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Prop 8 Trial Wraps Up



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Gay Judges Honored



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Illinois elections: Shock and awe

BY ANDREW DAVIS

On Feb. 2, (a few) Illinois voters weighed in on some unusually competitive primary races—and a few surprises emerged. Some races were not decided by Windy City Times' deadline Tuesday night, but full results online at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

U.S. Senate

Just a few weeks ago, State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias had a substantial lead over opponents David Hoffman, a former Chicago inspector general, and Cheryl Jackson, ex-president/CEO of the Chicago Urban League, in the Democratic primary for the seat currently held by Roland Burris and formerly held by now-President Barack Obama. However,

Turn to page 4

Obama, military push to lift gay ban

BY TRACY BAIM

Military leaders testified before the U.S. Senate Feb. 2 about "how" not "when" the military's gay ban will be lifted.

"The question before us is not whether the military prepares to make this change, but how best we prepare for it," Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee. "We have received our orders from the commander in chief and we are moving out accordingly." However, it is up to Congress to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law.

Admiral Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate committee: "No matter how I look at this issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which

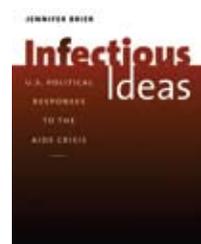
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AIDS history traced 2 new books look at epidemic

BY TRACY BAIM

The first cases of what would later become known as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) were diagnosed almost 30 years ago. During a time of economic recession and the rise of the "moral majority," the gay community had to fight an uphill battle against not just the disease but also homophobia, complacency, inadequate research and healthcare systems, and gays often even against one another about what approach to take as their friends were dying.

Two new books with Chicago connections take a closer look at the trajectory of AIDS as it impacted the mainstream and gay communities.



University of Illinois at Chicago scholar Jennifer Brier's *Infectious Ideas* book focuses on the federal and global epidemic, including a detailed account of President Ronald Reagan's criminal neglect and politicizing of the disease. Her book does not address Chicago's response, but instead looks closer at New York, San Francisco, and the overall U.S. and "global south" response.

Turn to page 16



Two new books take a closer look at the AIDS epidemic, including ACT UP. Pictured are demonstrators at an ACT UP/Chicago protest in 1990. Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright.

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RuPaul talks about the second season of her reality-TV show and her new book. See page 14.

Photo by Mathu Andersen



Artist David Csicsko's work is showcased at the Belmont "L" station. See page 7.

Photo by Hal Baim

Photo on cover (from top left): Attorney David Boies by Tracy Baim; photo of (from left) Sebastian Patti and Tom Chiola by Andrew Davis; Photo of Cyon Flare courtesy of Flare

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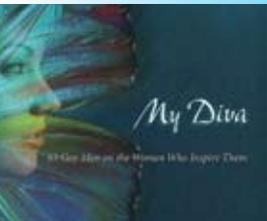
Chicago native Tommy Defendi shows that skin is in by posing in a calendar (as Mr. March).



Photo by Gio Caruso

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LEAVE IT TO 'DIVA'



Read a review of the book *My Diva: 65 Gay Men on the Women Who Inspire Them*.

ON THE LAMM

Gay writer Brad Lamm (right) talks with Windy City Times about his work, *How to Change Someone You Love*—and weighs in on Dr. Drew.



Photo by Jeremy Cowart

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ELECTIONS from cover

Hoffman had recently gathered momentum, and Giannoulas had to deal with negative news regarding Broadway Bank, the Giannoulas family's financial institution. (Also, out candidate Jacob Meister withdrew Jan. 31, and threw his support behind Giannoulas.) Giannoulas managed to hold off David Hoffman 38 percent to 34 percent; Hoffman announced his concession to Giannoulas and thanked his own supporters shortly before 10 p.m. Feb. 2. (Jackson garnered 20 percent of the vote.)

On the Republican side, Mark Kirk won by a substantial margin, with real-estate developer Patrick Hughes a distinct second.

With Republican Scott Brown winning the U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts formerly held by the late Ted Kennedy, the White House has definite interest in the winner of the Illinois race.

U.S. House

Most of the U.S. House races ran as expected, with many incumbents (e.g., Bobby Rush, Jesse Jackson, Jr.) prevailing either by wide margins or uncontested.

In the 7th Congressional District, Danny Davis took 66.9 percent of the Democratic primary vote; Sharon Denise Dixon garnered 13.6 percent and Darlena Williams-Burnett won 12.8 percent of the vote.

In the 10th Congressional District, a very tight race between three-time candidate Dan Seals and opponent Julie Hamos developed in the Democratic primary. With 99 percent of precincts reporting, Seals had 48.0 percent of the vote; Hamos had 46.6 percent.

Governor's race very tight

There were only two candidates in the Democratic primary—but they waged a war of words that made the race extremely tight. Gov. Pat Quinn was attempting to get elected in his own right after replacing ousted governor Rod Blagojevich. Dan Hynes, the state comptroller for more than a decade, really thrust himself into the race with a controversial TV ad that showed the late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington regretting that he had ever hired Quinn.

As of 10:30 p.m. Feb. 2, both the Democratic and Republican primaries were too close to call. On the Democratic side, Quinn led 50.7 percent to Hynes' 49.3 percent with 80 percent of precincts reporting. On the GOP side, Bill Brady and Kirk Dillard each had 20 percent; Andy McKenna was right behind with 19 percent.

Obama AIDS council named

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has announced 24 new members to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA). This council—chaired by Dr. Helene Gayle—consists of a diverse group of researchers, service providers, and community leaders from around the country, including HIV-positive individuals.

The new members are National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition's A. Cornelius Baker; Praveen Basaviah; Dawn Averitte Bridge of the Well Project; Douglas Brooks of the Justice Resource Institute; minister Calvin Butts III; Humberto Cruz; Ernest Darkoh; amFAR's Kevin Frost; Northwestern University professor Patricia Garcia; attorney Robert Greenwald; AIDS Alabama's Kathie Hiers; professor David Holtgrave; Kaiser Permanente's Michael Horberg; Ejay Jack; The Agassiz Group's Jack Jackson, Jr.; activist Naina Khanna; Dartmouth College President Jim Kim; former Bush assistant Anita McBride; Douglas Michaels of OraSure Technologies; actress Rosie Pérez; Mario J. Pérez; the Rebecca Project's Malika Saada Saar; Sandra Torres-Rivera of Bill's Kitchen; and The Black AIDS Institute Executive Director Phill Wilson.

For more information, see www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Alexi Giannoulas.

Other state races

In other state primaries, Scott Cohen had a slight edge over Arthur Turner (26 percent to 23 percent with 83 percent of precincts reporting) in the Democratic race for lieutenant governor.

The treasurer's race (on the Democratic side) seemed to be in favor of Robin Kelly, who led opponent Justin Oberman 58 percent to 42 percent, with 83 percent of precincts reporting.

Regarding the post of attorney general, Lisa Madigan (Democrat), Steve Kim (Republican) and David F. Black (Green) had no opponents, and will face each other in November.

All three candidates for secretary of state—Jesse White (Democrat), Robert Enriquez (Republican) and Adrian Frost (Green)—were unchallenged in their respective races as well.

General Assembly races

Some interesting and hard-fought races took place for seats in the Illinois General Assembly.

In the 7th District (Illinois Senate), incumbent Heather Steans defeated openly gay candidate Jim Madigan, who would have been the first out state senator had he prevailed and in the general election. As of 9:30 p.m. Feb. 2, Steans had outgained Madigan 65.1 percent to 34.9 percent with 85 percent of precincts reporting.

In the 5th District (Illinois House), incumbent Ken Dunkin fought back a stiff challenge from openly gay candidate David Schroeder in the Democratic primary.

Also, in the only race to feature two openly gay candidates, incumbent Democratic state Rep. Deb Mell (40th District) led Joe Laiacona 65.5 percent to 34.5 percent with 87 percent of precincts reporting.

Another gay candidate, Ed Mullen, ran against Dan Farley and Ann M. Williams in the Democratic primary for the 11th District seat in the Illinois House. With 86 percent of precincts reporting, Williams had 45.7 percent of the vote, while Farley had 32.3 percent and Mullen trailed with 22 percent.

County

In the Democratic primary for Cook County Board president, Toni Preckwinkle prevailed, defeating three opponents—Cook County Circuit Clerk Dorothy Brown, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District President Terrence O'Brien and incumbent president Todd Stroger. As of 9 p.m. Feb. 2, the other candidates had already made concession calls to Preckwinkle, who thanked her parents and campaign team as well as people "Black and Latino [and] gay and straight." (With 85 percent of precincts reporting, Preckwinkle had 50 percent, O'Brien had 23 percent and Brown had 14 percent, according to Fox Chicago News. Stroger finished last.)

In the Republican primary, financial adviser Roger Keats defeated police officer/attorney John Garrido.

In the race for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District commission, openly gay Todd Connor was running fourth in the Democratic primary's suburban vote. (Only the top three go on to the general election.) However, he placed third in the city with 90 percent of precincts reporting. So at press time it is not clear yet if he prevailed.

Judicial

Last year, Sebastian Patti made history as the first openly gay person in the Illinois Appellate

Court when he was appointed by the state's supreme court. In suburban Cook County, Patti had 13 percent to Mary Rochford's 45.82 percent; in the city, he had 18.13 percent to Rochford's 34.29 percent, with 91 percent of precincts reporting. Patti will return to Cook County Circuit Court since he had not resigned his post there.

As for Cook County races, lesbian candidate Linda Pael is involved in a tight Democratic primary race for the Dolan vacancy. With 91 percent of Chicago precincts reporting, Pael had 32.93 percent of the vote to Susan Kennedy Sullivan's 31.15 percent and Kevin J. Murphy's 25.32 percent; in the suburbs, Pael had 31.82 percent to Sullivan's 36.36 percent.

Lesbian candidate Mary Trew had her own tight race. In the suburbs, she trailed Steve Bernstein 30.53 percent to 23.53 percent; in the city, she led Bernstein 29.35 percent to 27.1 percent. There are six Democratic candidates in the Cook County Circuit Court, 9th Subcircuit, "A" vacancy race.

Early reports in the race for the Democratic nomination for the 16th Circuit Court in Kane County had openly gay John Dalton of Elgin ahead of opponent Michael Funkey of Aurora by about a 2-1 margin; however, only 18 of 228 precincts' votes had been counted, according to SuburbanChicagoNews.com.

LGBT candidates

Below is how gay and lesbian candidates fared in their races around the state:

—Sebastian Patti: Lost Appellate Court (South vacancy) primary to Mary Rochford

—Jacob Meister: Withdrew from the U.S. Senate race Jan. 31

—David Schroeder: Lost to Ken Dunkin (Illinois House, 5th District)

—Joanne Fehn: Lost to John Callahan (Cook County Circuit Court, Kelley vacancy)

—Linda J. Pael: Race undeclared as of press time

—Ed Mullen: Lost to Ann M. Williams (Illinois House, 11th District)

—Greg Harris: Won an uncontested Democratic primary race for his Illinois House seat

—Deb Mell: Defeated Joe Laiacona (Illinois House, 40th District)

—Joe Laiacona: Lost to Deb Mell (Illinois House, 40th District)

—Todd Connor: Undeclared as of press time

—Jim Madigan: Lost to Heather Steans (Illinois

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nois Senate, 7th District)

—Mary Trew: Race undeclared as of press time (Cook, 9th Subcircuit, "A" vacancy)

—Kent DeLay: Uncontested in Democratic primary (Illinois House, 99th District); will face Republican incumbent Raymond Poe in November

—Bob Mueller: Was uncontested in the Green primary (Illinois House, 47th District)

—John Dalton: Race undeclared in Democratic primary (16th Circuit, Kane, "A" vacancy)

—Christopher Boyster: Competed for a spot on the Sangamon County Board; result undeclared as of press time

See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com for updates.

