of folded its tent, and we really need the equivalent of something like that that's on guard every single day against our enemies, and we don't have that." — *Activist legend Larry Kramer to the Dallas Voice, Sept. 18.*

"WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT EVERYTHING WE HAVE won can very quickly be taken away from us. We have seen this time and again. Presidents come and go ignoring us. This president is no different. Once again he is not doing it for us and once again we are letting him get away with it. This president is another loser for us and I predict he will remain this way." — *Activist legend Larry Kramer speaking at Dallas gay pride, Sept. 20.*

"WE KNEW (FROM THE PROP 8 BATTLE IN CALIFORNIA) what the opposition was going to say (in the current battle in Maine). ... Shouldn't we have had an ad on the air already addressing these specific concerns before the Yes on 1 opened their lying mouths? ... We need to kill their arguments before they even voice them. We need to tell Mainers: 'You're going to hear that marriage is going to be taught in schools, but you have the power to decide that yourself in your districts. You're going to hear that your church is going to be sued, but you already have protections in place by law. The other side is going to try and confuse this issue, to state things that are not in the law. They want to mislead you. They will lie to you. This is not about curriculum, not about religion. What this is about is civil marriage for all. It's about protecting families. It's about being fair.' But that's just a start. It's got to hit harder. Expose the lies as lies." — *Blogger Phillip Minton (unitethefight.org), Sept. 17. A new poll shows gays losing marriage in Maine 48 percent to 46 percent.*

"WE ALSO MUST CONDEMN VIOLENCE BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION and gender identity. In country after country after country, young men and women are persecuted, are singled out, even murdered in cold blood, because of who they love or just based on claims that

they are gay. We are starting to track violence against the LGBT community, because where it happens anywhere in the world, the United States must speak out against it and work for its end. Through our annual human rights report, we are documenting human rights abuses against LGBT communities worldwide. And we are seeking out partners at the United Nations such as Brazil, France, Sweden and the Netherlands to help us address these human rights abuses." — *U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaking Sept. 11 at the Roosevelt Institute's Four Freedoms Medals Gala Dinner in New York City.*



We need an ACT UP constantly and always.

—Larry Kramer

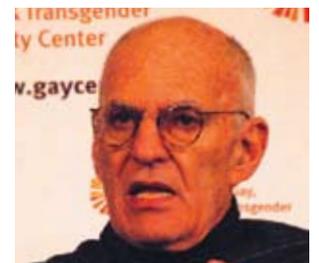


Photo by Doug Meszler



"I'VE BEEN AFFECTED BY GAY ISSUES MY WHOLE LIFE. I have (gay) friends that are married. I have (gay) friends that are great parents. I have (gay) friends that are business partners, who are fabulous and in established relationships that have lasted longer than both of my marriages combined. I'm also lucky that I had parents who were really open and non-judgmental and inclusive, and I guess there aren't that many in the grand scheme of things, but in New York—and in my business—it's very natural. So, I'm always surprised by people that are not tolerant, that are uneducated, and it saddens me, but honestly there's a lot of change going on. It's furious." — *Actress and singer Vanessa Williams (who plays Wilhelmina on Ugly Betty) to San Diego's Gay & Lesbian Times, Sept. 17.*

"IT (MY RELATIONSHIP WITH DAVID WEBSTER) JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER. I wanted him from the very beginning, and it took a long time to get him, and now I've got him. It's worked out beautifully. So for those of you with similar stories, take hope when it doesn't work the first time." — *Activist legend Larry Kramer to the Dallas Voice, Sept. 18. Kramer and Webster were a couple for four years in the 1970s, then broke up and didn't see each other for 17 years, before getting back together in the early 1990s.*

"IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW (NEW JUDGE ELLEN) DEGENERES relates to the gaydar-scrambling parade of '(American) Idol' contestants who, with the network's PR assistance, mainly deflect the issue of their sexual orientation as irrelevant to the task at hand, which is pop stardom and mainstream marketing, which turned youngsters such as Clay Aiken and Adam Lambert into the most curious sort of modern-day closet cases. Ellen knows a thing or two about that—when orientation is relevant and when it is not—and it remains to be seen if she'll be able to bring this sort of nuance to the clear-plastic desk of decision." — *Washington Post TV critic Hank Stuever on the selection of Ellen DeGeneres to replace Paula Abdul as a judge on American Idol, Sept. 11.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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**TRACY
BAIM**

The Olympics question

Because I was so involved in efforts to bring the Gay Games to Chicago in 2006, I have been asked hundreds of times by friends and strangers what my opinion is of the Olympics potentially coming to Chicago.

While the financial scale of the Gay Games is much smaller than the Olympics (the Chicago 2016 group has spent more than five times our \$10 million budget just on their bid), we had more than 11,000 athletes and culture participants, which is more than many summer Olympics have had. The Gay Games also inspired Mayor Daley to make a stronger push for the Olympics here. He said his experience during Gay Games VII in 2006, especially at Soldier Field's Opening Ceremony, motivated him.

But the Olympics are a city-sponsored and supported event, while the Gay Games were privately funded, and we even paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to the city for use of Soldier Field, parks, city services, and more. The city made money from us, not to mention the millions in economic impact the city experienced from tourists and residents spending money during our 10-day event.

So, what do I think about the potential of Chicago hosting the Olympics? I am quite torn. As a lifelong Chicagoan, I am so proud of this city, and I consider it the best place in the world to live. I think an event like the Olympics will be good for Chicago, but I have quite a few caveats to that statement. I do want Chicago to win the right to host the Olympics, but I also want us to

hold this city and its elected and appointed officials to a much a higher standard than we have witnessed in the past.

We all know the stories of insider deals, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts run amuck, double-dipping politicians, lack of transparency, gentrification without enforced plans to build low-cost replacement housing, and, possibly worst of all, the sale of our city's income-generating assets without a full vetting. The parking meter scandal will negatively impact generations if it is not fixed.

"The Chicago Way" is a joke we live with, but it is not one we have to continue to laugh at while doing nothing.

In sum, I saw what the Gay Games did for our city, on its own scale, and I therefore think the Olympics would be an even grander way to showcase our city. But this is what I would ask us to make sure of:

1) We need a law that requires one-for-one housing replacement for those who will be displaced by the necessary building boom.

2) The parks that will be swallowed up for years because of Olympic plans must also be replaced one-for-one.

3) Enforcement of women and minority contract set-asides must be overseen by an independent review panel.

4) Security personnel (police and others) need ongoing training to handle a diverse population already in Chicago, one that will only get more diverse during the Olympics. No repeat of the 1969 riots, please, or of recent cases of police misconduct.

5) Changes to transportation should be in line with plans that will further enhance the long-term needs of the communities, not just short-term Olympic travel needs.

6) That every person, paid or volunteer, with the Olympics and the city must sign strict conflict-of-interest and ethics contracts. Absolutely no one associated with the Olympics process should profit from the Olympics in any unethical way. This includes through building contracts, sale of properties, no-bid contracts for restaur-

rant vendors, etc.

7) When an event takes place in a neighborhood, every effort must be made to involve local businesses, not forcing them to compete against massive corporate chains for the Olympic business. We need to use this as an opportunity to grow local businesses, not line the pockets of multi-billion-dollar Olympic sponsors.

8) Finally, I have been pretty unimpressed with the outreach of the Olympic bid committee. It has been very top-down and secret in many of its approaches. They have paid the price for that arrogance. They have not learned the lessons of past events in Chicago or elsewhere, and they have not had a grassroots feel at all. That has to change. Native Chicagoans and our friends are living in cities throughout the world. Our own Gay Games created a vast network of Chicago fans that have gone untapped by Olympic organizers. These are athletes and cultural folks who might make easy ambassadors for our city's outreach efforts for the Olympics. The winning bid city can't afford to manage from the corporate tower. We need this event to have ownership from all parts of the city of Chicago—geographic, class, ethnic, religious, gender, and LGBT. The city needs us all to feel a fully vested interest to make the Olympics successful.

For the Gay Games, we experienced an amazing support from a wide range of city and suburban people, including from Oak Park, Evanston and Crystal Lake (yes, Crystal Lake, which eventually supported us). Athletes said strangers, gay and straight, welcomed them with open arms. We had a tremendous feeling of citizenship and pride in hosting the Gay Games.

I want that for Chicago again, for the Olympics. But it is a much more difficult, and expensive, path. Let's hope our officials—those who are elected and those who are part of the Olympic team—are listening. If they are not, we may just have to shout a little louder.

Tracy Baim was co-vice chair of Gay Games VII and is publisher of Windy City Media Group.



**STATE SEN.
HEATHER
STEANS**



**STATE REP.
GREG
HARRIS**

The fight for equal marriage

The United States claims to be the most free and independent country in the world. Yet all of our citizens do not have equal rights. In Illinois, same-sex couples have to fight to visit each other in hospitals, make health care decisions, and raise children together.

That is not true equality and fairness. We believe that needs to change, and the time is now.

I, Rep. Greg Harris, D-13th District, have introduced Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriage bills in the House each session for each of the past two General Assemblies.

And now I, State Sen. Heather Steans, D-7th District, want to make it clear that it is a priority not just of an openly gay representative in the House but, in fact, fair-minded straight people in the Senate to work toward equal rights.

I believe that my husband and I shouldn't be treated any differently than my many LGBT friends in their relationships. That's why I am introducing the "Equal Marriage Act" in the Senate and will work with my colleagues to bring Illinois back to the forefront of human rights.

Over and over again, our collective American community has learned the painful lesson that separate can never be equal. In the 19th century, women across this country came together to fight for the basic right to vote. In the 20th century, it took a brave young girl in Kansas to teach us that we cannot provide equal education in segregated classrooms. Marriage equality is our civil rights battle for the 21st century. When one of us is discriminated against, we are all discriminated against.

In 2004, an ABC poll showed just 32 percent of Americans favoring gay marriage. Now 49 percent support it, versus 46 percent opposed—the first time in ABC/Post polls that supporters outnumbered opponents. Moreover, 53 percent believe equal marriages held legally in another state should be recognized as legal in their states.

Five progressive states—Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire and our neighbor, Iowa—now have full marriage equality. In Maine, voters will go to the polls to decide whether equal rights should be granted to same-sex couples.

It is under consideration in many other states, and should be made clear to everyone in Illinois that this is a fight we will not quit. No session will go by in the Senate or the House where this battle will not be fought—and in the interest of justice, fairness and the principle set forth by our founding fathers, we will win.

Letter to the editor:

Pushed too far

The other day a straight Black man at a local CTA train station told me he should strangle me and then throw me into the Chicago River because I was Black and gay! I was told being gay was a "white" thing.

I have always helped fight the war for equality from afar, but it's time to be more active.

I'm going to be on the front lines with patience, education, leadership and, most importantly, love.

Being gay alone brings enough challenges. Being gay and Black means a lonely and hurtful world being rejected by family, friends, the Black church and Black society in general.

I think it's my time and anyone else in the LGBT community to take a stand and speak out against these acts and start to have a uniform voice, no matter if you're Black, white, brown, etc.

Too many LGBT individuals walk around everyday feeling repressed, confused and tormented because of their sexuality and the way society treats them.

I know I will no longer wake up everyday and try to come up with better ways to repress, hide and deny my sexuality!

All LGBTs should come out the closet and help the equal-rights agenda. We should help each other, provide support for those who are trying to come out the closet and educate ourselves.