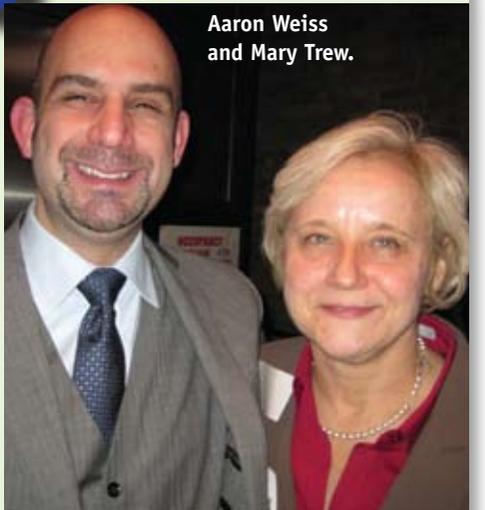


Linda Pael.

Judges honored



Sebastian Patti (left) and Tom Chiola.



Aaron Weiss and Mary Trew.

A Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) reception recognizing the retirement of the Hon. Tom Chiola and the appellate court appointment of the Hon. Sebastian Patti was held Jan. 27 at Rokit Bar & Grill. Cook County Circuit Court Chief Judge Tim Evans introduced both, calling Chiola a "trailblazer" and Patti "an icon." Chiola urged the crowd, which was filled with political figures and candidates, to become more involved with LGBT organizations and with establishing/reporting downstate contacts in advance of a possible vote on a civil-unions bill. Patti, who is on the Feb. 2 ballot for his court seat, talked of being "seduced by the magic" of being on the appellate court. In addition, Chiola accepted LAGBAC's Vanguard Award, while both he and Patti accepted awards from the Alliance of Illinois Judges, which, among other things, seeks to promote equal treatment of LGBT members of the judiciary on issues affecting judges. Photos and text by Andrew Davis; see more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Prop 8 trial wraps up

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

SAN FRANCISCO—There is nothing like turning an opponent's own words against him to both rile his emotions and destroy his position, and that was the work of attorney David Boies on the final day of the Proposition 8 trial.

Boies is one of the lead attorneys on a team challenging the constitutionality of California's same-sex marriage ban in a U.S. district court. And Jan. 27 was the 12th and final day of the court proceeding in that case, *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*.

Boies' mission was to tear down the claims by the pro-Proposition 8 supporters and, on this last day of the trial, he was finishing up his cross-examination of the second and final witness that attorneys defending the same-sex marriage ban brought to the court.

On the stand was David Blankenhorn, a man who clearly has a passion for reading, talking, and writing about marriage. He founded the Institute of American Values, a private think tank, to do just that—with a particular focus on how same-sex marriage has an impact on heterosexual marriages.

But although Judge Vaughn Walker allowed the defense to put Blankenhorn on the stand as an "expert witness," Blankenhorn exhibited neither the depth of knowledge nor the experience that an expert witness must have to withstand cross-examination. And, with Boies, he was up against the best.

Boies hammered away at the defense's claims about the purported harms of same-sex marriage. And as he did, Blankenhorn struggled to keep his composure and avoid giving testimony that contradicted the Yes on 8 team's defense.

"Let me start with something I think we can agree on," said. "Marriage is an important public good."

"Yes, sir," said Blankenhorn.

"And what do you mean by 'public good?'" asked Boies, noting that it was a term that Blankenhorn used in some of his writings.

"It's something that makes a contribution to society," said Blankenhorn.

"And it benefits the participants and the children they raise, is that right?" asked Boies.

"Yes, sir," said Blankenhorn.

"And do you believe that the legalization of marriage for gay and lesbian couples would benefit the gay and lesbian couples and their children?" asked Boies.

"I believe it would likely do so," said Blankenhorn.

"Do you believe it would likely do so or almost certainly do so?" asked Boies.

Blankenhorn hesitated and Boies pulled out a copy of Blankenhorn's book, *The Future of Marriage*, and read aloud a sentence in which Blankenhorn wrote that marriage "almost certainly" would benefit gay couples and their children.

"And you believe that the rights of gays and lesbians should take second place to the needs of an existing social institution, right?" asked Boies.

Again, Blankenhorn hesitated.

Again, Boies read from Blankenhorn's book: "the rights of gays and lesbians should take second place to the needs of an existing social institution."

"The answer is yes," said Blankenhorn, who attempted to offer an explanation for his writing.

Boies had Blankenhorn look down a list of 20 "possible" benefits to society of same-sex marriage—ideas that appeared in Blankenhorn's book. Blankenhorn insisted upon explaining that he had constructed the list in conversation with other parties interested in the issue, and he said he did not agree with all of them.

"You did not necessarily agree with every idea?" asked Boies. "Which of any of these pos-



David Boies. Photo by Tracy Baim

sible consequences do you agree with?" He had Blankenhorn go down the list, one by one, and identify whether he agreed or disagreed with each statement.

"I only wish to say that each of them," said Blankenhorn, "was a likely benefit, not a definite benefit." The list, he said, was just "an attempt to predict" the impact of same-sex marriage in the future.

Boies insisted he identify which points he agreed with and the volley between the two men soon deteriorated to the point where the

judge attempted to intervene with some advice for Blankenhorn and Blankenhorn shot back to the judge, "I don't need instruction." That drew a judicial warning.

Judge Walker gently but firmly advised Blankenhorn that, when a jury is instructed on how to view expert testimony, they are told "to consider a witness's background, training, expertise, testimony" and a number of other factors, "... and that includes the demeanor of the witness."

"I'm sure," said the judge, "you would not want your demeanor on the stand to have negative consequences." He advised Blankenhorn to answer only the questions Boies posed and to rely on the Yes on 8 attorneys to give him an opportunity to make explanations.

Blankenhorn was continuously confronted with statements—many of them from his own writing. One stated that allowing gays to marry would probably lead to fewer divorces because there would be fewer closeted homosexuals marrying opposite sex spouses. Another stated that allowing gays to marry could mean more couples "who might be interested in adoption and foster care," thus leading to "fewer children growing up in state institutions."

Blankenhorn also acknowledged, under cross-examination, that he believed domestic partner-

ships and civil unions—what he referred to in his writings as "marriage lite"—"could blur" the distinction between marriage and non-marriage in a way that could be detrimental to marriage.

Boies finally read two statements and asked Blankenhorn whether he agreed with them. One statement said the institution of marriage is "constantly evolving" and the other said that there is "no single definition of marriage."

Blankenhorn noted that he had written those words.

In closing the trial portion of the case, Judge Walker gave attorneys until Feb. 26 to submit post-trial briefs. After that date, he reiterated, he would examine all the testimony and documents carefully in order to prepare questions to ask during closing arguments. Walker said he would set a date for closing arguments sometime after the briefs are due.

There has been considerable attention on this case, in part because of the participation of Boies and well-known conservative attorney Ted Olson—both uniting to challenge the anti-gay initiative. Many believe the case could end up in front of the U.S. Supreme Court and that the result could have both large and longstanding implications for the gay civil rights movement.

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DADT from cover

forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens."

The hearing happened just days after President Barack Obama used his first official State of the Union speech Jan. 27 as an opportunity to call for the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that had been implemented by the last Democratic president, Bill Clinton, in his own failed bid to allow gays and lesbians to serve openly.

Gates said there will be a 45-day period to review and implement improvements in enforcement practices, the ACLU reported.

"While less draconian enforcement is long overdue and welcome, it will be no substitute for Congress taking the discriminatory law entirely out of the U.S. Code," said Christopher Anders, ACLU senior legislative counsel.

This marks the first time in 17 years that Congress has held hearings on the military and gay servicemembers.

Gates and Mullen "announced the creation of a working group whose outcomes must be nothing less than full equality and full access to all of the benefits and obligations required by mili-



Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates testifying Feb. 2 in the U.S. Senate. Photo by Patsy Lynch

tary service," said Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The Human Rights Campaign urged the military to include non-military experts in the group, but no non-military names have been listed so far. The American Forces Press Service reports that the working group will be headed by Jeh Johnson, the Pentagon's top lawyer, and Army Gen. Carter Ham, commander of U.S. Army Europe.

"We are encouraged by Secretary Gates' announcement that, as a first step, the Department of Defense will no longer aggressively pursue disciplinary action against gay servicemembers whose orientation is revealed against their will by third parties so that as few qualified and patriotic Americans as possible are discharged from the armed forces because of their sexual orientation," said the Center for American Progress (CAP).

The response from the LGBT community to Obama's speech was mixed, ranging from skepticism to optimism.

"This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are. It's the right thing to do," Obama said to loud applause, mainly from Democrats.

More than 13,500 servicemembers have fallen victim to DADT since it was created in 1994, according to SLDN, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. The military claims the number is 10,900.

In Obama's first year, far fewer gays were kicked out than the prior year, 2008. This could be in part because of personnel needs for the two wars being waged. The Pentagon said Feb. 1 that there were 428 DADT-related discharges in 2009 compared to 619 in 2008.

"It was heartening to hear President Obama mention that he would work with Congress to overturn Don't Ask, Don't Tell," said Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer USA retired, in an email to Windy City Times. "I would be honored to have a Commander in Chief, acting as one, acting as

President Truman, and pushing for the repeal of a law which has created two classes of people, one open and affirming and the other second class, secretive and disrespected. It is past time when the dedicated commitment of gay and lesbian servicemembers is acknowledged and celebrated by allowing them to serve in the military with full appreciation of their humanity."

"While the President promised that DADT would come to an end 'this year,' he did not provide specifics -- and the White House still has not released a plan to kill it. That's unacceptable," said Lt. Dan Choi, an Army lieutenant fighting his discharge under DADT. "I served in the Army for a decade under [DADT] -- an immoral policy that forces American soldiers to lie about their sexual orientation. Worse, it forces others to tolerate deception. As I learned at West Point, deception and lies poison a unit and cripple a fighting force."

Obama is perhaps responding to increased pressure from LGBT activists and Democratic Party donors who are withholding their support of Dems until they see more dramatic progress on LGBT issues. Even though Obama did sign into law the gay-inclusive federal hate-crimes law, and lifted the HIV+ travel ban, LGBT activists and leaders are seeking more progress, and lifting DADT would send a strong signal that Obama is willing to fight the more controversial battles for gay rights.

Openly gay Chicago Ald. Tom Tunney was at the speech, as the guest of U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley. He was seated above and behind the president, so he had a bird's eye view of the fidgeting Republicans. "It was mind boggling," Tunney said. "It was just awesome to hear the words, but the chemistry and dynamism of the room was amazing. There were so many elected officials and the Supreme Court justices. As a listener and student of politics, it was more intriguing to see the non-verbals, the reactions and cynicism of the Republicans."

Tunney said it was an honor to be there, after having heard so many Obama speeches over the years, including at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. He said he "looks forward to having more visits to D.C., for substantive discussion" on issues that impact the LGBT community.

The President also mentioned the hate-crimes law in his speech: "We finally strengthened our laws to protect against crimes driven by hate." And he included HIV and AIDS among the list of international causes the U.S. is helping.

Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain said the DADT policy is "working," and the ban should stay. Fox News reported that McCain said he believes "it would be a mistake to repeal the policy."

"We applaud President Obama tonight for his call to Congress to repeal [DADT] this year, setting the stage for the beginning of the end of DADT," SLDN Executive Director Aubrey Sarvis stated in a press release. "The climate is ripe for repeal, but the fight is far from over."

Human Rights Campaign used the speech to announce a "Voices of Honor" campaign to push for the end of DADT.

The Military Readiness Enhancement Act, being pushed by Iraq War veteran Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Penn., would replace DADT with open service by qualified lesbian and gay servicemembers.

Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart stated: "We have heard promises before about ending 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and we welcome the President's statement that the time has finally come to fulfill that promise. Very little has changed since Lambda Legal represented Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer 18 years ago after she was discharged for being a lesbian. Changing this discriminatory policy is long overdue."

"Although brief, his language was plain, his message was clear, and the outline of his strategy was smart," said Alexander Nicholson, founder and Executive Director of Servicemembers United, a group for gay and lesbian troops and veterans and their allies. "This effort will indeed be a challenge for our community, and



Admiral Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testifying Feb. 2 in the U.S. Senate. Photo by Patsy Lynch

the resistance of those who support discrimination in our armed forces should not be underestimated."

Nicholson is also a plaintiff in Log Cabin Republicans vs. the U.S., a challenge to DADT filed after the Supreme Court's decision in Lawrence v. Texas. The case is headed to trial this June. Log Cabin said "in an alarming contradiction to his stated public policy position, President Obama has instructed his Justice Department to fight" this lawsuit.

"The day after the State of the Union address, President Obama's lawyers 'bombed' us with so much paperwork that we can only conclude that the Justice Department's legal strategy is at odds with the President's position," said Dan Woods, a partner in the Los Angeles office of White & Case, who is representing the Log Cabin Republicans.

The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law has released a research brief on DADT.

"[Data] from the U.S. Census Bureau suggest that an estimated 66,000 LGB men and women are serving in the U.S. military," about 2.2% of personnel, said the study's author, Dr. Gary J. Gates. About 13,000 LGB people are serving on active duty (comprising 0.9% of all active duty personnel) while nearly 53,000 are serving in the guard and reserve forces (3.4%).

Ending DADT "will save a substantial amount of taxpayer dollars since estimates suggest that the policy has cost more than half a billion dollars," Gates said.

The study found that while women comprise only about 14% of active duty personnel, they comprise more than 43% of LGB men and women serving on active duty. The military spends an estimated \$22,000 to \$43,000 per person to replace those discharged under DADT.

The day after his speech, President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden spoke at the University of Tampa, and student Hector Flores asked about same-sex marriages.

Obama responded: "[A] basic principle in our Constitution is that if you're obeying the law, if you're following the rules, that you should be treated the same, regardless of who you are. (Applause.) I think that principle applies to gay and lesbian couples. So at the federal level, one of the things that we're trying to do is to make sure that partnerships are recognized for purposes of benefits so that hospital visitation, for example, is something that is permitted; that Social Security benefits or pension benefits or others, that same-sex couples are recognized in all those circumstances.

"I think that we've got to -- we actually have an opportunity of passing a law that's been introduced in Congress right now, and my hope is this year we can get it done, just for federal employees and federal workers ... [The] notion that somebody who's working really hard for 30 years can't take their death benefits and transfer them to the person that they love the most in the world and who has supported them all their lives, that just doesn't seem fair. It doesn't seem right. (Applause.) And I think it's the right thing to do."

For more details see the online version of this article at www.windycitymediagroup.com.

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Keith Boykin.

Panelists discuss fairness for Black gay men

BY YASMIN NAIR

People from every age group and many ethnicities filled all 180 seats leaving standing room only at "Justice for All? What is Justice for the Black Gay man?," a forum held Jan. 28 at the University Center, 525 S. State. The event—in honor of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day—was held to discuss the challenges and triumphs the gay Black community has faced.

Topics, discussed in panel format, included HIV/AIDS, same-sex marriage, discrimination within the gay community, homophobia within the Black community and economic parity.

Keith Boykin, a former aide to President Clinton and commentator on stations such as CNN, was on the panel along with E. Patrick Johnson from Northwestern University and Antonio D. Jimenez from the UIC School of Public Health.

The panel discussion was hosted by Jim Pickett, a leader in the local HIV/AIDS community, and Dr. Keith Magee, a Chicago newcomer with an education in theology.

Pickett and Magee asked the panel a variety of questions, beginning with a reflection of Boykin's book, *One More River to Cross*, which he wrote 15 years ago. The book tackled the similarities and differences within the Black and gay communities, and how these intersect and divide.

"Since writing *One More River to Cross* in 1996, how do you find this message resonating, both with the Black community in general and the Black gay community, specifically?" Magee asked Boykin.

Boykin discussed his changing views regarding the biggest challenge in the gay Black community. When the book was written, he viewed the paramount challenge to be "racism from the white community and homophobia from the Black community." Now, he views the biggest challenge to be the Black gay community's "own internalize prejudices."

Johnson was then asked to talk about his project, *Sweet Tea*, which collects stories about Black gay men ages 19-93 who live in the South.

He was asked to speak of a common theme between the gay Black community throughout the country.

"[Gay Black people] are looking for affirmation as gay Black men. They are also looking for confirmation, looking for community. Even though we are supposedly in a post-racial age, walking down the street as Black gay men we know that this is not necessarily true. Young people are looking for some kind of affirmation that we have ... a history of struggles that we have overcome."

After the hosts' panel questions, the floor was opened to audience members who wanted to ask questions and make suggestions to the community. Audience members discussed everything from what life is like for a gay Black man outside of the United States to how people identify.

"For me, I don't associate myself with being rigidly defined as Black or rigidly defined as gay; I associate myself with being human. Being Black or being gay doesn't surmount to the totality of my identification," attendee Drew Williams told fellow audience members.

The event's sponsors included LifeLube, Chicago Black Man's Caucus, Communities of Color Collaborative, Project CRYSP, the Test Positive Awareness Network and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

CHM looks at queer spaces, past and present

BY YASMIN NAIR

The Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark, hosted a two-person presentation on Chicago's queer spaces Jan. 28. The speakers were Sharon Haar, an architect and associate professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and Doug Ischar, UIC professor of photography.

Jane Saks, executive director of the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago, introduced the evening's topic and speakers. Historically, "queer space" has meant either the existence of built space exclusively intended for use by queers, like bathhouses or spaces appropriated by queers for strategic and sometimes ephemeral occasions, like parks used for cruising. Saks addressed the complexity of such notions of "queer space" and that it can offer a "resistance to heteronormative boundaries" that are "unscripted" by hetero conventions. Laying the ground for what would become a theme of the evening, Saks went on to interrogate the idea that queer spaces could be easily defined, given that they could be either temporary or permanent and that they are always marked by race and class and power.

Haar took up the question of power by asking, "What's queer about urban public space and who creates it?" Quoting Christopher Reed, she pointed out that "for a long time, the look of

the queer community was invisibility" and that the ways in which gay men and lesbians occupy space has markedly changed in the last 30 years." She raised the question of whether it was possible to create queer space by design and how we might go about archiving queer space. Like Saks, she emphasized the fact that queer space challenges heteronormative public spaces and questions cultural assumptions about what may or may not "appear in public."

The question-and-answer session that followed raised the issue of queer lesbian spaces, which, one respondent said, were disappearing while their absences were barely recorded. Another questioned the myth that gay white men had

"built the neighborhood from scratch," which ignored previous communities and that, according to the speaker, the creation of the neighborhood's public displays of the pylons came about in a top-down fashion. Ischar, in his response, reiterated a theme of the evening in saying that the pylons denied the transience of the community as queers were pushed northwards; he predicted that they would remain as "tombstones" of the neighborhood.

Read much more about the event—including how Center on Halsted, Boystown and the Jane Addams Hull House compare—online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

Belmont's new art



Ald. Tom Tunney (44th), Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, and other community and business leaders celebrated the ending of the three-year renovation of the Belmont El station Jan. 28 with a ceremony featuring artist David Csicsko (pictured above with Erin Adams), whose designs brighten the facility inside and out. The station is in the city's heavily LGBT Lakeview neighborhood, just down the street from Tunney's Ann Sather restaurant.

Tunney, who was fresh from the previous night's State of the Union in Washington, said the station "represents a gleaming gateway to our beautiful neighborhood." The facility also has room for commercial tenants.

The mosaic faces of Lakeview artist Csicsko, whose designs were also the "face" of Gay Games VII in 2006 in Chicago, were hand-cut and made at Erin Adams Design in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Adams joined Csicsko at the dedication. The designs depict various types of train riders with colorful faces.

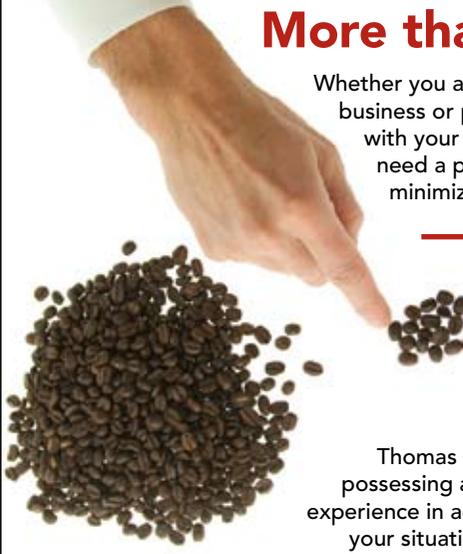
"I wanted to capture the spirit of Lakeview," Csicsko said in a press release. "There's so much diversity and vitality here, it just seemed that the train image was a great way to represent that. The design is all about making visitors enjoy using the station."

The mosaics even have a Facebook group, "Rub the Eye for Luck," which asks riders to rub an "eye" on one of the mosaic faces for good luck. A sculpture, "Space Junction of Energy" by Jerald Jacquard is featured on the station's outdoor plaza.

Karen Tamley, commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, also addressed the crowd about the station's accessibility. The facility boasts brighter lighting, Braille signs, wheelchair accessible turnstiles and expanded platforms. Text by Tracy Baim; photo by Hal Baim (more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com)

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Star Gaze patrons remember club

This is the third and final installment of our series on the closing of Chicago's Star Gaze lesbian bar.

BY MEL FERRAND

Thousands of women have walked through the doors at Star Gaze, each leaving with a unique experience. Many returned often over the years, sharing the common experience of being regulars at what became Chicago's last full-time lesbian bar. The following are some of the memories of a handful of those women who were impacted by owner Mamie Lake and her Andersonville bar.

When asked what brought these women to Star Gaze, they all seem to have different routes for arriving, but similar reasons for staying. Nikki Martin said, "I lived in the neighborhood and heard there was a lesbian bar here. When [Mamie] first opened she had Sunday brunch. You could eat on the dance floor [section] or in the beer garden." Sylvia B. Stallings, another local resident said, "I've been here since the first day. I used to be around the corner on Balmoral. When I got the postcard in the mail asking if I wanted the bar to open, I said, 'yes, yes, please, please;' and, when she [Mamie] got the patio, I said, 'yes, yes, please, please.'" Stallings added, "Mamie and [partner] Dusty are the salt of the earth. They have taken care of the neighborhood and community since they got here."