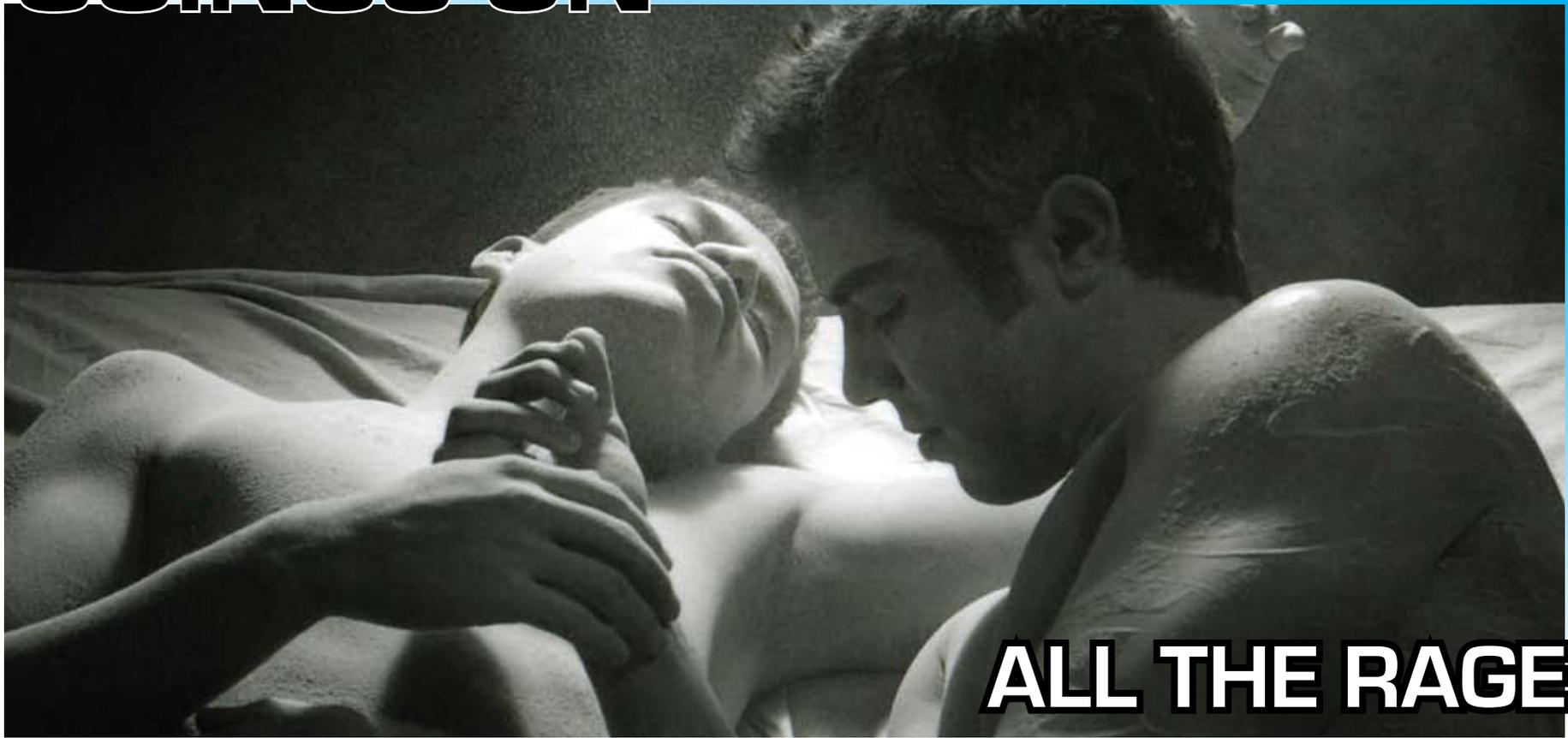
—Jason L. Cozart

Community Marketing, Inc.

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

GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



ALL THE RAGE

The Mexican movie *Raging Sun, Raging Sky* (above) is one of the LGBT offerings at Chicago International Film Festival. See page 16.

MOVIES

Moore to 'Love.'
Page 17.



HOMES

By design.
Page 18.

Photo courtesy of Fern Allison



SPORTS

Freeze frame.
Page 22.

Photo by
daviddanielsphotography.com



Daniel Beaty on Black men in America

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

At the tender age of 33, Daniel Beaty is a playwright, actor and songwriter on the rise.

After schooling at Yale University and training with the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, this native of Dayton, Ohio, went on to win an Obie Award for his 2007 one-man play, *Emergence-SEE!* Beaty's 2008 drama, *Resurrection*, was also co-produced by The Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Hartford Stage in Connecticut and the Philadelphia Theatre Company.

Resurrection is now making its Chicago debut at eta Creative Arts Foundation. The drama focuses on six African-American men between the ages of 10-60, and the societal and personal challenges they each face.

Dividing his time between Los Angeles and New York, Beaty took time to chat about *Resurrection* and why he feels it's necessary to include lots of humor and gay characters in his work.

Windy City Times: I've heard that you were inspired to write *Resurrection* based upon your own life experiences, but also by a policy report?

Daniel Beaty: I came across the National Urban League's report 2007 State of Black America: Portrait of the Black Male. [Now-President] Barack Obama wrote the forward and it was a series of statistics and scholarly essays about the state of Black men in America. I thought to myself, I want to write a story that thoroughly examines some of these issues, but also really tells a story of resurrection and overcoming these issues.

WCT: And those issues are...

DB: The state of the prison system, the education system, issues of health, faith in Black men, business ownership and others. In addition to that, one thing that was very important to me was that I endeavored to include in the land-



Daniel Beaty.

scape of Black American experience is a character who is gay and on the down low and the conflict between his religion and sexuality. That shows up in many communities, but definitely in the Black community.

WCT: How is that conflict worked into *Resurrection*?

DB: There is a [sixtysomething] father who is the bishop of a mega church and a very prominent figure in the community. And his [fortysomething] son is on the down low. He works in corporate America and works for a music label. Because of who his father is, and his own concept of what it means to be a Black man, he's dealing with a lot.

WCT: I've heard that the preacher character says some very homophobic things in the play.

DB: Yeah, I don't pull punches when I create characters. One of the lines in the play, which I've personally heard said over the pulpit, is "If you have been a drug addict, a prostitute, a murderer, or a homosexual, God can turn your life around." And so the response from the son is, "This is why it's so hard for me. Murderer equals homosexual." And then he goes on to talk about the hypocrisy of the fact that there are so many gay people in the church and even leaders in the church who are gay.

WCT: How is the play structured?

DB: It's combination of theatrical forms. There are characters scenes with each other. There are monologues directed to the audience and choreo-poem moments where they share lines of

a larger poetic song.

WCT: Choreo-poem? That sounds a bit like Ntozake Shange's for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf...

DB: That is actually a comparison that has been made, and I was mindful of that piece. I actually have a direct response moment to for colored girls... in this play. One of most devastating things for me [in Shange's play] is that an abusive man drops his children out of the window. In this play, there is a moment when a character, who has really fought hard for redemption, actually takes his baby boy to the window. He eventually surrenders to God to ask for strength to be the best father he could be.

WCT: As a gay playwright, how important is it to include gay characters in your work?

DB: I write primarily from the African-American experience, because that's what I know. But in that experience it's also very important to me that this conversation of sexuality and being gay is included in a larger landscape of what it means to be Black in America. I don't necessarily create stories that are all about that experience, but I create stories that include the experience of being gay as part of larger conversation.

WCT: You also stress humor in your writing.

DB: The play obviously deals with these social-political themes, but one of my commitments as a writer is to include a lot of humor in the work. You can't just preach at people. People want to be entertained. So in addition to these characters and the deep issues they're working through, there is also a lot of humor.

WCT: You were in Chicago recently to attend rehearsals and do some publicity. What's your reaction to seeing *Resurrection* at eta?

DB: One of the things that I love about the show being at eta is that it's an institution that is in the community, serves the community and is supported by the community of the South Side. Prior productions were in some more of the traditional regional theaters in which the landscape of these institutions is largely white and

over 50. So I'm excited about the possibility of a diverse audience—not just race, but age and class being able to experience the work.

Resurrection continues at eta Creative Arts Foundation, 7558 S. South Chicago, through Nov. 15. Beaty is also scheduled to appear in a special one-night fundraising performance of Emergenc-SEE! on Nov. 16. Call 773-752-3955 or visit www.etacreativearts.org for more information.

CRITICS' PICKS

All My Sons, Timeline at the Greenhouse, through Oct. 4. Timeline's *The History Boys* continues its sold-out run as the troupe also offers this splendid staging of Arthur Miller's retribution tragedy. Roger Mueller and Janet Ulrich Brooks as Joe and Kate Keller are heart-wrenching. JA

Cabaret, Drury Lane Oakbrook, through Oct. 11. Think you know *Cabaret* from its 1972 film version? It was a different creature on Broadway, and director Jim Corti masterfully returns this celebrated Kander and Ebb musical back to its Broadway roots (no interpolated film songs) for a smashing production. SCM

Fear, Neo-Futurists, through Oct 31. Edgar Allan Poe's nightmare-inducing story *The Fall of the House of Usher* serves as the spooktacular starting point for the Neo-Futurists' Halloween-centric show—staged, but of course, above a funeral home. CS

The Thin Man, City Lit Theatre, through Oct. 11. A whodunit adapted to the confines of the stage always means compromises, but an ensemble of actors steeped in urban grit 'n' glitter, led by the sturdy Wm. Bullion, ensures that fans of hard-boiled detective fiction will walk away satisfied. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge,
Morgan and Sullivan



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HARRIS



Yeast Nation. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW Yeast Nation

Playwright: Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann
At: American Theatre Company,
1909 W. Byron
Phone: 773-929-1031; \$35-\$40
Runs through: Oct. 18

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

The gathering of musical talent onstage at American Theatre Company is formidable. For the post-Alaska premiere of *Yeast Nation*, director PJ Paparelli has enlisted the help of some serious song-and-dance heavy-hitters: Among them, Joseph Anthony Foronda, (who could show Jonathan Pryce a thing or two about engineering in *Miss Saigon*), and Barbara Robertson, (who in addition to being a Shakespearean actor of no small accomplishments played Madame Morrible in *Wicked*.) The musical's pedigree is similarly impressive: As has been much noted, *Yeast Nation* is the sophomore effort by Urinetown creators Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics.)

But for all the undeniable charisma onstage and the proven gifts of its creators, *Yeast Nation's* charms are apt to prove elusive for many. The “bio-historical musical” about single-celled organisms floating (and dancing) in the primordial soup is at once innovative and alienating, shrill and silly, juvenile and satirically self-aware.

Dressed in fluorescent chartreuse rain ponchos (A bigger costume budget would go a long way toward ridding the raingear of its Dollar Store aesthetic), the bottom-of-the-ocean dwelling Yeasts struggle with stasis and evolution as their food supply of ocean salts dwindles and they're forced to contemplate floating toward the light and edible muck at the top of their water world.

Theoretically, the trials of these mucus-filled micro-organisms can be taken as an allegory or a fable or both (one Yeast points out as much in one of the show's many moments of meta-theatrics). With songs such as “Stasis is the Membrane” and “Let Us Rise,” Kotis and Hollman illustrate the universal themes of this way B.C. story. This is a musical about bettering the world and oneself by daring to rebel against a destructive, myopic and tyrannically enforced status quo.

But despite the obvious overarching themes, there's no completely shaking Yeast factor of *Yeast Nation*. In the end, asking the audience empathize with life forms generally associated with infections and/or bread dough is a tough sell. As for us, we weren't buying it. Moreover, where Urinetown was smart and original, *Yeast Nation* is obvious and reductive. A rockish score blasting through muddy acoustics doesn't help. The sound design is loud rather than clear. Amplification does make for coherency: It only makes the garble of garbled words louder.