Patrons in the now-closed Star Gaze bar. Photo by Linda "Kizzy" Ramos

Francine Mojica, a bartender from Star Gaze, said, "I used to work for Temps [Temptations] ... My friend told me that the people [Mamie and Dusty] she was working for were really good people and interested in community." Mojica further explained, "independent artists, whatever, she [Mamie] was more interested in helping out the community." Chantelle Yost, who later became a bartender at Star Gaze said, it was "a place to come out and be gay and enjoy and have lots of friends in [the] community. I could come in and sit at the bar with people I knew and meet new people in [the] community."

"I was livin' in the burbs and comin' here bein' comfortable around family," Pat Krug said. "You can relax, download, do what you gotta do. Your family away from family."

CC Clark, recently voted female athlete of the year for the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association, said, "The first time I was exposed to Star Gaze was from my basketball team. I started playing with The Players before I even knew Star Gaze existed. They were the team that taught me you go to your sponsor bar and you support them." Clark added, "We would have a 10 a.m. game, come here after and stay until night."

When asked about favorite memories, Nikki Martin said, "I spent my entire 30s here. There are so many, so many friends; I first started dating my partner here. Mamie and Dusty have been a huge part of the community and my life for 10 years."

Another regular named Bea said her favorite was "when we dressed up as the YMCA [Village People] for a fundraiser, I think for breast cancer. It was a drag show. I was the cowboy, my sister made her own costume, she was the Indian" She added, "We got about \$7,000 for an anonymous woman who eventually died, but the money went to pay her bills."

Pat Krug described how her weekly routine has been disrupted. She said, "Karaoke, pretty much every Sunday, same girls, same shit, never a dull moment." Krug added, "I think that is going to be the most missed thing around here. At least for me, everyone making an ass of themselves and luvin' it, that's 'Sunday Fun day.'"

From behind the bar, Chantelle Yost said, "My favorite nights were when we did benefits; like when everyone offered to shave their heads, the Hurricane Katrina benefit, [and for] a regular, Gillian Barre, to help her [and others] financially through hard times." Another long-time bartender, Francine Mojica said, "I don't know if this counts as a favorite, but I met a lot of people and have become friends with them over the years. All 11 years I've been working here have been good memories. Mamie is the best employer I've ever worked for. She really cared about us and sacrificed herself for us ... and if you can say you enjoyed your job, that's something."

Finally, when asked to add any final comments, the regulars seemed nostalgic, yet realistic in their musings.

"People have been asking me how I feel about the bar closing," Francine Mojica said. "And, I don't want it to close. ... Mamie did a lot for the gay community; she had benefits, and for whatever reasons, they [lesbians] stopped coming. I am going to miss this place, the people, but I wouldn't give up my experience." Chantelle Yost said, "I started working here when I had a hard time finding a job in the straight community [as a bartender] and Mamie and Dusty took a chance on me when no one else would." When asked where she will go now, she said with a big smile, "Who's hiring? I'm available."

Bea said, "It was fun while it lasted, but like all the lesbian bars, they close. I think something else is going to pop out. I don't think Mamie is done yet. She's down, but she's not out. I think the bar was too big for her. I'm sad that Star Gaze is closing, but that's not devastating." She posited, "If this happened six years ago, I would be more upset, but I'm 43 and I don't go out that much anymore."

A woman in her late 20s named Frankie—who no longer lives in Chicago, but frequented Star Gaze when she visited—said, "I love Mamie because she was fair. She was a fuckin' lesbian and all about the lesbian movement. ... I remember one year when everyone in the house was sick [during the annual Capricorn Party] and the party was canceled so Mamie let us bring the food here." She added, "I feel like this is home and I appreciate it. I don't know anything else as a lesbian but Star Gaze." In addition, Frankie said, "I always tell my friends you got to go to



Reporter Mel Ferrand with Mamie Lake. Photo courtesy of Ferrand

Star Gaze; it's lesbian owned, it's all about the lesbians, it's not a lesbian night."

CC Carter said, "It's just been here so long and has so many memories that go along with it, that it's a weird feeling that it's just not gonna be here. ... For me it's an integral part of the neighborhood and when it's not here there will be a void." On the owner, CC added, "I've always felt really great about Mamie because she's the owner and she's always here and involved in the atmosphere of the bar and that makes a difference for someone coming in. It's one thing if there's people who are in a bar to make money, but it makes a difference when the owner is involved and accessible. I suppose it made me feel a part of the bar, like I belong here." Finally, she admitted she's not sure where she'll hang out now. Carter said, "... that's tough. There's not an exclusively lesbian bar. Lost & Found is gone and Girl Bar. This was the last totally dedicated lesbian bar. Other places are totally friendly; great, but this is the one place I thought was all us."

Similarly, Sylvia B. Stallings said, "Mamie was good for a cup of coffee in the old days, and a meal, and she would float us a loan if we were broke." She added, "Every Pride weekend or Pride Day they'd have a Bar-B-Q here and they'd feed the neighborhood, all free. They were the first to offer the space for a benefit for someone without health insurance or a death. There's always been a collection ... any time they [Mamie and Dusty] could think to extend themselves. There used to be a bus to the [Lesbian Community Cancer Project] Gala at South Shore. They brought local comics and music ... a lot got their starts here."

Stallings got very solemn and added, "Besides sponsoring sports teams, dart tournaments, drag king shows, this has been my neighborhood bar, not just my lesbian bar. ... These people are family. They would invite you in if they knew you were alone at Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter; if you were on your own ... they didn't just take your money, they took your welfare into interest."

Pat Krug added a uniquely personal testimony. She said, "I'd have to say the biggest thing for me is that Mamie was lookin' out for every girl around here. Like if you'd had too much to drink or if you needed a job ... she opened her heart and she opened her door to ya. I know because I'm actually one of them. I was livin' with a friend, sleepin' on a couch, in between jobs, and Mamie let me work the door here. The best part was she was very supportive; she [Mamie] said, 'Keep your head up things will turn around' and they did. She basically looked out for everybody." When asked where she will frequent now, Krug said, "I honestly don't know ... this is our safe haven. Somewhere down the line the girls will find another one or open another one." Her thoughts about Mamie were similar to the other regulars, she said, "Mamie is amazing. She loves this community and gave her heart and soul to it. She's a little bit of history."

Finally, Bibi said it most succinctly when she said, "This is the bar that became my 'Cheers.'" And like that popular television series, it has left a lasting impact, but is now off the air.



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Fiorito will not be prosecuted

BY ANDREW DAVIS AND SAMUEL WORLEY

Windy City Times has learned that embattled Chicago police officer Richard Fiorito will not be prosecuted and criminal proceedings have been stopped, according to the State's Attorney's Office.

Fiorito had been under investigation for allegedly falsifying DUI arrest reports. Also, it was alleged that he targeted LGBT motorists in particular, using anti-gay slurs during those arrests.

Sally Daly, spokeswoman from the state's attorney's office, said that her department sent a letter to Chicago Police Department Superintendent Jody Weis saying that no criminal charges will be filed. Daly said that the office had gone over all the pleadings and depositions, had interviewed dozens of witnesses and had looked at the full video footage. "At this point and time, it was not sufficient to sustain the criminal charge against Officer Fiorito," Daly said. Daly also said that there were inconsistencies between the allegations in the federal lawsuit and what they found in their criminal investigation.

In response to criticism that the state's attorney's office does not go after police officers as it should, Daly said, "That criticism could not be further from the truth. [Anita Alvarez, the state's attorney] has not shied away from placing charges against police officers if they have, in fact, committed a criminal act."

According to an item in the Jan. 20 of Windy City Times, Gay Liberation Network's Andy Thayer said that his organization "got word from inside the State's Attorney's office" that the state's attorney, Anita Alvarez, had decided not to move forward with the case, which had been under investigation by a grand jury.

When asked by Windy City Times if the state's attorney's office made any recommendations to Weis regarding Fiorito, Daly responded that it had not.

Thirty-seven plaintiffs are involved in a separate civil-rights case against Fiorito. Fiorito, who worked in Lakeview, had been accused of falsifying DUI arrests—allegedly to increase the overtime pay that comes with court testimony in those cases—and harassing LGBT motorists.

HIV+ suburban man files civil suit

An HIV-positive Blue Island man has filed a complaint against the city of Blue Island and two of its police officers, claiming, among other things, assault, battery, malicious prosecution and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Demetrius Anderson, in a suit filed through Chicago's Civil Rights Center, said that on April 20, 2009, he attempted to stab himself in the chest with knife. (Anderson claimed he suffered from clinical depression and anxiety.) After his sister summoned an ambulance, Anderson informed the emergency medical technicians (EMTs) of his HIV status.

Anderson, according to the complaint, started to panic as they neared the ambulance, and he started running. Two policemen, identified as Officers Benton and Podbielniak, gave chase and

eventually apprehended him. Anderson claimed that the officers handled him so roughly as they handcuffed him that, among other things, he suffered numbness in his right hand.

Anderson also alleged that the officers verbally assaulted him, saying, among other things, that the plaintiff would have nightmares for the remainder of his life because of his HIV status.

School criticized for holding LGBT seminars

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

William Beye Elementary School, part of the Oak Park public-school system, recently drew criticism from the Illinois Family Institute (IFI) for hosting a series of seminars aimed at increasing teacher awareness of LGBT families. The seminars were presented by the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance's executive director Shannon Sullivan.

According to an interview Beye's principal, Jonathan Ellwanger, gave to the Chicago Sun-Times, the seminars came in response to the bullying of a student with same-sex parents.

Laurie Higgins, director of IFI's Division of School Advocacy, wrote in a January column, "It was only a matter of time before homosexual activism infected elementary education here in Illinois.

"The forms of diversity of which Ms. Sullivan is enamored are, in the view of many people, profoundly wrong; and public schools have no right to use school hours, school resources, and public money to affirm Ms. Sullivan's unproven, divisive theories to children," Higgins wrote.

In an interview, Higgins said that she objected to the teaching of "homosexuality" as "by nature analogous to race or skin color"—which she called an "absurd proposition."

Ellwanger told Windy City Times that he "didn't see [the controversy] coming.

"The long and the short of it is that we've got caught up in some things bigger than us," Ellwanger said. "I don't think it had anything to do with us."

Though Higgins said that she had not contacted Beye directly with her concerns, they were apparently well-publicized enough to draw a large crowd to a January 19 PTO meeting, at which Sullivan presented.

At the end of a question-and-answer session, Sullivan said, a parent read a statement about the controversy that Sullivan called "pretty mean ... a couple of students left the room crying."

Sullivan said that her organization had fielded a number of calls on the matter—some of which were supportive, she said, and some of which she characterized as "blithering idiot stuff." Many complained about the spending of taxpayer money on the seminars—although Sullivan pointed out that that money was the PTO's, and not public.

Sullivan said that she thought some parents' concerns about addressing LGBT issues in schools sprung from their recognition that young people tend to be more accepting of LGBT people.