On the plus side of *Yeast Nation* is its sheer audaciousness. Not since the dancing scuba scene in *Mama Mia* have we seen an 11 o'clock number

performed by a cast tricked out in Pepto-Bismal pink, tight-as-white-on-rice catsuits. Paul Spadone's costumes—despite the apparently rock bottom budget—are clever. Look carefully at those acid greenish ponchos and you can tell which Yeasts are old-timers and which are comparative youngsters. It's unfortunate that within those ponchos/membranes, there's little to anchor *Yeast Nation* emotionally.

THEATER REVIEW

Year Zero

Playwright: Michael Golamco
At: Victory Gardens Biograph
Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln
Phone: 773-871-3000; \$30-\$48
Runs through Oct. 18

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Let me offer a belated apology to Victory Gardens Theater. Back in a 2007 review of *The Magic Cabaret*, I incorrectly stated that an upstairs rehearsal room at Victory Gardens' Biograph Theater was the company's incomplete studio theater.

Victory Gardens has now unveiled its true studio space with the world premiere of Michael Golamco's drama *Year Zero*. This 120-seat theater promises to be a vital addition not only for Victory Gardens, but also for the Chicago theater scene.

Too bad that Golamco's *Year Zero* doesn't fully live up to this auspicious occasion, or its own potential. *Year Zero* is a product of Victory Gardens' Ignition: Emerging Playwrights of Color initiative, which aims to promote and produce works by minority playwrights and artists (Victory Gardens current main stage show, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, is also an Ignition product).

Golamco's heart is in the right place with *Year Zero*, but he aims at too many targets. Cambodian-American characters deal with not only the legacy of their native country's genocidal past under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, but with the difficulties they face from gangs and heightened expectations to succeed in their adopted country.

Year Zero's main protagonist is the awkward 16-year-old Vuthy Vichea (an enjoyable Joyee Lin). Vuthy largely gets all A's in his diverse high school in Long Beach, Calif., but is also constantly bullied at school. He's also coping with the recent death of his mother in a very odd way: He secretly talks to a human skull he swiped while visiting a Cambodian death camp museum.

Vuthy's med-student older sister, Ra (a very-understated Jennifer Shin), isn't much help. Back in town to clean out the family home, Ra refuses to take Vuthy in to live with her and her condescending Chinese-American boyfriend, Glenn (a merely adequate Allan Aquino), in Berkeley, Calif.

Helping to stoke lingering questions about Vuthy and Ra's deceased mother is hunky neighbor and ex-con, Han (a low-key Tim Chiou). Han is not only a family friend and former gang member (note his many tattoos), but he vaguely remembers some of the chaos and confusion of Cambodia as a child.

Since Golamco's meandering script doesn't raise the dramatic stakes compellingly enough, director Andrea J. Dymond doesn't really draw out showy performances from her cast.

At least the production is handsomely designed, particularly Richard and Jacqueline Penrod's domestic set design that allows Cambodia's disturbing past to literally materialize high over the characters' heads.

Though *Year Zero* is stuffed with enlightening insights to its Asian-American characters, it comes off more as a worthy educational experience rather than an entertaining drama. But in terms of giving voice to underrepresented minorities in American culture, *Year Zero* does its job.



Fake.
Photo by
Michael
Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW

Fake

Playwright: Eric Simonson
At: Steppenwolf Theatre,
1825 N. Halsted
Phone: 312-335-1650; \$20-\$48
Runs through: Nov. 8

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The so-called "Piltdown Man" ranks among the greatest scientific hoaxes ever perpetrated. In the wake of Darwin's theories on evolution, the discovery in 1912 on English soil of a "missing link" between apes and humans found enthusiastic support in those most wanting for such an event—if only to refute the disturbing Teuton-supremacist theories emanating from Germany. Thus, asserts author Eric Simonson, do people bereft of necessary facts turn to speculation and/or mysticism for comfort in troubled times. (Consider our own myth of airline passengers mounting resistance against terrorists bent on destruction of our nation's capital.) This propensity to actualization, which Steppenwolf Theatre proposes to explore this season, is all the more timely as technology renders rumor capable of spreading faster than ever before.

Simonson begins by presenting us with a conference called by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, for the purpose of exposing the half-monkey/half-human skull in question as a fraud perpetrated by an amateur anthropologist, a radical theologian and the curator of the museum exhibiting it—his witness, a hard-nosed female American journalist. The action soon leaps four decades—yes, very like Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*—to 1953, where a team of eggheads from the University of California, armed with the latest chemical-dating equipment, will produce proof of the artifact's bogus foundation.

Simonson could have fashioned this material into a cozy whodunit—Yankee skepticism triumphing in the end, of course—or a biting analysis of otherwise ethical men bending principles to their own advantage, in service of goals honorable, or not. He also could have made a compassionate plea for mortals, beset by uncertainty, driven to fabricating order in an unruly universe—Sir Arthur's opponents taunt him for his belief in spiritualism, and the connections between personal tragedy and scholarly curiosity in the life of founding father Darwin, himself, are explored. Or our playwright could invite discussion of all of these themes, and throw in some sex to raise the stakes a little more.

SPOTLIGHT



Shakespeare's history play *Henry V* gets a little bit of creative revisionism in Matt Pepper's black comedy *St. Crispin's Day*, now in its Chicago premiere at Strawdog Theatre. As the English forces are about to take on the French at the Battle of Agincourt, a provocateur among the troops tries to get the recruits to overthrow the monarch. It all fits in with Strawdog's season exploring "Why We Fight." *St. Crispin's Day* plays 8 p.m. Fridays; 4 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; and 7 p.m. Sundays through Saturday, Oct. 31, at Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway. Tickets are \$20 and \$30 on closing night. Student and senior tickets are \$15; call 773-528-9696 or visit www.strawdog.org. Photo by Chris Ocken

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BY DAVID BYRNE WITH TONY PEREGRIN

This fall **Kylie Minogue** is embarking on her first North American Tour with a stop at The Congress Theater, 2135 N. Milwaukee, on Wed., Oct. 7. Before I can daydream about the show's set list, I must ask, "Why The Congress Theatre?" Having seen her in London during 2002's Fever Tour, I would have thought the Chicago Theatre to have been better residence for the Australian pop star.

Minogue's career spans over 20 years, highlighted by a HI-NRG cover of Little Eva's "The Loco-motion" and the pulsating "Can't Get You out of My Head." The petite breast-cancer survivor puts on quite the performance. Even Madonna has been accused of ripping off of the talent 10 years her junior. Minogue has a new album in the works.

Health care and the abuse of prescription drugs are regulars in the news. **Linq** combines her songwriting craft and her experience as a pharmacist to tackle these issues on her latest self-release, *Rx and the Side Effects*. On "Prescription Chaos," our quick to medicate culture

is criticized. Linq cleverly chronicles a family's woes on "Simple Woman" and scolds the bullying of the pharmaceutical industry on "Money Today." "Gun in Hand" is video-ready, ideal for Las Vegas-style impersonators of Michael Jackson, Anna Nicole Smith and a poor-miming Paula Abdul. I am still feasting on Linq's fantastic album, *Life Goes On*, from earlier this year; *Rx and the Side Effects* is a remarkable successor.

He has forced Britney Spears, Amy Winehouse, Beyonce and Aretha Franklin. The fearless openly gay comedian **Greg Scarnici** makes a debut bow with *12 Inch Freak*. His brand of comedy is coupled with multiple genres, including R&B on "I Wanna..." and house on "Ohh... Yeah." Fusing music with a twist of humor is in the same vein as the L.A.-based electro trio *Dirty Sanchez*. Scarnici's latest HI-NRG video "Hater Anthem" is nothing short of hilarious. Having already taunted celebrities like Enimem and Fergie, closet cases are the target on "Curious" and "Gay for Pay." *12 Inch Freak* also includes Scarnici's breakout youtube sensation "Gimme More (Pills)," a spot on spoof of Spears' comeback smash.

The Ettes' impressive set *I Want Power* offers a certain roughness around the corners on these under-three-minute delicacies. "Red in Tooth and Claw" and "No Home" recall finer riot grrl moments. While "I'll Be Your Lover (But I Can't Be Your Baby)" possesses Joan Jett's love for rock with a touch of a '60s pop sound. "Walk out That Door" has a mean harmonica with a nod to Jane's Addiction. The trio will have material featured in *Whip It!*, the female roller-derby



The Ettes.

film directed by Drew Barrymore. The Ettes will be opening for Juliette Lewis Friday, Oct. 2, at The Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake. Do You Want Power is out now via Take Root Records.

Taking the best from Hole, Veruca Salt and Giant Drag, **Pariah Piranha** kicks the door in with *People People*. Opener "Artifacts" sets the pace, while "Role Model" has a beautiful bleeding guitar. The closer, "Insurance Insurance," is the highlight of this Pennsylvanian band's third full-length. While '90s alternative bands are slowly becoming the hip nostalgic acts, this queer power trio has one hand keeping the remote on MTV's *120 Minutes* and the other with an all-day bracelet to today's best music festivals, like *Lollapalooza*. *Pariah Piranha* has toured with fellow LGBT artists like *Girl in a Coma* and *Nicky Click*. *People People* is out now on *Queer Control Records*.

The *Flesh Hungry Dog Show* continues to showcase a bright array of LGBT musicians. On Friday, Oct. 2, **Matt Alber** and **Aluminum Group** will be performing at *Jackhammer*, 6406 N. Clark.

The classically trained Alber was the first artist signed onto *Tommy Boy's LGBT imprint, Silver Label*. His album, *Hide Nothing*, is out now and features a cover of *Imogen Heap's "Hide and Seek,"* as well as the heavenly "Slow Club"

and "Monarch." His video "End of the World" has some heart-fluttering man-on-man romance.

Sunday, Oct. 4, marks the first live concert for **Ohvaur** at The Abbey Pub, 3420 W. Grace. Featuring Chicago's very own Timothy Den, Ohvaur offers a soulful after-hours sound, as heard on its self-titled E.P. The 5 track teaser is similar to *Zero 7's* acclaimed debut *Simple Things*, although Ohvaur focuses more on the instrumentation. But try to resist the refrain "it should not be this hard" on the opener "Not What This Century Wants." Expect any of the numbers here to get licensed to film or TV, something *Zero 7* has had success at. Ohvaur is working on its full-length and plans to tour abroad.

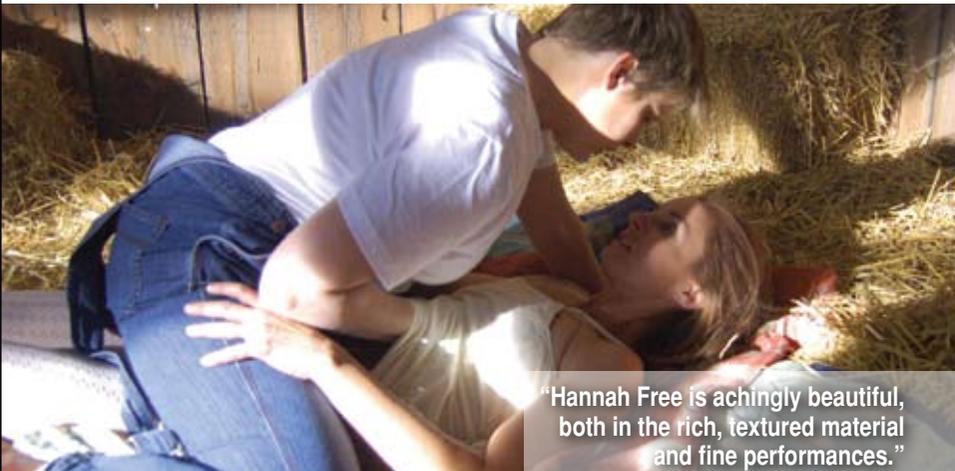
House fixture **Ralph Rosario** has a new club hit on his hands with "Everybody Shake It." Here, he teams with fellow Chicagoan Shawn Christopher. The vocal powerhouse might be best known for the dance classic "Another Sleepless Night" and lending her chops to Lil Louis' signature "French Kiss." On "Everybody Shake It," Rosario delivers an irresistible rhythm. In addition to adding his own spin to "Everybody Shake It," Dave Aude, DJ Paulo and Jay-J. also contribute mixes. "Everybody Shake It" is available now on iTunes. Rosario's remix of *Vanessa Williams' "Real Thing"* is racing up the club charts.