"They understand that the next generation of people will be making policy decisions, which is why this work is so important," she said.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"I WANT HIM (OBAMA) TO SUCCEED. BUT I AM VERY UPSET by what he's not done in terms of rights of gays and lesbians. I understand it tactically in a campaign, but at this point I don't know. There is some belief that he actually doesn't believe in same-sex marriage. But it's fundamentally inexcusable for a member of the Democratic Party to stand on the principle that separate is now equal, but only on the basis of sexual orientation. We've always fought for the rights of minorities and against the whims of majorities." — *San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom to The New York Times, Jan. 19.*

"LEGALIZING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE WOULD ... BE A RECOGNITION OF basic American principles, and would represent the culmination of our nation's commitment to equal rights. It is, some have said, the last major civil-rights milestone yet to be surpassed in our two-century struggle to attain the goals we set for this nation at its formation." — *Federal Prop 8 case lawyer Ted Olson writing in Newsweek, Jan. 9. The trial in the lawsuit arguing that Prop 8 violates the U.S. Constitution began Jan. 11 in San Francisco.*

"ANOTHER ARGUMENT, VAGUER AND EVEN LESS PERSUASIVE, IS THAT GAY MARRIAGE SOMEHOW does harm to heterosexual marriage. I have yet to meet anyone who can explain to me what this means. In what way would allowing same-sex partners to marry diminish the marriages of heterosexual couples? Tellingly, when the judge in our case asked our opponent to identify the ways in which same-sex marriage would harm heterosexual marriage, to his credit he answered honestly: he could not think of any." — *Federal Prop 8 case lawyer Ted Olson writing in Newsweek, Jan. 9. The trial in the lawsuit arguing that Prop 8 violates the U.S. Constitution began Jan. 11 in San Francisco.*

YESTERDAY AT LAX, ON THE WAY UP HERE, I was going through security. I removed my sunglasses and said, 'I want you to be able to see my beautiful eyes.' The guard said, 'Don't ever say that to another man.'" — *Courage Campaign Chair Rick Jacobs live-blogging the federal Prop 8 trial, Jan. 11.*

"I HAVE BEEN SO GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA TO TALK ABOUT HOUSTON. Now, there was a split in the media. About half of the guys who talk to me ... said, 'Houston elected a lesbian mayor!' and the other half said, 'Houston did that?'" — *Houston Mayor*

Annis Parker speaking to supporters in Houston on Jan. 3.

"THE PROPONENTS OF PROP. 8 SEEK TO HIDE AND OBFUSCATE. They did not want their own ad played in court. They did not want documents from their own strategists to become public because the documents show clearly that their entire campaign was built on the decades of prejudice and fear that we heard about in detail yesterday from Prof. Chauncey. As Ted Olson keeps saying, their arguments do not hold up in public or in court. They only win when they can manipulate the media and the public, using scare tactics." — *Courage Campaign Chair Rick Jacobs live-blogging the federal Prop 8 trial, Jan. 13.*

I want him (Obama) to succeed. But I am very upset by what's he not done in terms of rights of gays and lesbians.

—Gavin Newsom



Photo from David Carrington Miree

"EFFORTS TO PROMOTE 'TRANSGENDERISM' IN PUBLIC POLICY DECONSTRUCT one of the most fundamental concepts known to mankind. It renders gender, the most basic organization of social systems, completely meaningless. In doing so, activists like Simpson are asking the rest of society to radically reorder the ways in which the culture makes reasonable and rational accommodation for the two genders." — *Focus on the Family spokeswoman Monica Schleicher objecting Jan. 5 to President Barack Obama's appointment of Amanda Simpson as senior technical adviser in the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, where she will monitor the export of U.S. weapons technology.*

"THE ANTI-GAY-MARRIAGE PROPONENTS WHIPPED UP A MORAL FRENZY (in California) in 2008, suggesting conjugal parity would harm children, summon the devil, tear down churches and melt civilization." — *New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd, Jan. 16.*

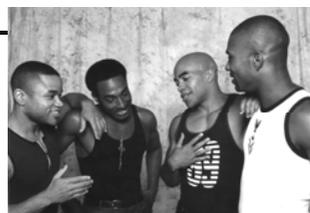
"I'VE NEVER BEEN IN. I'VE NEVER SAID I WAS STRAIGHT, and I'm not saying I'm gay now. I never lie, and I've never shied away from the topic. I've certainly chosen through my work to do things that promote the rights of LGBTQ people. I am not a hypocrite—certainly not now." — *Ugly Betty actor Michael Urie, who plays Marc St. James, to The Advocate, February issue.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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**REV.
IRENE
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Will faith-based agencies help Haiti's gay community?

Since the world community has descended on Haiti with relief aid in response to the Jan. 12 earthquake, I am wondering how Haiti's LGBTQ communities are being helped.

As one of Haiti's most marginal groups the question arises in response to how some American LGBTQ New Orleans were treated during the Hurricane Katrina relief effort in 2005.

During Hurricane Katrina former President George W. Bush's conservative faith-based organizations—like the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities and all other organizations in Bush's "armies of compassion"—highlighted how after the storm homophobia blew in.

While seemingly invisible in the disaster, many LGBTQ evacuees of Katrina and their families faced discrimination at the hands of those conservative faith-based relief organizations because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or HIV status.

"Tragedy does not discriminate and neither should relief agencies," stated Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal, in a news release in 2005. "In our experience during the aftermath of Sept. 11, LGBT people face compounded difficulties because on top of the disaster, they face discrimination when it comes to recognizing their relationships, leading to even more hardship at the worst moment imaginable."

My concern is will many of these same conservative faith-based relief agencies that are

now in Haiti transfer their homophobic attitudes onto Haiti's LGBTQ citizens.

Ironically, homosexuality has been legal in Haiti since 1986. But few protections and provisions come with it. For example, same-sex marriage, and civil unions are not recognized. It's unclear whether LGBTQ couples can adopt children or have custody of their own children. LGBTQ Haitians don't openly serve in the military. They don't have anti-hate-crime bills that specifically addresses discrimination and harassment LGBTQ Haitians face on the basis due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Minimally, LGBTQ Haitians are protected under its Constitution as stated in Article 35-2 that prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on, "sex, beliefs, opinions and marital status." And the United Nation's International Bill of Human Rights mainly protects LGBTQ Haitians. With no queer enclaves in Port-au-Prince and other big cities throughout Haiti, many LGBTQ Haitians are left puzzled by what it means that homosexuality is legal in their country.

However, as in all repressively homophobic cultures, LGBTQ people have always found ways to express and to live out their true authentic lives. In Haiti, how openly queer you are depends not only on your class, profession and skin complexion, but also your religious affiliation.

In a country that is predominately Roman Catholic homosexuality is condemned. But among Haiti's LGBTQ middle and profession classes they find ways to socialize out of the public "gaydar" and with impunity.

For example, in Petionville, an upscale suburb of Port-au-Prince of mostly American and European whites and multiracial Haitians, is where many LGBTQ people will informally gather for dinner parties, at restaurants and beaches. The well-known four-star tourist hotel, the Hotel Montana in the hills of Petionville that was recently destroyed by the quake, is one of the hot spots. And these queers hold positions as government officials, business people, NGO and UN aid workers.

For the poorer classes of LGBTQ Haitians who live, work and socialize in the densely populated and improvised capital city of Port-au-Prince,

discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender expressions is commonplace. The 2002 documentary *Des Hommes et Dieux* (Of Men and Gods) by anthropologist Anne Lescot exposed the daily struggles of Haitian transwomen. Blondine in the film said, "When people insult me because I wear a dress I am not ashamed of how I am. Masisis (gay males) can't walk down the street in a wig and dress."

But poorer classes of LGBTQ Haitians do have at least two ways to openly express and celebrate who they are—in Vodou and in Rara festivals.

Although the universal perception of Vodou is the Hollywood stereotype of an orgiastic ceremony ritualizing the malevolent powers black magic, and engaging in cannibalism, Haitian Vodou is an ancestral folk religion that expresses an acceptance of all people of all sexual orientations and gender expressions.

With the belief that behavior is guided by a spirit (loa), gay males in Haitian Vodou are under the divine protection of Erzulie Freda, the spirit of love. And as a feminine spirit, gay males are allowed to imitate and worship her. And lesbians (madivins) are considered to be under the patronage of Erzulie Dantor, a fierce protector of women and children experiencing domestic violence. Dantor is bisexual, but she prefers the company women.

At Rara Festivals, a yearly festival that begins following Carnival belongs to the peasant and urban poor of Haiti. The Rara bands come out of Vodou societies that have gay congregations where gay men are permitted to cross-dress with impunity.

It is my hope that the many conservative faith-based groups and organizations that are now part of Haiti's earthquake relief effort will not discriminate against Haiti's LGBTQ community as many of them did toward New Orleans's queer communities during Katrina.

And it is my hope they remember that engaging acts of goodwill are needed in the face of this natural disasters and they must be inclusive of all of God's people.

Statement for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (Feb. 7)

African Americans continue to bear the largest and most disproportionate burden of HIV/AIDS of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. While Black men and women made up 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2007, they accounted for more than half of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses that year and nearly half of all Americans living with HIV/AIDS. For Black women ages 35 to 44, HIV was the third leading cause of death in 2006. In our nation's capital, 6.5 percent of Black men are living with the virus—a percentage higher than that of any other racial, ethnic or gender group in the city, and higher than in many countries in Africa.

Today, on the 10th annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, we are inspired to improve our efforts to overcome this public health crisis in the Black community.

One of the fundamental ways Black men and women can reduce the spread of HIV in their communities and preserve their health is by getting tested for the virus during routine medical care, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Physicians. Identifying HIV infection early in its course is critical. A growing number of studies have shown that starting treatment early, while the immune system is still intact, is more beneficial to HIV-infected patients than initiating therapy later in the course of disease.

As a nation, we must knock down the barriers that prevent many Americans, especially African Americans, from receiving health care in general, and HIV testing, counseling and treatment in particular. An insidious component of this barrier is persistent stigma around homosexuality, HIV-positive status and injection drug use. I am gratified that Congress and President Obama recently lifted the 21-year-old ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs, which have been scientifically proven to reduce HIV transmission among injection drug users and serve as a gateway to treatment for drug addiction, HIV and other diseases.

Another barrier to HIV care in Black communities may be a reported reluctance among some individuals to start treatment for HIV infection before they feel sick. Research tells us that HIV-infected individuals are more likely to remain alive and healthy if they start treatment early—even if they feel well.

Treatment for HIV may benefit not only the infected person who is receiving antiretroviral therapy, but also his/her sexual partner. Treatment with antiretroviral drugs lowers the amount of virus in bodily fluids, potentially decreasing the risk of HIV transmission. NIAID is conducting a clinical trial to test this hypothesis in collaboration with the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Mental Health, all part of the National Institutes of Health.

To combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Washing-

ton, D.C.—a majority-Black city—NIH and the D.C. Department of Health recently launched a \$26.4 million research partnership designed to decrease the rate of new HIV infections, improve the health of district residents living with HIV infection, and strengthen the city's ongoing response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. NIAID and the D.C. Department of Health are jointly leading the project, called the D.C. Partnership for HIV/AIDS Progress, with support from the NIH Office of AIDS Research.

In other research that will directly benefit African Americans, NIAID is conducting two studies to learn how to deliver HIV prevention and treatment services to hard-to-reach U.S. communities at high risk for HIV infection. One of these studies focuses on Black homosexual and bisexual men, and the other concentrates on inner-city women in impoverished, largely minority neighborhoods.

We must stem the spread of HIV in the Black community to overcome the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States. I encourage everyone ages 13 to 64 to get tested for the virus, and I urge those who test positive to start treatment as early as their doctors recommend. Through partnerships among the African-American, scientific and public health communities, we can expand the access of Black men and women to HIV prevention, treatment and care, with the goal of ending the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Anthony Fauci
Director, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), NIH
Bethesda, Md.

LETTER

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Lawrence
Ferber

LOVE AND '8'

From left: Reed Cowan, Steven Greenstreet and Dustin Lance Black (from *8: The Mormon Proposition*) were at Sundance. See page 15.

THEATER

'Hughie' goodness.
Page 12.

Photo by Liz Lauren



MOVIES

'Last' dance.
Page 14.

Photo courtesy of Sony



PROFILE

A bit of Flare.
Page 19.

Photo courtesy of Cyon Flare

Scottish
Play Scott

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Former Chicago actress Shannon Cochran is simultaneously happy and terrified to returning back to the Windy City.

Cochran stars in national tour of Tracy Letts' drama *August: Osage County* in the pivotal role of the grown daughter, Barbara (a role originated at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 2007 by ensemble member Amy Morton). Since *August: Osage County* went on to conquer Broadway and, later, London, Cochran is well aware of the huge expectations placed on her as this Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning drama comes home.

"I'm just scared to death, especially if [people] saw the original," Cochran told *Windy City Times*, even though she has more than 20 years of regularly working in Chicago theater (often at Steppenwolf) and enviable credits like originating roles in Letts' other dramas like *Bug* and *Man From Nebraska*.

The Steppenwolf production of *August: Osage County* "was something so special in its place and time. Nothing could quite recreate the original production," admitted Cochran, who is nervous about her peers' reaction to her performance. "But this is just like a completely different animal that is doing very well because it's such a good play."

One major difference is the fact that the tour of *August: Osage County* has been playing in large touring houses on the road—some as large as 4,000 seats.

"Economics kind of dictates that [the producers] put it in as large of a house for shorter amounts of time so they can cover more cities," Cochran said, adding that she would prefer to play at Chicago's cozier Bank of America Theatre instead of the Cadillac Palace Theatre.

Playing huge houses also means that all of the cast members have to wear body microphones



Estelle Parsons
(left) and Shannon
Cochran in August:
Osage County.

(Cochran has to wear two in case one goes out). The production on Broadway only utilized floor and area microphones.

"It would be a logistical nightmare in these different houses to try and equalize that kind of sound," Cochran said. "In the beginning everyone really felt terrible because we felt it was an artificial canned sound, but then we realized after talking to friends of ours and they pointed out that the sound guy is actually making it seem like you're just projecting in a regular theater."

Cochran is well aware that the Chicago engagement of *August: Osage County* has been selling very well. There's the star element with Academy Award-winner Estelle Parsons taking on the malevolent matriarch Violet Weston (a role that won a Tony Award for Deanna Dunagan). But another reason is that there are so many locals who kicked themselves for missing it the first time around.

"You wouldn't believe the number of people who have said that to me: 'I missed it when it was in Chicago and I didn't realize it was that big of a deal so I didn't rush right out,'" Cochran said.

Though now based in Los Angeles, Cochran was grateful that Letts and director Anna D. Shapiro approached her to play Barbara (she was spared going through the audition process). And she's

not nervous about what Amy Morton's reaction is going to be.

"Amy actually helped us put this tour together so she's seen my performance already," Cochran said. "So I don't have to spring that on her, so that's a relief."

Cochran also faced another potentially nerve-racking homecoming recently when *August: Osage County* played Tulsa, Okla. (Letts originally hails from Oklahoma.)

"It was interesting because the people knew it was about them and for them and so they were cautious as they got into the play they watched and listened to it," Cochran said, making an understatement by saying how the Weston clan is not the most flattering portrait of an Oklahoma family. "But you could almost feel on stage the momentum gathering in the audience so that by the end they leapt to their feet. Everyone we spoke to afterwards said, 'Thank you for bringing this to us.'"

August: Osage County continues until Feb. 14 at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph. Tickets are \$25-\$125; call 800-775-2000 or visit www.broadwayinchicago.com.

Another Elphaba engagement

If there is anyone still kicking themselves for missing out on the long Chicago run of *Wicked*, they'll soon have another chance to see it.

Last week, Broadway in Chicago announced that the blockbuster 2003 Broadway musical based upon Gregory Maguire's revisionist "Wicked of Oz" novel is returning for an eight-week engagement at the Cadillac Palace Theatre Dec. 1, 2010-Jan. 23, 2011.

Wicked famously played at Chicago's Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre for 1,500 performances, grossing more than \$200 million in a run lasting almost four years, starting in June 2005. (The national touring company arrived first before a dedicated Chicago company took its place.)

In other Broadway in Chicago news, the off-Broadway aerial spectacle *Fuerza Bruta* is set to literally play the stage of the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University starting in May. Audience members stand on the stage to look up at all the acrobatic performers (some of whom also perform in overhead swimming pools). It all sounds exciting, but let's hope that this unconventional show doesn't end up doing any major damage to the historic 1889 theater.

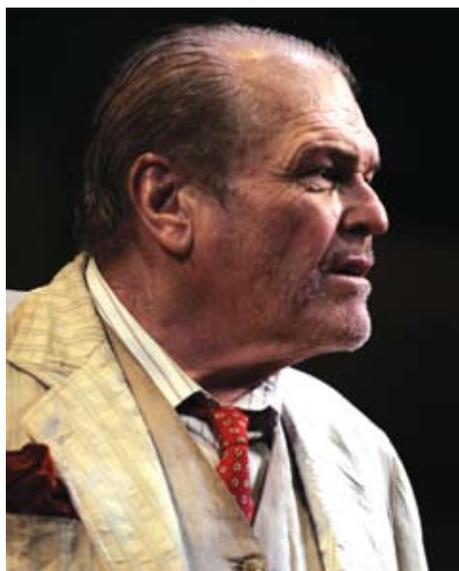
Critical champion

Victory Gardens Theater recently announced that its new 109-seat theater upstairs at the Biograph Theater is to be officially christened as the Richard Christensen Theater after the emeritus Chicago Tribune theater critic.

The theater christening also coincides with the launching of a \$1 million capital campaign called "Campaign for Growth" to support Victory Gardens' commitment to new works and other initiatives like the IGNITION Festival for minority playwrights.

Though critics are often reviled by those who work in the theater community, they do play a vital part in steering attention to often exemplary art. Christensen's long-time career at chronicling the rise of Chicago theater is certainly deserving of this great honor.

Please pass along theater news and other related tidbits to scottishplayscott@yahoo.com and Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com.



Hughie/Krapp's Last Tape. Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

Hughie/ Krapp's Last Tape

Playwright: Eugene O'Neill/Samuel Beckett

At: Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn

Phone: 312-443-3800; \$25-83

Runs through: Feb. 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

One of the bulbs in a wall sconce is burnt out—one suspects for years—and the chandeliers also bear signs of neglect. So even before an elevated train rumbles overhead, we know the kind of hotel this is, despite the desk clerk's formal (but decidedly shabby) uniform. It's the perfect refuge for "Erie" Smith, a low-roller traveling on a shrug and a shoeshine, without the shine. And tonight, after a five-day bender following the death of the former night-concierge—the closest thing to a friend he had—Erie gambles that the late Hughie's successor will prove likewise enabling.

Eugene O'Neill's duet for loners can be viewed as a courtship in the distinctly masculine mode comprised of equal parts swagger and sentimentality. Erie's braggadocio bespeaks his fear of the airy illusion which fuels his world deflating. We sense, more clearly than in the 2004 production (also directed by Robert Falls), the dimming of the dazzle as Erie seems to visibly shrink inside his rumpled suit, until, bare moments before the light is extinguished, his solitary audience kindles his own small beacon to rescue both men from the darkness.

You will find no such gritty salvation in the second of the paired one-act plays comprising the double-ticket. Krapp's Last Tape is Samuel

Beckett at his most exasperating, the action opening on the title character, who could, himself, be the desk clerk at a hotel located somewhere in that terrible void Conor McPherson invoked for *The Seafarer*. "Action" is an optimistic description, for it is an almost interminable wait before he stirs, during which we can hear wheezes, sighs and Four Seasons ring-tones throughout the auditorium. What follows is hardly more active—our myopic hero eats bananas (and slips on a peel, naturally), retreats to a back-room for a drink or three, and listens to tapes of his younger self engaging in Proustian introspections.

Barrel-chested and big-voiced, Brian Dennehy often commands the stage by his sheer size. But an empty stage—Joe Grifasi's enigmatic concierge notwithstanding—requires more than mere presence, and it is to Dennehy's credit, and Jennifer Tarver's direction, that our attention never falters (though spectators are advised to shift their gaze occasionally, lest their eyes become fatigued by the intensely focused illumination in Krapp's study). The contrast between these two portraits of aging is as vivid as the sight of a 71-year-old actor so very much still in his prime signals hope for us all.

THEATER REVIEW

Six Scary Stories

Playwright: adapted by David Denman

At: Clock Productions at The

Old Speakeasy, 4139 N. Broadway

Phone: 773-327-7077; \$15

Runs through: Feb. 21

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

The Old Speakeasy, home to National Pastime Theatre, might be the last place you'd be likely to invite youngsters, but though the shivery tales comprising Clock Productions' anthology involve copious violence of the Tales-From-the-Crypt variety, Jesse Stratton and adapter David Denman's direction lends its presentation just the right amount of eeew-gross yuckiness to appeal to middle-schoolers (in age, or in heart).

The evening begins with a rainy day, and two Victorian misses first seeking amusement in a book of Celtic myths, one of which recounts the saga of foolish lords quarreling over their shares of a freshly-killed boar, then engaging in speculation on the dangers of infinite time. The damsels are next seen at a party in the company of a handsome young playboy who invites the devil to a Dorian Gray-ish bargain, with similar results. The fourth story describes the grisly fate of a country boy who desecrates a newly dug grave, while the fifth centers on the misfortune of a Nazi soldier who tempts fate, despite the warning of a gypsy clairvoyant. Our final lesson is set in the cheerful world of baseball, where a

win-at-all-costs player finds himself the target of a terrible vengeance exacted by the teammates of his latest victim.

Two of these gruesome morality fables are lifted from comic books, another from a familiar campfire yarn, so subtlety is hardly their goal. But any seriously disturbing menace is undercut by the playfully low-budget technical effects—the Halloween-costume beards and horned helmets on the Celtic lords, for example, or the rubber masks denoting villains of evil countenance. Nazi salutes segue into Three Stooges-style slapstick and a decapitation—executed with a hacksaw—yields a fun-house cadaver's head.

If this Saturday-afternoon-in-the-basement ambience was reflected in the actors' performances, the results would have emerged as juvenile as their source material, but the six-member ensemble never betrays the integrity of their characters by so much as a wink or snicker. Even during Daniel Pesina's pitched battles (one with wooden swords, one with umbrellas), our attention remains firmly fixed on the values affirmed by the events. The producers overlooked an opportunity in not including a study guide with the playbill to promote after-show discussions of ethics based on these pop-fiction parables.

THEATER REVIEW

Harper Regan

Playwright: Simon Stephens

At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn

Phone: 866-811-4111; \$18

Runs through: March 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When Americans run away from home, they usually keep running for awhile—crossing several state lines, at least. But the English working housewife who is the heroine of Simon Stephens' road play makes her escape a mere 150-odd miles from her home (northwestern London to south Manchester, not much more of a trip than from Chicago to Milwaukee). She makes no attempt to conceal her identity—indeed, her eagerness to share her life with strangers is her most noticeable characteristic. The crucial factor is that no one, not even her husband and child, know where she is, or when she will return—if she returns.