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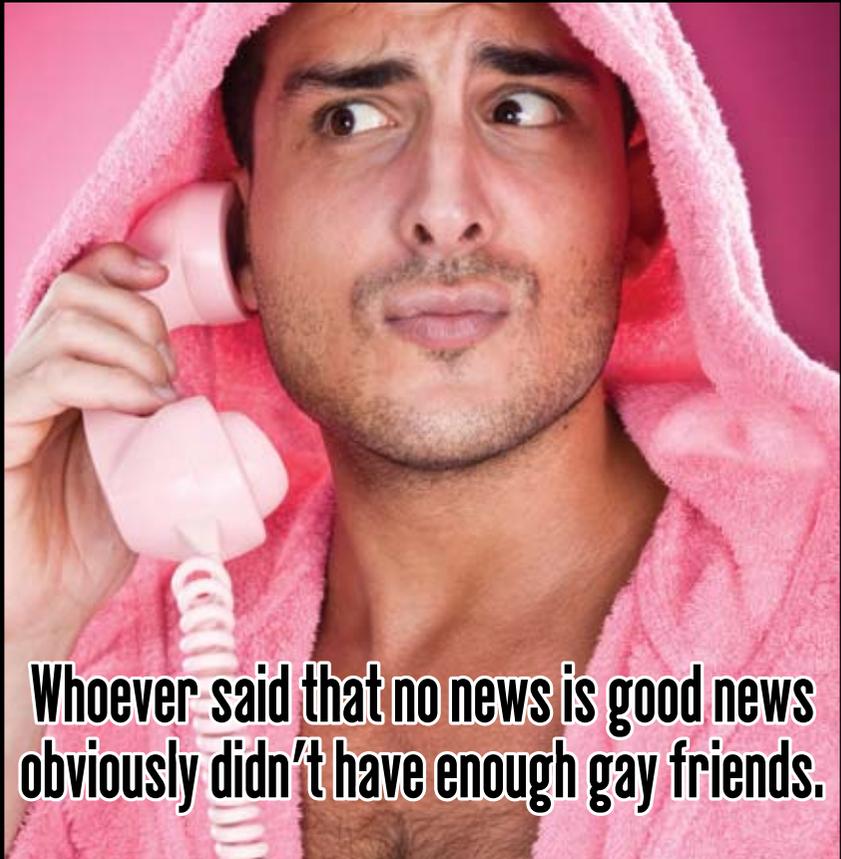
Sharon Gless (*Queer as Folk*, *Burn Notice*, *Cagney & Lacey*) stars in the drama *Hannah Free*, a film about a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home. The film is the story of six decades in the life of a lesbian partnership.

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MUSIC

Janis Ian: An icon talks

BY BLAIR MISHLEAU

Emmy Award-winning artist Janis Ian has recently released a compilation of her work so far, entitled *The Essential Janis Ian*. Janis chatted with *Windy City Times* about her music, her life and how they intersect.

Windy City Times: How would you describe your music?

Janis Ian: Social music is how I think of it: not political, not folk, not rock but social.

WCT: Who has had the greatest inspiration on your music?

JI: Leonard Cohen and the Beatles would be two huge ones, Leonard was just one of the great lyricists of my time. Leonard and Dylan, were if you were a songwriter in my community, those were the two you'd try to beat.

WCT: What inspired you to come out?

JI: Well, I was out, for all intents and purposes. Everyone I worked with knew. Then I fell in love with a guy. After that relationship ended ... I realized that I coasted towards women. I fell in love with my partner, Pat, 20 years ago.

Urvashi Vaid from [the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force] thought it would be good for kids who were living in unsupportive environments to hear that the singer of at 17 was gay, so I came out.

WCT: Do you have any advice for gay and lesbian kids coming of age today?

JI: It's a whole other world now; you can't be locked up just for being gay now. Live your life like a normal person. The sooner we start seeing and regarding ourselves as normal the sooner the world will have to view us as normal. I think we've seen that over and over now.

WCT: What is your favorite song?



Janis Ian.

JI: I really don't have a favorite. I'm gratified when "At Seventeen" reaches people where it should reach. You hope that your work will go where it will do the most good.

WCT: Could you tell us a bit about your autobiography?

JI: It's a really good beach read, that's what people keep telling me. They all said they picked it up and couldn't put it down. You write a book just like you write a song, and you hope that people will enjoy it. I say that if you read the first few pages and you don't like it, then put it down.

WCT: How has your music changed through the years?

JI: As you get older, you develop confidence of a different sort. You don't sweat the small stuff so much. You get more patience with any luck. Now I know that there's going to be another show—so if my voice cracks or I can't hit the

right note—I know there's another show.

I've gotten a new appreciation for live shows as I've gotten older. When I was younger there were a lot more live shows in smaller venues. Now everything is more of a hassle. There are so many live shows. It's just harder to get bang for your buck, I think.

WCT: Your music tends to be more solemn. Why is this?

JI: I think that's just what I do well. Just like some people write funny well—I write funny very rarely. I write about things that make people uncomfortable and give them a safe space to think about such things.

WCT: What is your favorite instrument to play?

JI: I'd say bass, but I'm terrible. I do love playing it, though.

WCT: Do you have a close second?

JI: I love playing guitar, that's what I do.

WCT: The movie Mean Girls features your song "At Seventeen," and also features a character named Janis Ian, who is dealing with teen angst similar to the song. How does it feel to have such a homage paid to you?

I think it's great. I think it's absolutely great. I think Tina Fey did a wonderful job. When I met her after the movie she was nervous that I'd be pissed off. But I thought it was great. I mean, how often does someone get a character in a movie named after them? It's pretty rare.

WCT: Your music varies so much. Why is this?

JI: That's just an accident of talent. I guess I just grew up listening to a lot of different music, and that comes through. It gets boring doing the same thing all the time.

WCT: So, you've even written science fiction. Why?

JI: I've just always been a huge science fiction fan. I know a lot of science fiction authors. It's just an area of interest. If I had more time, I'd get more done, but I don't have a lot of time to get to writing these days.

More LGBT music:

Must-see LGBT videos:

- "A Guy Named Joe" by Coyote Grace
- "EZ Heeb" by Athens Boys Choir
- "Happy Again" by Scott Free and His Closest Friends
- "Heavy Cross" by The Gossip
- "Lala" by Von Iva

Hot LGBT tickets:

- The Aluminum Group and Matt Alber Oct. 2 at Jackhammer
- Bob Mould Band Oct. 12 at Metro
- The Gossip Oct. 16 at Metro
- Me'Shell NdegeOcello Oct. 16 at Old Town School of Folk Music
- JD Samson (DJ Set) Oct. 16 at Berlin

Must-hear club cuts:

- "Bulletproof" by La Roux
- "Celebration" by Madonna
- "Don't Upset the Rhythm (Go Baby Go)" by The Noisettes
- "Everybody Shake It" by Ralphie Rosario feat. Shawn Christopher
- "Sexy People" by Lolene

—David Byrne

I would start with the best of set- with The Essentials; I think it's a pretty good career overview. They can also go to my Web site, there's a lot of free stuff on there.

WCT: Will you be coming back to Chicago soon?

JI: Yes, some time this year. I suggest that people come to my website and check out my tour schedule.

WCT: How do you like Chicago?

JI: I think Chicago is great, it's the first place I got to do a stage performance, so I'm very fond of it. Then you have old town school, which is one of the best folk venues I know of.

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MUSIC

Matt Alber: Hiding nothing

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

Out singer/songwriter Matt Alber's debut album *Hide Nothing* is about being open and sincere with his listeners, whether it's being forthright about his sexuality or just the intimacy and soulfulness of his voice. It's in that same spirit that Alber begins his very first tour, a Midwest excursion that includes a stop in Chicago Friday, Oct. 2.

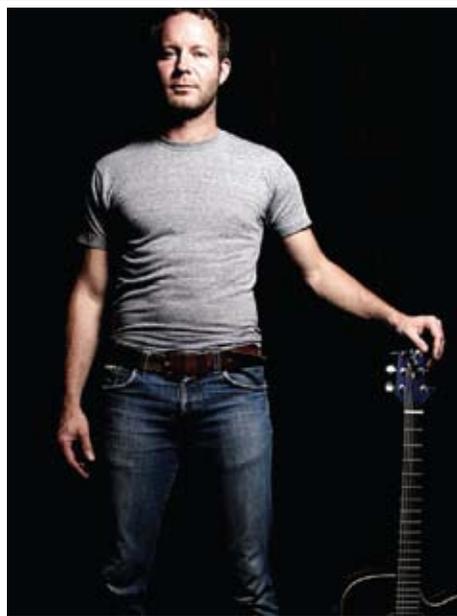
Alber, 34, grew up in Wichita, Kan., but has spent the last several years living in California. Since *Hide Nothing* was released almost a year ago, Alber has been living in Los Angeles and singing in a cover band called The Gentleman Callers. Now, he said, the time has finally come to hit the road and promote his own work.

Windy City Times: You grew up in the Midwest, so this is a bit of a homecoming tour for you. What are your thoughts on coming back?

MA: Well, I'm hoping it's great; I mean, it'll be an experiment. I made this record at home and I'm definitely getting some help from other people but in terms of people hearing about my record, it's people just telling their friends and people who are kind enough to write about it. I'm kinda crossing my fingers that people come.

WCT: Was there another reason besides it being where you're from that you chose Chicago and other Midwest stops for your first tour?

MA: Well, I went to my manager, Brian, and I said this was a part of the country that I really miss and I would love to go back and sing there, and that—in conjunction with several invitations coming at the same time saying, "Hey,



Matt Alber.

we'd love for you to come"—the tour kinda put itself together in a way.

WCT: In terms of your music, I guess a lot of people, especially because of the popularity of "End of the World," have compared you vocally to Rufus Wainwright, but your voice takes on many different qualities throughout your album. What are your intentions, vocally?

MA: I'm glad that you recognize that there's a lot of different vocal qualities going on; that's kind of why I like making music. I feel like some artists have a signature sound, like you hear their voice and you immediately think "Oh, that's Rob Thomas," you know, or "Oh, that's Dido"—they have a quality that's almost unchanging in a way. And that's just not the way I make music. I grew up learning a lot of different skills about singing and the way I like making music is trying

to have every song get its own voice in a way.

For example, on "End of the World," it's almost like a vintage cover of the actual song that never made in on the record. I tried to make it sound old-fashioned on purpose like it's coming out of a Victrola or something. Instead of singing it in the same way I would sing maybe "Field Trip Buddy," I tried to come up with more of an, I don't know, almost like a torchier kind of voice. Actually, I think Rufus—I'm a huge Rufus fan, by the way—I feel like he definitely approaches his music from that kind of torchier place in his voice. So that people compared me to him that's a huge honor to me. I think he's an incredible songwriter.