Mrs. Harper Regan's flight begins with the news that her father is dying and that her boss, after editorializing about the condition of the economy and the world in general, refuses to give her a day off to visit her ailing sire. And if she loses her job, how will she and her presently unemployed spouse finance their daughter's education at Oxford University? Nevertheless, when someone casually suggests that she just get up and go, she heeds the advice, discovering in her three-day exile the courage to pursue experimental interactions outside her prescribed social roles, ranging from a quickie hotel-room shag arranged from an Internet café, to a con-

CRITICS' PICKS

Kink, Annoyance Theatre, through March 6. Men aren't the only comedians who do ribald sexual humor, as writer/actors Mikala Bierma, Christina Boucher and Rachel Farmer all hilariously show in this musical about so-called suburban sexual repression. SCM

Macbeth, City Lit Theatre, through Feb. 21. Something bloody wicked this way comes. And since it's directed by Chicago Shakespeare veteran Susan Hart, we expect said wickedness to be well-played even as things go south for this Scottish thane. CS

Mary's Wedding, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble at the Raven Complex, through Feb. 20. Canadian playwright Stephen Massicotte admits to writing this play to impress a girl (in the beginning, anyway), but there's nothing mawkish or adolescent about this historical romance set amid the terrible upheaval of World War One. MSB

The Year of Magical Thinking, Court Theatre, through Feb. 14. Writer Joan Didion began a spiritual and intellectual journey when her husband died as their daughter faced catastrophic illness. Formidable Mary Beth Fisher channels Didion in this solo work. JA

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge,
Morgan and Sullivan

frontation with her estranged mother, where relations both disturbing and comforting await her.

And we are right behind her every step of the way, urging "You go, girl," even when she grinds a glass into a barroom rude-boy's face and then calmly exits wearing his leather jacket. The superb ensemble work that comprises Steep Theatre's stock-in-trade is exhibited to full advantage under Robin Witt's carefully-detailed direction of this United States premiere production, with Kendra Thulin making the drab matron's journey of discovery one of a middle-aged, middle-class Alice roving amid a wonderland of diverse citizenry replicated in all their uncaricatured ambiguity by actors displaying Eva Breneman's pitch-perfect accents.

Travel, no matter the distance, cannot help but broaden the horizons of both the traveler and those witnessing the enlightenment-in-progress. We are not told precisely *how* Harper's abbreviated odyssey will affect her relationships with her family and neighbors, but so inexorably do we become immersed into Stephens' microcosmic universe that our certainty (hope?) that some change has been initiated equals our happiness over another fellow wayfarer's deliverance from the prison of their own self-imposed inertia.

SPOTLIGHT



After spoofing Illinois' former governor, the creators behind Rod Blagojevich Superstar! have now taken aim at America's most conspicuous right-wing commentator in **Rush Limbaugh! The Musical**. See Limbaugh and his right-wing cohorts like Ann Coulter, Karl Rove and Donald Rumsfeld can hold a tune in this new show. *Rush Limbaugh! The Musical* plays 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays and 2 p.m. Sundays until March 24 at the Second City e.t.c., 1608 N. Wells. Tickets are \$25; call 312-337-3992 or visit www.secondcity.com. Photo of Mark Sutton as Rush Limbaugh by Bob Knuth



Harper Regan. Photo by Lee Miller

THEATER REVIEW

Master Harold ... and the Boys

Playwright: Athol Fugard

At: TimeLine (sic) Theatre,

615 W. Wellington

Tickets: 773-281-8463;

www.timelinetheatre.com; \$25-\$35

Runs through: March 21

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

The genius of South African playwright Athol Fugard is that his many plays (1960-1990s) each chronicles the horrors of apartheid and the insidious stupidities of racial hatred while retaining stylistic grace, warmth, frequent humor and compassionate humanity. Even his white antagonists are not evil in their moral blindness, but products of their time and culture. His black characters, trapped by their time and denial of their culture, typically are far wiser.

Written in 1982, *Master Harold ... and the Boys* is deeply autobiographical down to the characters' names. It's set in 1950 when South Africa's apartheid policy still was new, although colonialism and vicious racism long had been part of the nation's legal and social structure. The antagonist, Hally, is a 17-year-old white boy—Fugard himself—whose deepest friendships have been with his family's Black employees, Sam and Willie, but especially Sam. The friendship unravels in the course of this 100-minute "real time" play.

The unhappy child of an unhappy marriage, Hally experiences rage, conflict, fear and guilt having little to do with racism. But will they become so? Will Hally—who would be 62 when South Africa's white supremacist government finally fell—embrace anti-apartheid reform as Fugard did? Or will he become the bitter, diehard racist his father is, and Fugard's father was? Such is the richness of Fugard's pithy imagery that a



Master Harold... and the Boys.

kite made of brown paper, a park bench and a ballroom dancing competition become thorough metaphors for South African segregated society ... and for human relations anywhere.

Master director Jonathan Wilson is at the top of his game (and will take on the role of Sam beginning March 1). His three actors deliver rich, nuanced and deeply thought-out performances, and Wilson's staging exhibits a graceful economy with no wasted gestures or indecisive moves. The setting is a small tea shop owned by Hally's mother. The constant choreography is fascinating as Hally carelessly helps himself to food and drink and spreads his mess around while Sam and Willie quietly and patiently serve him and clean up after him. Ultimately, Master Harold is about Sam's efforts to clean up Hally's emotional mess, and we must believe that Hally comes to understand that or it's a very sad play indeed.

Respected veteran Alfred H. Wilson is majestic as Sam, the older and wiser of the two Black characters and the play's hero. Wilson's upright carriage, unhurried movement and speech, and frequent bemused attitude bespeak a man who has seen it all and survived it all. He cares deeply about his friend Willy, but invests his hopes for a better future in Hally. Smaller and livelier, Daniel Bryant as Willie carries his anger closer to the surface than Sam and makes the perfect foil. Also, as written and as beautifully performed, Willie and Sam are each other's guardians.

As Hally, Nate Burger is a brightly promising new face. Not yet out of college (Loyola), he's nonetheless fully confident in portraying Hally's

emotional swings and deep insecurities. If he were physically smaller than Sam or Willie (or both), the power dynamic would be viscerally more forceful, but his taller stature in no way mars Burger's interpretation.

Timothy Mann designed the plain, tile-floored tea shop of yesteryear, which is correct in every period detail except the far-too-modern jukebox.

Note: Two other Athol Fugard plays are in production this season. *The Island* currently is running at Remy Bumppo Theatre through March 7, and Court Theatre offers *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*, May 13-June 13. See www.fugardchicago2010.org.

THEATER REVIEW

The Castle

Playwright: Howard Barker

At: Oracle Theatre, 3809 N. Broadway

Phone: 312-244-2980; \$10-\$20

Runs through: March 6

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

One can eventually surmise why Oracle Productions tackled British playwright Howard Barker's unconventional 1985 comic drama *The Castle*. Though supposedly set in the Middle Ages, the play is stocked with allegorical allusions that parallel issues in modern-day America.

For that reason alone, one might be tempted to offer Oracle Productions a pat on the back and overlook Barker's absurdist and frequently potty-mouthed dialogue that fills his self-proclaimed "Theatre of Catastrophe" play. (Some would describe it as Monty Python-esque, but to me it came off as self-serving and deliberately obstinate.)

Then there's a very "Aren't we clever?" smugness that pervades this production led by co-directors Ben Fuchsen and Justin Warren. Lowering stage lights into the eyes of audiences (an obvious staging device of pointing the finger

and saying, "You're all implicated, too!") or dressing the set with knitted afghans (to symbolize America's current military involvement in Afghanistan—get it?!) are just two of the annoying techniques in *The Castle* that make you wish you spent your hard-earned entertainment dollars elsewhere.

The Castle concerns the Knight Stucley (Jason Rice) who returns home from one of the Crusades with a Turkish architect named Krak (Dave Steiger). Stucley is shocked to find his kingdom in disarray, particularly his wife, Lady Ann (Rachel Boller), pregnant with another man's child and hanging around with the lesbian man-hating witch Skinner (Victoria C. Gilbert).

So Stucley goes about throwing his kingdom back into order by forcing Krak and the builder Holiday (Jackson King) to build a new castle that will be impervious to future attacks (one can draw a parallel to America's heightened security fears of the past decade).

Stucley also ends the woman-friendly freedoms that were put in place during his absence, which then causes all the pregnant women to commit suicide when they realize they don't have control of their own bodies (this is done in a bit of shadow play that is woven throughout the production—one of the staging effects that isn't as cloying as others).

Try as they might, the cast is at sea at attempting to make something coherent with Barker's dialogue. Directors Fuchsen and Warren don't provide the proper guidance by offering an overarching approach to the material, so we get a mishmash of self-aware comic mugging and serious dramatic acting styles.

With *The Castle*, Oracle Productions does its best impression of a show that is typically the domain of Trap Door Theatre. Do you end up caring about any of *The Castle*'s characters and their conflicts? Alas for me, the answer is, "No."

But can you take solace with all *The Castle*'s political and social relevancies to today? Reluctantly, if that at all.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES



Christopher Plummer and Helen Mirren in *The Last Station*.

Dear John; The Last Station

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Author Nicholas Sparks has cornered the market for modern romantic novels with five best-sellers in a row. Though the majority of the books have been adapted for the screen, none of them has had the same kind of commercial success. But that hasn't stopped many of these pictures from connecting with viewers who love nothing more than getting out their hankies. I offer my husband as Exhibit A. No matter what time of day or night, if he's cable flipping and *The Notebook* is on, he will stop and, in seconds, become immersed in the romantic waterfall flowing from the screen. When it comes to affairs of the heart, Sparks' characters never find love without paying a heavy emotional price.

All of which makes director Lasse Hallström, whose biggest successes have been with the über romantic *Chocolat* and the nostalgic, tender and tragic *Cider House Rules*, the perfect choice to helm *Dear John*, the latest screen adaptation of a Sparks big time success.

The movie—set in South Carolina, as many of Sparks' stories are—follows his two fetching would-be lovers over the course of their extremely bumpy road to *Eternal Love*. Channing Tatum plays John Tyree, a hunkalicious surfer on leave from the special forces in the Army who “meets cute” with Savannah Curtis (Amanda Seyfried) when he dives off a dock to retrieve her purse.

Precious among Oscar nods

The LGBT community fared well when the Academy Award nominations were announced in the early-morning hours of Feb. 2.

The movie *Precious*: Based on the Novel *Push* by Sapphire scored several nods, including one for best picture, one for best director (Lee Daniels) and two for acting (Gabourey Sidibe for best actress and Mo'Nique—already considered a front-runner—for best supporting actress).

Daniels is just the second African American to receive such an honor—and is one of the few openly gay persons to do so.

Two other director nominees are former spouses Kathryn Bigelow for *The Hurt Locker* and James Cameron for *Avatar*. They have split prizes so far this award season.

Colin Firth received an Academy Award nomination for playing a gay professor dealing with his partner's death in *A Single Man*.

Meryl Streep received an unprecedented 16th acting nomination for her role as Julia Child in the film *Julie & Julia*. She has won two (for *Sophie's Choice* and *Kramer vs. Kramer*).

The Oscar telecast will take place March 7 on ABC. Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin will co-host the event.

(Tatum's gay fan base is sure to rise, thanks to the large number of shirtless beach scenes.) He's a moody loner who is used to taking care of himself and is guarded with his emotions, while she's sunny, open and a do-gooder—not at all the traditional Southern belle that her wealth and privilege would lead one to expect.