WCT: As you begin touring and as you progress your career it sounds like you're not so much interested in honing your sound to any specific category but you want to keep bringing variety to your music.

MA: Yeah, like right now I put this band together called the Gentleman Callers. When we play together we've got a sound that's almost like an R&B/soul kind of groove to our music and so I'm sort of taking my songs that have a little more electronics and finding a way to do them live that makes sense and when I do it with the band I started singing from a lot more soulful place. I'm woking on a new record right now that's going to be much more influenced by soul and gospel which is a lot of fun.

WCT: On your blog it says your favorite music is made by "anyone vulnerable who records at home." These days that can sometimes mean a lot of teenagers. Explain.

MA: I guess the thing that I'm encouraged about these days is that even though you hear all this stuff about the music industry tanking and everything's falling apart, well I think it's just the industry part that's tanking, it's not the creative part—the creative part's thriving because now the tools are in everyone's hands

and almost anybody can buy a microphone and a computer and with a little bit of music you can certainly mix a song and a lot of people are doing that now.

WCT: You're openly gay and your album is called *Hide Nothing*, but being an out singer/songwriter is not explicitly advertised in your bios and promos.

MA: I guess there's lots of bios floating around out there ... I guess I'm surprised because most of the bios it's one of the first things they say. I definitely try and put that out there.

WCT: And your "End of the World" video obviously doesn't hide it, either.

MA: Yeah, it's my first music video and I'm being dipped and kissed by a handsome man so, yeah, I'm not in anyway trying to hide it, I think as long as there is a closet for people to be in that it's important for people to be out. It doesn't mean that everything you say or everything you do has to be preaching directly about something that's gay, but the fact that you are out—I kind of pity the people who aren't—so it's really important to me that people know that I'm gay. But I think if you take a listen to my album you realize that I have a lot more to say than just "Hey, I'm gay."

I've also been lucky enough to find a label—they signed me as the first gay artist to their Silver Label—so I don't have to worry about that, you know. I'm not with Universal and I'm not on American Idol where I have to think "oh I wonder what America's going to think?" I get to say and be exactly who I am.

To find out what male actor Matt Alber would have liked to have dance with him in the "End of the World" video, read the entire interview at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Alber and the Aluminum Group will perform at Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark, Friday, Oct. 2, at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10 each; see www.fleshhungrydog.com.

MOVIES

Chicago Internat'l Film Festival—LGBT films

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Although Oscar nominee Uma Thurman, Willem Dafoe and Oscar-winning legend Martin Landau and other film celebs will attend the 2009 Chicago International Film Festival (CIFF) which kicks off its 45th year Thursday, Oct. 8, and runs through Oct. 22, it's the inclusion of a new film programming category in its official lineup that will be most anticipated by LGBT film audiences. "OUTrageous" is the program's name, which is described in festival literature as "from the edgy to the tender, these bold gay-themed films fearlessly exhibit new artistic perspectives on sexuality."

That's the good news. The not-so-good news is that, although LGBT-themed movies have been given this new, special category to highlight them, the number of queer films overall has dropped—from nine last year, in a festival featuring more than 150 movies, to just six. But as usual, festival programmers have gathered what sounds like an interesting array of queer-themed movies (see descriptions below) and are to be lauded for finally recognizing that audiences of all persuasions are eager for films about Our People.

Motherhood—a comedy from director Katherine Dieckmann in which Thurman plays a Manhattan-based woman trying to balance kids, husband and a writing career—is the opening-night selection of the festival. Anthony Edwards plays the husband and Minnie Driver is also in the cast. (The film opens here for a commercial run at the end of October.) Thurman and Dieckmann will attend the red-carpet premiere festivities Oct. 8 beginning at 6 p.m. at the AMC River East Theatre, 322 E. Illinois, followed by a



Precious.

cocktail/hors d'oeuvres reception at the Wit Hotel, 201 N. State.

The centerpiece screening of the festival is the eagerly anticipated **Precious**, based on the novel *Push* by Sapphire, the story of a pregnant 16-year-old African-American girl born into poverty in Harlem. Director Lee Daniels is the recipient of the fest's Artistic Achievement award for the film (which has already garnered top festival prizes at Sundance and Toronto). Gabourey "Gabby" Sidibe, who stars as Precious, will be honored with the fest's Breakthrough Performance award. Both Daniels and Sidibe will attend the Wednesday, Oct. 14 red carpet festivities, a post-screening tribute to Daniels, a Q&A and post-reception—all being held at the AMC River East (sole screening venue for this year's movies—a great move on the part of the festival). An encore presentation, minus Daniels and Sidibe, is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 16, at 6:15 p.m.

North By Northwest, Alfred Hitchcock's classic thriller is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and the festival will honor the film with a screening on Sunday, Oct. 18, at 5 p.m. Martin Landau, Oscar winner for his tremendous performance playing horror icon Bela Lugosi in Tim Burton's *Ed Wood*, who plays the sinister, devoted—and

subtly gay—henchman to villain James Mason, will attend the screening.

Emily Blunt—who first came to prominence in the sultry lesbian love story *My Summer of Love* and had breakout roles in *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Sunshine Cleaning*—stars in the festival's closing-night presentation, **The Young Victoria**, Oct. 22 at 7 p.m. This historical romance follows the early reign of Queen Victoria and her tempestuous romance with Prince Albert (Rupert Friend from *Cheri* and *Pride & Prejudice*). Paul Bettany co-stars.

The six films in the OUTrageous film program include the following titles (Note: Descriptions come from CIFF press materials—screeners were not made available in time to meet WCT deadlines.)

The Thank You Girls (Philippines)—This celebration of a singular family of drag queens follows a hapless group of beauty pageant contestants who leave the big city in search of fame, glamour, and adoration out in the rural provinces. It will be presented in Visayan with subtitles. Screens Oct. 12, 17, 18

Raging Sun, Raging Sky (Mexico)—This strangely hypnotic tale follows a young man's quest for love through the seediest spots in contemporary Mexico City. Named best gay-themed

feature at Berlin, the film creates a deeply sensual atmosphere by blending intense eroticism and arresting monochrome visuals. It will be presented in Spanish with subtitles. Screens Oct. 10, 12

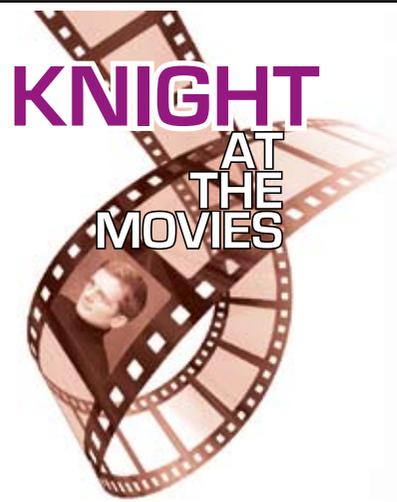
Give Me Your Hand (France)—Twin brothers—one gay, one straight—travel to the funeral of a mother they never met, equipped with only their rucksacks. Theirs is a close if combative relationship, but it is threatened by sexual entanglements and betrayal as they progress through the European countryside. French with subtitles; screens Oct. 9, 10, 13

Eyes Wide Open (Germany, Israel)—Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox community offers the comfort of belonging, but the conformity can be suffocating. Aaron, a devoted husband and father, is well-respected in this world. Then he meets Ezri, a charismatic 22-year-old, who quickly steals Aaron's heart. Soon he's choosing this taboo love over his family. Hebrew, Yiddish with subtitles; screens Oct. 17, 18, 19

A Woman's Way (Greece)—Taboos of love, sex and family are defiantly and happily broken in *A Woman's Way*. Following a love affair between an ex-con and a transsexual hooker, the film has a shocking twist echoing the classic tragedies of Greek theater. Vibrant colors and sensational costuming balance the deep-dark storyline, propelling this melodrama to sensational heights. Greek with subtitles; screens Oct. 17, 18

A Frozen Flower (South Korea)—Set in 13th-century Korea, this sweeping epic tells the unconventional story of a taboo love triangle between the king of Goryeo, his male guard and the queen. This bold and provocative tale of blossoming desire is laced with bloody battles and betrayal, lust and forbidden love. Korean, Mandarin with subtitles; screens Oct. 11, 13

As noted, all films will screen at the AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois. Complete information on tickets, show times and special events are available by calling 312-332-FILM (3456) or online at www.chicagofilmfestival.com.



Capitalism: A Love Story; Bright Star

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

All the familiar hallmarks are there: the contrast between the vintage, archival footage of the halcyon days of yore with its perky music and jokey narration and the brutal realities of today with its ironic voice over, the black comedy stunts, the unearthed, telling documentary footage. Then there are the jaw-dropping stories of the little guy caught up in the uncaring system, the bottom feeders getting rich on the economic woes of the disenfranchised, examples of indifference on the part of the rich and politically powerful, the sobering facts and figures, the breathless malfeasance.

Finally, the big shambling guy himself wanders into view, bullhorn in hand and the reason for

the sense of déjà vu that overwhelms Capitalism: A Love Story, Michael Moore's new film, from its opening moments clicks firmly into place. Here is Moore's return to the themes that put him on the map with Roger & Me, his film about the devastation of his hometown Flint, Michigan by the indifferent auto industry. It's we vs. them, the great unwashed vs. the microscopic but exceedingly rich and powerful, the overriding taint of corruption and wealth bearing down on the easily distracted masses, the lone voice crying out against wrongdoing. Twenty years later, as Moore points out persuasively, the economic decimation and emotional despair of Flint has spread to our entire country.

Moore has taken on the Bush administration (Fahrenheit 911), the gun lobby (Bowling for Columbine), the health care industry (Sicko) and now goes after what may be his biggest target—Wall Street. In examining the financial sleight of hand practiced by what are essentially a group of high end gamblers, Moore has made what may be his magnum opus.

Greed is definitely not good in Moore's view. He jauntily begins his latest film polemic with excerpts from an educational movie about the fall of ancient Rome (Cheney, naturally, is cast as the evil emperor of this realm). He points the finger at Wall Street, beginning with the Reagan presidency and deregulation of the industry (along with a lowering of the tax code for the rich). Reagan, the former actor and shill for corporate America, is seen as the dummy front man for Wall Street/corporate America and Moore offers a stunning clip of Reagan's Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Treasury Don Regan telling the President while addressing Wall Street to "speed it up."

"Who tells the President to speed it up?" Moore demands in voice over and he quickly proceeds to track the close relationship between

Wall Street and political power that has existed since. We see a lot of horrifying things done in the name of personal and corporate greed—stuff like life insurance policies taken out on unaware employees (they're referred to as "dead peasants")—and the devastating effect this has had on regular folks (who are shown at the outset narcotized by the modern day version of the arena—reality shows—and distracted by true reality). By the time Moore gets to a Peoria farmer and his family being put out of their fourth generation home (who are so strapped they have accepted \$1,000 from the bank to get their house ready for the new owners) one feels worn down.

Even the euphoria of the Obama election—seemingly the one bright spot in this morass (and the movie)—is fleeting and Moore doesn't really offer any solutions to our mess much beyond, "vote the bums out of office." At the fade out even he seems ready to call it quits: "I can't do this anymore unless you in the theatre watching this join me" he says. But though this later day Don Quixote has certainly tilted many a windmill off balance in his time one wonders what kind of impact his message has ultimately had. Many times during the current debate over healthcare I've thought to myself, "If everyone in this country watched Sicko the discussion would be over in seconds and we'd have healthcare for all."

If only we could take Michael Moore out of the movie, that is. Because Moore is such a polarizing figure, the very people who need to hear his warnings of catastrophe shut him out and the rest of us? I love him but I'm not sure that his alternately entertaining/sobering documentaries have really had much of a cultural impact beyond the short term. This modern day Cassandra has delivered yet another urgent warning for America but will anyone really listen once the

movie is over? I felt truly heartsick at the end of Capitalism: A Love Story—because it seems that on many levels the messenger has once again overwhelmed his insightful message.

Writer-director Jane Campion, Oscar winner for The Piano, returns to a period romantic melodrama with Bright Star, the story of the three year courtship between poet John "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" Keats (Ben Wishaw) and fashionista Fanny Brawne (Abie Cornish). "Melodrama" is probably too lush a word to lob at this rather dry film that could have used a lot more juice. Though the movie contains a feisty performance from Cornish, a somber one from Wishaw (what else to do with the gloomy Keats?) and a nice, nasty one from Paul Schneider as Charles Armitage Brown, Keats' best friend and fellow poet, Campion's movie is as perfectly composed as an intricate, exactly detailed museum exhibit or one of those 16-hour Masterpiece Theatre adaptations of Dickens. I wanted to love it because it's so damn literary and exquisitely put together but ultimately it felt like a very long two hours.

Though Campion's eye for period detail is diverting and some of the scenes pack an emotional wallop, ultimately Bright Star is a highfalutin snore. Poetry and cultural aesthetes may champion Campion's creative vision and I hung in there trying not to nod off but honestly, my attention wandered until pretty much the second Keats started coughing, signaling the beginning of the end.

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

See more movie-related items on page 20, including photos from the Hannah Free gala.

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WHAT TO DO?

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Audrey Niffenegger reading from her highly anticipated new novel, *Her Fearful Symmetry*, at a special, ticket event. A Women & Children First Bookstore event at the Swedish American Museum. Time TBA. 773-769-9299 www.womenandchildrenfirst.com

danceOUT, Center on Halsted in partnership with Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre and Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center to commemorate National Hispanic Heritage Awareness Month. Emerging and established LGBT dancers and choreographers. 7 p.m. \$10. Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

GenderJUST training on adulthood (a predisposition towards adults, which manifests itself as bias against children, youth, and all young people who aren't addressed, viewed or respected as adults) 5:30-7 p.m. at the CFS Center for Social Change, 719 S. State, Suite 3N. \$5. RSVP at Hilda@ChicagoFreedomSchool.org or 312-435-1201

Green Party Campaign Launch Fundraiser gubernatorial candidate, Rich Whitney, and Green candidate for congress in Illinois's 5th congressional district, Matt Reichel. 7 p.m. doors/8 p.m. remarks. Globe Pub, 1934 W. Irving Park

Hannah Free, Chicago-made lesbian feature film starring Sharon Gless (Cagney and Lacey, *Queer as Folk*, *Burn Notice*) in the title role in the story of a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home. One-week engagement. 800-982-2787, www.ticketmaster.com. Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 164 N. State

U of I Gender & Sexuality Center annual LGBTQ Heritage Month celebration, *Queer Economics: The Cost of Homophobia. The Benefits of Being Yourself*. Free and open to the public. Info at www.gsc.uic.edu or 312-413-8619. Opening: M.V. Lee Badgett, Ph.D., author of "When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage", U of Mass. Amherst professor, and Research Director at the Williams Institute. 3-4:30 p.m., room 2850 University Hall, 601 S. Morgan. 312-413-8619 lthomson@uic.edu

Women and Children First event Audrey Niffenegger, *Her Fearful Symmetry*, special ticketed event will be held at the Swedish American Museum, at 5211 N. Clark St. \$29.67 (the price of the book, plus tax. Reserve a ticket at 773-769-9299

Thursday, Oct. 1

AVER (gay veterans) monthly meeting, 7 p.m. Center on Halsted. 3656 N. Halsted. 773-472-6469

Chicago Artists' Month opening celebration. 6-8 p.m. See this listing Oct. 9 and www.chicagoartistsmonth.org for shows of LGBT interest. Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St.

Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau welcome the Board of Directors of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Center on Halsted, 3656 North Halsted. 312-567-8564

Hannah Free, Chicago-made lesbian feature film starring Sharon Gless (*Cagney and Lacey*, *Queer as Folk*, *Burn Notice*) in the title role in the story of a lifelong love affair between an independent spirit and the woman she calls home. Last night one-week engagement. 800-982-2787, www.ticketmaster.com. Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 164 N. State

Matt Alber concert with special guests The Aluminum Group, 9 p.m. Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St. www.brownpapertickets.com/event/80390

Pow Wow open mic every Tuesday Night, \$5. 7:30 p.m. Jeffrey Pub, 7041 S. Jeffrey

The Other Dance Festival, Hedwig Dances performs *Rein*, Bellow, \$15 / \$12 Hamlin Park Fieldhouse, 3035 N. Hoyne www.chicagomovingcompany.org

Youth Pride Services will introduce the first book selection recommended for LGBT youth of color. Call 773-382-0511 for info and location.

Friday, Oct. 2

Lily Tomlin, 8 p.m., Paramount Theatre, Aurora www.ticketmaster.com

Miami City Ballet performs Balanchine's Symphony in Three Movements and *Valse Fantasia*, *Black Swan Pas de Deux* from Swan Lake, and *Tharp's In the Upper Room*. \$89, \$74, \$64, \$49, \$30. Fri/Sat 8 p.m., Sun 2 p.m. www.auditoriumtheatre.org or ticketmaster.com

Wine Reception Mixing up one part abstract Artist Susan Olmetti, one Part Chicago House Fundraiser, and one Part SIR Spa. Hosted by abstract artist Susan Olmetti and SIR Spa 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. SIR Spa at 5151 N. Clark St. www.susanolmetti.com/chicago-abstract-art-fundraiser.html

Saturday, Oct. 3

AIDS Run and Walk 7:30 a.m. Star Fundraiser Breakfast Begins, 8 a.m. registration. Grant Park, Columbus and Balbo. www.aidsrunwalk.org

Gerber/Hart Library annual benefit, "Making History: Riot, Revolution, Rights." Keynote speaker David Carter, author of *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution*. Swedish-American Museum Center, 5211 N. Clark St. www.gerberhart.org

Indie/South Indie music/arts exhibit, 5 to 9 p.m. through Nov. 15. Prairie Avenue Gallery 1900 S. Prairie, 312-907-7909 mbaim@earthlink.net

Mordine & Company Dance Theater Links Hall's 30th Anniversary Celebration, \$30 for a Festival pass. Links Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave. www.brownpapertickets.com

"Schoolhouse Rock Live!" Last night to relive "Just a Bill," "Conjunction Junction," "Interplanet Janet?" and sing along with the cast while drinking a beer! *Mary's Attic* in Andersonville. 8 p.m. \$10. www.hamburgermaryschicago.com/attic.php

Women & Children First's 30th Anniversary Gala with special guests Alison Bechdel and Dorothy Allison for a special evening celebrating Women & Children First's 30th year. Refreshments, auction, dancing into the night. Ticket information will be available soon.

Youth Pride Services trip to Fierce Youth Center in New York to visit LGBT youth of color leadership development program in the Big Apple. \$50 for YPC members. Call 773-382-0511 for info

Monday, Oct. 5

Outrage, Oscar-nominated filmmaker Kirby Dick's new film which takes a look at the hypocrisy of closeted politicians who continually vote against gay rights and actively campaign against the LGBT community they covertly belong to. 9 - 10:30 p.m. ET/PT, on HBO, HBO2 through Oct. 14

Tuesday, Oct. 6

A Superior Stroll: An Exclusive SOFA Chicago 2009 Preview Night, 6 to 8 p.m. \$25 advance at www.rivernorthchicago.com or \$30 at door.

Wednesday, Oct. 7

Kylie Minogue The Congress Theater www.kylie.com

Thursday, Oct. 8

45th Chicago International Film Festival through Oct. 22. 10 admissions, \$80 for Cinema/Chicago members /\$110 for non, 20 admissions, \$155 members/\$210 for non. \$5 Matinees, Special Presentations \$12/\$15, Gala Presentations \$20/\$25 AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois St. www.chicagofilmfestival.org

Amy Kelly, winner of Chicago Gay Idol, live, 8:30 p.m. Briejo, 211 Harrison in Oak Park. Briejo is an eclectic American restaurant and bar created by Jody Andre previously of Tomboy, Speakeasy Supper Club and the Room. www.briejo.com

Fire Ink III Cotillion will bring together hundreds of LGBT writers of African descent whose work spans the genres. Austin, Texas, www.fireandink.org. Through Oct. 11

Freedom Museum presents Madeleine Albright, noon, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, GAR Hall, 2nd Floor. www.freedommuseum.us

Omega Sigma Theta, Youth Pride Center's fraternity for Black gay teens 18 and under, is accepting new members during this orientation. 5:30 p.m. Call 773-382-0511 for info

October Prose, Poetry and Pints at the Pug. Queer-focused, straight friendly open mic reading, featuring special readings from Darwyn Jones (contributor, *Sin: An Anthology*) and Mark Richard Zubro (*Schooled in Murder*) and a staged reading from playwright and author Rick Karlin's newest work (*Witches Among Us*); Hosted by Tavern Boy Craig Rathwell and author Drew Ferguson. Sign-up for open mic begins at 7:30 p.m. Readings start at 8 p.m. Wild Pug, 4810 N. Broadway; 773-784-4811

Speed Dating event for gay men, co-sponsored by Out Alumni Chicago, the Chicagoland Gay and Lesbian Singles Meetup, and the Chicago Professionals Meetup. Daters should arrive around 6:45-7 p.m. through 8:45 p.m. Tix \$12 at door, or \$10 advance at culture@centeronhalsted.org or 773/661-0763

Saturday, Oct. 10

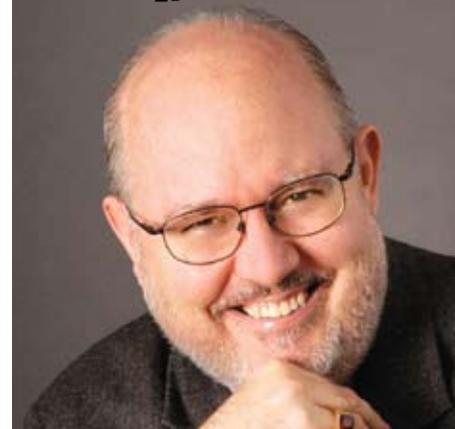
Howard Brown Health Center Annual Gala, Bertha's Ball, named in honor of Chicago's grande dame of philanthropy, Bertha Honoré Palmer recep 6, gala 7 p.m. to midnight. Palmer House Hilton, 17 E. Monroe St. Info to come at www.howardbrown.org

Sunday, Oct. 11

National Equality March Washington, DC. www.equalityacrossamerica.org or e-mail jointheimpactchicago@gmail.com

Pam Ann USA Tour A-list Pucci clad air hostess to the stars, glamorous, glitzy and hilarious. 7 p.m. Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph St. www.harristheaterchicago.org 312-334-7777

Saturday, Oct. 3



HOW SWEDE IT IS

David Carter will be the featured guest at the annual Gerber/Hart benefit, which will take place at the Swedish-American Museum Center, 5211 N. Clark.

Photo by Brandon Belushin

Saturday, Oct. 3



FRIENDS OF DOROTHY

Writer Dorothy Allison will be a special guest at Women & Children First's 30th-anniversary Gala at The Breakers, 5333 N. Sheridan.

Photo by Andrew Davis

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

Interior design: Color for fall

BY FERN ALLISON

Fall is a season of change and brings with it a rich, wonderful palette of colors.

Leaves start turning bright crimsons and oranges and the air is crisp and earthy.

So as we leave our summer colors behind in the garden, it is nice to bring the fall colors into your house. An easy way to do this is with flowers. Select hydrangeas that have taken on a deep rust color or mums in their rich shades of purples and terra cottas. Try mixing the flowers with curly stems for added texture. Another option is bittersweet stems with their deep-yellow skinned berries. They should be showing up at local farmers' markets soon. Long stems can be laid across your mantel while shorter stems can be placed in vases to dry out. These will carry

you into winter and can be spray-painted white with touches of silver for the winter holidays.

Don't stop at just the flowers. Place the vase on a great placemat or table runner with fall colors. Create a more sophisticated arrangement by adding some small gourds and pumpkins, tea lights or votives, and don't forget the greenery. Feel free to use bittersweet stems instead of the greenery or in addition to it. Now you have a fall setting on your table that is bright during the day and romantic at night. You may want to use small vases of flowers rather than one large vase which will give a certain rhythm to the table.

Pillows are another great way to bring fall into your home. Reds, oranges or browns—the traditional colors of fall—will blend or complement almost any color scheme. Retail home decorator stores currently offer a nice selection of pillows in these colors so you'll have lots of options. However, if you can't find just the perfect pillows that work for you, have some custom made. You can choose from virtually thousands of fab-

rics with varying weight and texture. Consider having a pillow or two made into a ball shape to add some excitement to the room. Add a throw with the pillows and you have an entirely new look on a very reasonable budget. Be sure to consider removing some of your current pillows to achieve your desired effect.. Put these items in storage for a few months and then bring them back out. It will be like having two new rooms in the course of one year.

Fall colors are organic and can be used throughout the year in decorating your home. The colors are comforting and warm in tone, such as caramel brown with an earthy green or a bright orange with a tawny rust. These are rooms you can live in and relax in year round. You just might bring some fall colors into your home and never replace them of the season.

Fern Allison is president of Lakeside Interiors, 1129 McDaniel, Evanston. Call 847-512-5045, e-mail fern@lakesideinteriors.com or visit www.lakesideinteriors.com.



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Hannah Free's hometown premiere



Hannah Free, a new lesbian feature film produced and shot in Chicago, had its hometown premiere this week at the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute. The run ends Thursday, Sept. 30, with shows weeknights 6:15 and 8:15 p.m., 164 N. State Street. It has been so successful that the Gene Siskel will be bringing it back end of November; look for info soon at www.hannahfree.com (as well as details on upcoming screenings around the U.S. and the world). The sold-out premiere gala Sept. 26 featured stars of the film, including Sharon Gless, director Wendy Jo Carlton and writer Claudia Allen. Pictured on this week's cover are stars Jacqui Jackson, Sharon Gless and Taylor Miller. Large photo above are members of the cast, crew and post-production team. TOP RIGHT: Stars Maureen Gallagher and Gless. MIDDLE: Stars Meg Thalken, Gless and Pat Kane. BELOW FAR LEFT PIC: Producers of the film, Sharon Zurek (also editor), Martie Marro (also music composer), Gless, Wendy Jo Carlton (director), and Tracy Baim (executive producer). Middle: Stars Kelli Strickland, Gless and Ann Hagemann. Right: Gless and writer Allen. The post-film gala was held at the Renaissance Hotel, with entertainment by the Lucy Smith jazz trio. Photos by Hal Baim and Kat Fitzgerald. More photos online at www.windycitymediagroup.com and the Facebook Hannah Free fan page.



MOVIES

Emanuel Levy: Discussing Minnelli

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Director Vincente Minnelli is remembered by film audiences for his Technicolor-drenched classic musicals like *Gigi*, *An American in Paris*, *Meet Me In St. Louis* and many others. He's also immortalized by queer film audiences as the one-time husband of Judy Garland. It was their short-lived marriage that produced another gay icon, daughter Liza. Minnelli himself was circumspect about his private life and didn't reveal much personal information in his 1974 autobiography *I Remember It Well*.

Though he married four times and produced another daughter, gay and bisexual rumors have always swirled around Minnelli and have intensified since his death in 1986. Out professor/author/film critic Emanuel Levy seeks to lift the veil that has shrouded Minnelli's personal life and its underlying impact on his movies in his recently released book *Vincente Minnelli: Hollywood's Dark Dreamer*. Improbably, for such an esteemed filmmaker, this is the first full-length biography of the acclaimed director.

Windy City Times: Do some of Minnelli's films have a "gay sensibility" permeating them?

Emanuel Levy: Yes, definitely. *Tea & Sympathy* and *Home from the Hill* were very personal films. When you look three or four times at a picture you pay attention to other things. For example, when you look at a movie like *Designing Woman* you get that same thing. There are two sets of "friends" and the character of the choreographer played by Jack Cole is basically Minnelli. He's feminine but spends his time with women. I

think that this channeling of Minnelli's sexual anxiety is both on a conscious and subconscious level. It really runs through most of his films.

WCT: Did he ever talk about his gay proclivities?

EL: No. Not at all. There is evidence that he had a companion in New York. When Minnelli arrived in Hollywood he was wearing makeup and he was told to stop that. I also found in letters some anecdotes that he and his boyfriend dressed alike when he was in New York. I also found evidence that when he took Judy [Garland] on a promotional tour before they got married [they were in New York for *Meet Me In St. Louis*] that he introduced Judy to him. I heard that, in the '40s and '50s, gay directors like Minnelli and Cukor would go to Palm Springs because that's where the wild scene was. There was a sex scene and no media. Of course, nowadays you cannot leave the house without paparazzi but at that time you could disappear for a weekend. [Laughs] I think Judy also took him a couple of times to gay friendly bars when they traveled apparently in the late '40s.

WCT: Why didn't Liza participate in the book?

EL: Liza wanted to see a sample—early on—of my writing. She wanted to know what kind of books I wrote so I sent her my Cukor biography. [Laughs] I laugh because she knew that somebody who wrote a biography of Cukor and is going to write a biography of her father was going to bring up his sexuality. I'm not sure how to define him. Technically, he was bisexual. He didn't marry once. He married four times and he had two daughters. Was he a repressed homosexual? Definitely, yes.

WCT: So who do you think should play Minnelli in the Anne Hathaway-Judy Garland biopic?

EL: I don't know. Sean Penn can play anyone, right? [Laughs] He was in his early 40s when he met Judy so it would have to be somebody who could play that age. I think Anne Hathaway

is a good choice. I think Cate Blanchett would be better as Judy than Anne Hathaway but as the middle aged Judy because she really can do anything and she can sing apparently. Frankly, I'm not sure this movie will ever materialize by the way. [Laughs] Let's remember the date of our conversation and let's see how long before it reaches the market place. This is a problematic one—they will maybe have to get approval from Liza.

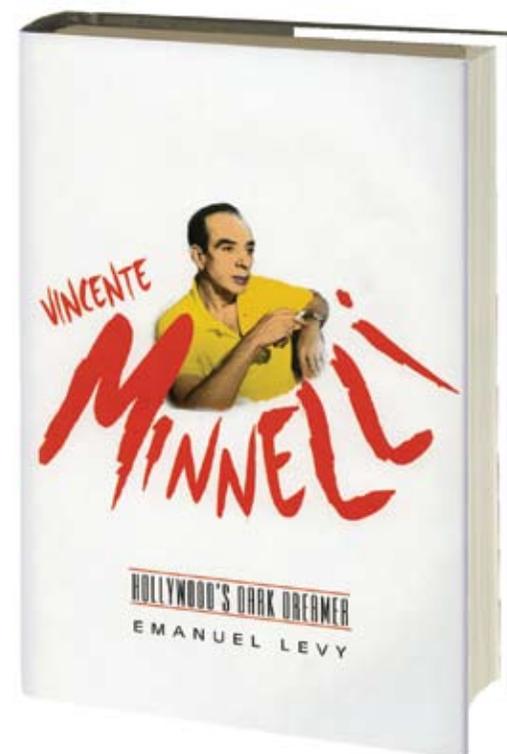
WCT: Minnelli is actually the one who changed the public's perception of Judy Garland. He presented her as she wanted to be—this beautiful young woman in *Meet Me In St. Louis*.

EL: That is the key to the romance by the way. I do believe that she was in love with him. First of all—it runs in the family. Three generations—you know that, right? Her grandmother was also married to a wonderful gay man and Liza, too. At least two of her husbands are gay. So it runs in the family and Judy was the matchmaker of Liza and Peter Allen who was flamboyant when they married. Peter Allen did in a monologue that somebody gave me of how he went to meet Minnelli and asked for his approval for his daughter's hand in marriage and he went back to his friend and said, "One Australian queen talking to an older queen in a red study talking about getting his approval to marry his daughter." [Laughs] You have to take some of that with a sense of humor.

WCT: What is the lasting influence that Minnelli has had on the movies?

EL: He's a case study for how the Hollywood system did not

stifle or suffocate talent but let it blossom. His meticulous attention to detail sets his movies apart. This is what is the most distinctive about Minnelli—the attempt to control every aspect of the production. He applied makeup to Shirley MacLaine for a screen test. No director of his level would be on his knees with makeup, applying eye liner. That comes from being gay and being a perfectionist and very sensitive to aesthetics—to beauty. He was insecure from a young age, he was inarticulate and shy—that's not a very good combination for a director and yet, he knew exactly what he wanted. He just could not articulate it in words but he knew what he wanted and his movies, good and bad, show that.



BILLY MASTERS

"There are many dying children out there whose last wish is to meet me."—David Hasselhoff shares his philanthropic side with the world. Hey Davey, I've got a wish that involves dying, but I don't think you want to hear it.

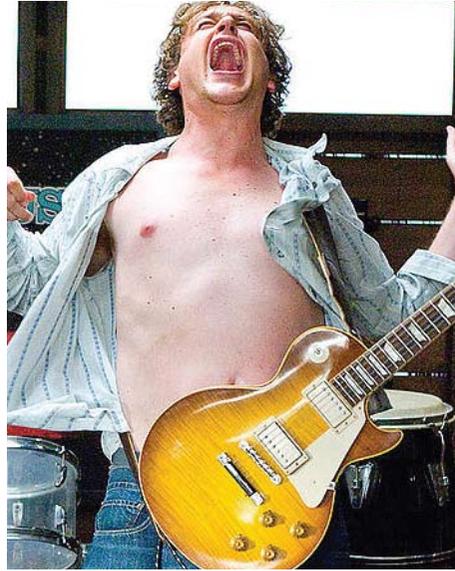
Let's get this out of the way right off the bat—yes, that was me walking into the Emmys with Justin Timberlake. I know you all saw it, courtesy of my darling Nancy O'Dell and "Access Hollywood" (I like to pretend that Billy Bush isn't even there). It all happened kinda quickly, but when it was over, I turned around and found myself face-to-face with a sheik. That kinda threw me. I mean, you walk the red carpet with Justin Timberlake...that somehow makes sense in my world. You bump into a sheik, and that makes you go "Hmmm." Adding to the lunacy of the moment, the sheik kept screaming "Chebby Chin." It took a while for me to realize he was trying to get the attention of Chevy Chase—who wisely acted oblivious (although I don't think he's that good an actor).

Bottom line—I was getting scoops from the get-go. Timberlake—kinda tall, kinda skinny, kinda nondescript. If you didn't know he was supposed to be someone, you'd never look twice—really. But he's nice and chatty once you get him away from his handlers. I found out that he was almost hoodwinked into appearing on "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List." When Kath went to lunch with TI, she had the rapper call Justin on the phone. Once JT knew Kathy was there, he quickly wrapped up the call and later refused to sign a release to air the conversation. He's no fool. Someone he does love is Tina Fey, and he's gonna turn up on "30 Rock" this season. He doesn't seem to love posing for photos with fans. And he pissed off some ladies a couple nights earlier in NYC when he wanted to get into a nightclub and there was a line. He just breezed on in, while some gals said, "You can't do that." He turned and said, "Sure I can" and winked—I think it was the wink that pushed them over the edge. But with me, he was charming, lovely, and never said a bad word. He even talked to the sheik. That made one of us.

Some of my Chicago fans flew out for the Emmys and were shameless as they attacked anyone who even looked famous. I believe the most memorable moment was when I was talking to Jason Segel from "How I Met Your Mother." He was very friendly and answered some of my questions. As I was ready to leave, I mentioned how much I enjoyed his work in "Forgetting Sarah Marshall." At that point, Paul from Chicago asked a question that even I had the good taste to avoid—"Was that really your penis in the movie?" I mean, Paul, why not say, "Billy made a lot of money on that penis—was it yours?" Jason smiled and said, "Yeah, that's me." As Paul went to take a photo of us, he blurted out, "Congratulations on having such a great cock!" Yes, the face Jason made at that moment is captured on film and worth checking out on BillyMasters.com. And, yes, his penis will be there too.

I don't know if you realize this but most celebs are very small. Not small like Tina Fey's little person husband. Small like having a slight build. Ryan Kwanten, who looks like the most muscular stud on True Blood, is skinny as a rail (albeit a well-defined rail). Now, I think I look OK next to a normal person. Next to a really hot person, I look like their less attractive friend. But next to a hot and skinny person, I look like Mothra storming towards the city!! While most people can gain weight and it distributes everywhere, if I gain 5 pounds, it goes to my cheeks. So imagine what 15 pounds has done. Yes, a blond pumpkinhead was seen at the Emmys in a dashing tux! To make matters worse, every time my friend took a photo of me, he seemed to purposely make sure that I was in the foreground—to maximize my head, of course. I looked like

the stunt double from "Mask"! In the photo with Ryan (who went out of his way to fix his hair and tie, saying, "I wanna look good for you, Billy"), my head looks three times bigger than his! The only one at the Emmys bigger than me was Steven Cojocar—but his excuse is that he's had half a dozen organs transplanted into him.



Re"member" Jason Segel's, ahem, part in Forgetting Sarah Marshall? Paul from Chicago sure does.

Maybe I should say that's what I'm doing, too!

I, of course, didn't go straight home. I was celebrating with the folks from HBO. As always, it was *the* party to go to. And love was in the air. Jason Segel was thisclose to Chloe Sevigny (you remember her—the one who gave an on-camera blow job to ex-lover Vincent Gallo). Hayden Panettiere was underfoot at every turn ... until she banged right into Kevin Connolly. They were inseparable thereafter. Glenn Close was transfixed by the band, while Dana Delaney was getting her groove on. Kathy Griffin breezed through on the arm of Garry Shandling—all the better for a photo-op. And I spied the very dashing Patrick Fabian—who I suspect none of you know by name. But, suffice it to say, he's definitely drool-worthy.

Because I'm not foolish enough to believe that bad pictures of me are enough to send you all to BillyMasters.com (although, you've gotta admit, this is one helluva column), I'm gonna give you some skin. And, no, not mine! One of the hotties on "True Blood" was a no-show at the Emmys. That was Alexander Skarsgård, who was voted "Sexiest Man in Sweden" in 1999—and who the hell am I to argue with the Swedes? He's 6'4" and a size 13 shoe—which is information I'll be filing away for future reference. Why the hell couldn't I bump into him? At least I'd look short! Anyway, back in 2002 he did a little Swedish film called "Hund-Trick" which includes a lengthy shower scene—with two other guys! So, why not post it on our website? We'll also run pics from "Turn Your Darlings"—which I probably missed because my local multiplex is woefully short on Swedish flicks. In this one, he plays a suicidal transvestite traveling through the desert. It ain't pretty—and neither is he.

When I'm running stills from the all-Swedish version of "Priscilla," it's definitely time to end yet another column. Phew—I'm exhausted! What a week. I can't think of anything else to say, other than to direct you to www.BillyMasters.com, where you'll read a much more lengthy account of my Emmy adventures (it is so worth the effort). If you've got any questions or great Photoshopping skills, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I have to borrow clothes from Cojo! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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Alvin Ty Law (left). Photo by daviddanielsphotography.com

Flag football's Freeze play

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Freeze will make its flag-football debut at Gay Bowl 9, set for Oct. 8-11 in Washington, D.C. The bowl is a 20-team tournament featuring squads from across the United States, including the three-time defending champion New York Warriors.

Though the Freeze will be Chicago's lone participant—as opposed to recent years when Chicago has sent two teams to the premiere annual LGBT flag football event—the team has plenty of championship talent.

Take, for instance, receiver Shon Anderson, a recent transplant from Los Angeles, where he was a three-time Gay Bowl winner. Other experienced Gay Bowl players on the Freeze include receivers

James Platt, Andrew Burke and Brian Wilburn, also a recent transplant from Los Angeles.

Dan Shaver and Alvin Ty Law are the Freeze co-captains, and this will be Law's sixth Gay Bowl.

"We held tryouts, and then picked the best players from all of the Chicago teams; we tried to be a little more inclusive in that regard. We wanted good people, not just good players," said Law, 28, a defensive specialist who plays linebacker and receiver. "Though we don't play on the same team [in the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association league], I don't think it's that big of a detriment. We've been practicing since July to build team chemistry.

"I think we have a good shot at winning; I think we're among the top four or five teams out there, along with Los Angeles, Phoenix and others."

The Freeze—a nickname picked through Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association voting—open play in Gay Bowl 9 against the Silicon Valley Crash, and then face the Salt Lake City

Avalanche, which finished second in 2008. Chicago's final game in the seeding round is against South Florida Cat 5.

Teams are then split into a Competitive and Recreational Division for single-elimination play at that point.

"You have to give respect to New York, the team has won the [Gay Bowl] the last three years, but we're definitely gunning after them," said Law, who lives in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. "I think we have good depth; our backups are just as good as our starters. That will really help us. Plus, we have big, strong, athletic players.

We'll be disappointed if we don't do really, really well. We want to win it all, and I think we have a good shot at it."

This seems especially true with defensive stars Winston Howard (middle linebacker) and Derek Smith (rusher). The team also features quarterback Jim Goodrum and Gil Minor.

Minor, Law and Platt are the only Freeze players who previously played for the Chicago Flames, the Gay Bowl champion in 2005.

The Flames' quarterback and the 2005 Gay Bowl MVP, Will Ward of Chicago, will be playing for the Michigan Panthers.

See www.gaybowl9.net.

GAY GAMES PROFILE

Matthew Stuczynski: Sail on

BY ROSS FORMAN

First by land, next by sea ... welcome to the Gay Games world of Matthew Stuczynski, who lives in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood.

Stuczynski competed in cycling at the 2006 Games in Chicago. Next July in Cologne, Germany, Stuczynski will be back in competitor mode—in sailing, though.

"My [Cologne] goal is to sail as best I can and work as part of an amazing sailing team," said Stuczynski, 46, a Spanish and German high school teacher.

"Having shied away from sports as a young person because I was gay, the Games give me the opportunity to relive those earlier bad experiences and to re-do and recreate those negative times in a very positive and healthy way."

Stuczynski graduated from Ryan High School in Omaha in 1981, and then the University of Nebraska. He received additional degrees from the University of Illinois-Chicago and Dominican University.

He earned his Sail Chicago skipper card in 2009 after passing a series of sailing and sailing-knowledge tests.

More about Matthew Stuczynski:

—**Birthday:** May 15, 1963

—**Status:** Dating Harold Di Vito

—**Reflections on the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago:** "I got to participate with friends and strangers in such an affirming, positive and

healthy endeavor ... the whole experience was life-changing."

—**Hobbies:** Sailing, biking, hiking, reading, travel and gardening

—**Superstitions:** "I do not like to kill [insects], especially spiders. I learned from a favorite aunt that killing spiders was bad luck."

—**Little-known fact:** "I am a closeted technogeek."

—**Favorite sports team:** Chicago Blackhawks

—**Favorite pro athlete:** Billie Jean King

Red Stars to hold fall, winter clinics

The local women's pro team Chicago Red Stars is holding multiple soccer clinics throughout Chicagoland this fall and winter.

Several sessions include the opportunity to learn alongside Red Stars defender and 1999 World Cup champion Kate Markgraf as well as Red Stars forward and former University of Illinois All-American Ella Masar. Space is limited for the Red Stars' winter clinics, so register early.

Contact Red Stars Camp Director Kate Westfall at 708-496-9511, or register online at ChicagoRedStars.com. Fall clinics run Oct. 3 and 24; winter sessions run Dec. 21-Feb. 27.

Dykes Pedaling Bikes get-togethers

Dykes Pedaling Bikes is getting together once a month on Saturdays for lakefront rides. The last one is slated for Oct. 3.

The group meets at 9 a.m. at the totem pole at Addison and Lake Shore Drive in Lakeview, and then rides to Grant Park, stopping briefly at "Queens Landing" (across Lake Shore Drive from Buckingham Fountain) at about 9:40 a.m. to meet additional riders. Helmets are required.

Dykes Pedaling Bikes is sponsored by the Windy City Cycling Club, the Lesbian Community Care Project and dykediva.com. For more info, e-mail rbezale@gmail.com or visit www.windy-citycyclingclub.com.

AIDS Walk/Run Oct. 3

The AIDS Walk/Run will take place Oct. 3 in Grant Park. To participate alongside thousands of supporters, 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.

Red Stars pick up options for players

The Chicago Red Stars announced Sept. 28 that they are picking up the 2010 contract options for nine players for the organization's second Women's Professional Soccer season.

This returning Red Stars group includes defender Marian Dalmy, defender Ifeoma Dieke, midfielder Chioma Igwe, goalkeeper Caroline Jonsson, midfielder Brittany Klein, forward Ella Masar, defender Jill Oakes, midfielder Megan Rapinoe and defender Natalie Spilger. Terms of their contracts are not released.

Season tickets for the 2010 season are currently on sale. For more information, visit www.ChicagoRedStars.com or call 866-WPS-2009.

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WINDY CITY TIMES



Matthew Stuczynski.

Cleveland has been named as the host city of the 2014 Gay Games. See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and next week's issue to find out the results.

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Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC



A widely published author and speaker, Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas.

He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations.

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MORE THAN A PRETTY GARDEN

The Chicago Botanic Garden has 23 display gardens and has just unveiled its 24th—on top of a building. Not just any building, but the new Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Plant Conservation Science Center.

The new green roof garden allows Garden scientists to test hundreds of new species of plants for their suitability in green roof applications. The results will make green roofs not only more beautiful, but also more environmental and sustainable.



The opening of the new Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Plant Conservation Science Center confirms the Garden's role as a world leader in plant conservation science. A 38,000-square-foot laboratory building designed to earn a gold LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, the Plant Science Center offers expanded research facilities, dynamic exhibitions, a 16,000-square-foot green roof garden, and public accessibility.



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