The two have an intense two-week affair before John is called back into action. Their only argument occurs when Savannah intuits that John's ultra-shy father (Richard Jenkins, marvelous in a supporting role) might have some behavior problems; hothead John reacts defensively. But the two make up—passionately—and promise to write until John's return (this being 2001, when texting was not an option). Then Hallström gives us one of the movies corniest set pieces—the love-letter exchange montage—in which we actually see the postal service in action. Right on cue a gently plucked guitar and lush strings wash over the screen.

But trouble looms for our comely pair and, before this interrupted love melody can be finished, the story will involve the 9/11 tragedy, cancer, autism, dappled sunsets by the beach, moonlit nights spent apart and many more musical montages.

Both young leads do their thing with the requisite passion required (although, oddly, neither sports a southern accent) and Hallström's unhurried pacing guarantees that, by the fade-out, both tears of grief and joy will have been shed. Like the other Sparks adapted movies, *Dear John* is so old-fashioned and its hyper-romanticism such a rarity in cinemas these days it almost seems new again. It will more than satisfy those with a predilection for the genre but cynics are warned to keep clear—or be prepared to shut up and hand some Kleenex to their cow-eyed better halves.

Cynics are also warned to avoid *The Last Station* from director Michael Hoffman. Hoffman has adapted Jay Parini's novel, based on true events, of the last days of acclaimed Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (Christopher Plummer) and the war over the rights to his valuable copyrights (*War & Peace* and *Anna Karenina* being just two of the titles in contention) between his wife of 43 years, Countess Sofya (Helen Mirren), and the leader of Tolstoy's acolytes, Vladimir Chertkov (Paul Giamatti).

Hoffman—who has directed his share of romantic dramas and one of my camp favorites, *Soapdish*—gives the material his all and with this fascinating story; three grand thespians like Plummer, Mirren and Giamatti to shoot off the acting fireworks; and James McAvoy and Kerry Condon as the young lovers who provide the film with its lusty subplot, who can blame him?

Tolstoy, the Bob Dylan of his day, was so influential a literary and cultural figure that he inspired a fervent group of followers known as “Tolstoyans.” This pro-Tolstoy movement eschewed material possessions and advocated the spread of passive resistance during the last decade of Tsarist rule in Russia. The movie, told through the eyes of Valentin (McAvoy), one of Tolstoy's stary-eyed devoted followers, is set in

Russia in 1910 near the summer home of Tolstoy where a group of the supplicants are living in a commune. Valentin has a major case of star worship and not even a hot affair with the nubile Masha (Condon) can shake his devotion to the group. As Tolstoy's new secretary, Valentin becomes a pawn in the ruthless tug of war between Chertkov and Sofya over Tolstoy's new will.

The protracted battles between Plummer and Mirren (who has her best role since *The Queen*)—during which Sofya uses every trick in her emotional arsenal—and their tender moments in between are thrilling, fun and deeply satisfying to watch. These are great actors having a whale of a time with tremendous parts. From the moment we first see the couple having afternoon tea on the terrace their philosophical differences—despite their deep affection—is clear.

It will be a fight to the acting death it seems and, indeed, as Sofya shamelessly schemes to get rid of Chertkov (who has an additional aide in the Tolstoy's distant daughter), things go from promising to comical to the emotional breaking point for all concerned. The movie centers on the larger theme of the responsibility of the artist to his legacy and his audience versus the responsibility to the personal, which Hoffman nicely balances (along with the subplot of the young lovers, who represent the young, idealistic version of the Tolstoys).

All of which help envelop the viewer in *The Last Station*, which—despite some dramatic implausibility and a misstep here and there—is, overall, a very well-told, well-made historical romantic drama.

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

NUNN ON ONE: TV

RuPaul: Drag doll talks about the show—and love

BY JERRY NUNN

RuPaul is *Workin' It* with a new book, a new season of *Drag Race* and life in the fast lane. *Windy City Times* sped over for a chat with the queen of drag.

Windy City Times: Hi, Ru! I haven't talked to you since last year. How have you been?

RuPaul: Good and busy.

WCT: Tell our readers about your new book.

RP: It's a culmination of questions and answers that I get asked on my Web site all the time. People write to me about my style esthetic and how I have been able to stay interested in what I do for so many years.

Basically, we are spiritual beings having a human experience so it is important to remember to not take life too seriously. That is really the gist of the book.

WCT: You were pretty deep when you stated

in the book “whatever you proclaim as your identity in the material realm is drag.”

RP: It's really not that deep. Honestly, Jerry, that is all something that we intrinsically know. We just conveniently forget it. We can pretend to be who think we are. I think we all know that at our core.

WCT: I liked things that you said about cutting gossip and negative things out of life. It is good advice for the New Year.

RP: Yes, it is true. You can fall into that trap and it seems harmless but the truth is it actually does harm to other people. The deepest part of it is that it harms you.

WCT: I don't watch the news on TV because it is depressing and can drag you down.

RP: Oh, it really does. It is working in tandem with your ego. There is unlimited amount of love but limited amount of resources in the world. But there is still enough for everybody.

WCT: I have never thought you being on a diet before because you always seem so thin. But you actually have to work at it, too.

RP: I say drag queen diet in the book because it sounds so good. I like the way exercise makes you feel. I like food when it is not clogged up in my body. Certain food combinations make my digestive system slow down. I don't like that feeling because I feel groggy and sluggish. I can have bread just not with meat and vice versa.

WCT: I love the picture in the book of you as both Obama and his wife, Michelle.

RP: Yeah, that's fun. We did the Sarah Palin picture for Christmas this year but it didn't wind up in the book.

WCT: I have to see that. People can find items like that on your Web site?

RP: Yes rupaul.com.

WCT: Now you have a second season of *RuPaul's Drag Race* with more contestants and guest celebrities.

RP: The production value is so much better. It is really dynamic. I have seen the first four episodes of the show so far. It is compelling and the kids really draw you in. They make you want to root for them. There is also a ruthless element to it because it is a competition show. Having seen the first season, they are keen with agenda and strategy. They have the advantage of the first season that they saw the show and they got the lay of the land. Especially with this younger generation they have a sense of entitlement going on that my generation did not have. This makes for really good television.

WCT: Well, I know now there is a whole new generation that can enjoy your music and projects that didn't get to know you back in the '90s, like I did.

RP: I think that is fantastic. That's why doing new things such as the book are important. I love working on the show because I get a good taste of the younger kids and how they are. If I can mentor them, I am sure on some level that they are mentoring me.

Read what RuPaul thinks of falling in love online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



RuPaul. Photo by Mathu Andersen



Sundance gay-fest director John Cooper. Photo by Lawrence Ferber

Rebel Yell: Sundance 2010

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

PARK CITY, UTAH: Despite this year's theme of "Rebel," there was little rocking of the boat at the Sundance Film Festival, held Jan. 21-31.

The first edition headed by openly gay fest director John Cooper, a 20+ year Sundance staff vet, 2010 saw only subtle tweaks in programming and structure—for instance, three opening night programs and the inaugural sections NEXT, for micro/no-budget entries and the international-inclusive Spotlight—and, barring *Twilight's* Kristen Stewart, who starred in two entries, a slight toning down in the celeb factor and return to more anti-Hollywood minded roots. The year's biggest game-changing shake-ups occurred off-screen: Queer Lounge was gone, Miramax closed shop, and many familiar industry faces were absent—all casualties of the economy.

Film-wise it was a year of girl power (and gayer!), with females behind some of the most buzz-garnering titles. Picked up by Focus features for, reportedly, approximately \$5 million, Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are All Right* stars Annette Bening and Julianne Moore as Nic and Jules, a lesbian couple whose teenage son and daughter track down their sperm-donor father (Mark Ruffalo).

Funny and complicated, yet quintessentially Sundance with its family-on-the-edge plot/theme and well-drawn, meticulously acted characters, Cholodenko's fourth feature (*High Art*, *Laurel Canyon*) is a cinematic watershed in its outstanding, fully developed post-gay representation of an LGBT family unit.

Natural and flawed, Bening's prickly Nic and Moore's confused Jules face all the same challenges and foibles of a "normal" heterosexual couple, and are painted as such. Their parenting discussions ring true and are frequently riotous, like when son Laser asks them to explain their hidden stash of gay male porno videos (which they caught Laser watching with another boy, leading to awkward birds and bees chat about his sexuality). It's an absolute must-see.

Buzzed about well in advance of the festival, *The Runaways*, directed by Floria Sigismondi, dramatizes the story of Joan Jett's legendary all-teenage-girl band (best known for their hit single, "Cherry Bomb"). Star Kristen Stewart is a dead-ringer for Jett, while Dakota Fanning—she's all grown up!—portrays exploited jailbait vocalist, Cherie Currie.

Yet for a film about rocking with your [figurative] cock out, the film suffers from an ironic prudishness. Jett is painted as almost asexual, barring a brief onscreen acknowledgement of intimate relations with Currie, and guitarist Lita Ford barely registers. (FYI, Jett served as an executive producer and performed at a packed Harry O's party during the fest.) Yet character actor Michael Shannon—as Kim Fowley, the

band's flamboyant, Eddie Izzard-esque creator/manager—adds scenery-chewing spice.

A lilting folk ditty compared to *Runaways'* rock ballad, writer/director Adriana Maggs' *Grown Up Movie Star* stars Big Love's Shawn Doyle as a Newfoundland father whose life is shaken up by his daughter's (Tatiana Maslany, winner of a Special Jury Prize for Breakout Performance) sexual rebellion, as well as his own gay awakening.

Directors Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg document Joan Rivers' tireless efforts to stay relevant over the course of a year in the supremely entertaining *Joan Rivers—A Piece of Work*. On hand for several screenings, Rivers, 76, kept audiences in stitches during Q&As, and offstage partook of a *de facto* Sundance tradition—swagging. "I got a lot of swag," she admitted once back in Manhattan. "You get it home and you go, 'who needs this,' but that's not the point. It's still fun to take at the moment."

I ran into Juliette Lewis in swag mode at the Lia Sophia Lounge, where Diesel handed out new watches, fragrances and "Be Stupid" T-shirts. Naomi Watts swung by the Art & Soul Center, where ConAir provided hairstyling and goodies. Village at The Yard proved a treasure trove as usual, a Fred Segal gifting lounge plump with brands like Dockers, Parish Nation and Affliction. I ran into Elijah Wood at the Swagg Media/Gibson Lounge, while House of Hype—where Bill Gates (!) threw a party—boasted pretty darned sassy Sean John jackets, possibly the fest's coolest get.

But back to the films and girl power. *Slamdance's* *The Four-Faced Liar*, written by and starring Marja-Lewis Ryan, charts a rocky love triangle between a heterosexual couple and lesbian. Even one of the year's most highly anticipated gay male titles in Park City, Sundance opener *Howl*, was produced by a female team, Elizabeth Redleaf and Christine Kunewa Walker.

A stylized, experimental biopic directed by gay, Oscar-winning documentarians Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (*Common Threads: Stories From the Quilt*), *Howl* focuses on the youthful years of queer Beat poet Allen Ginsberg—portrayed by James Franco—while amalgamating a recreation of the landmark 1957 obscenity trial against his published poem, "Howl," and a vibrantly animated interpretation.

Franco was present at the film's Jan. 23 screening, where he shared that he'd been a fan of the Beat Generation since high school. "They've always been with me and now that I'm in grad school [at Columbia University], where Ginsberg went, he's constantly in my life." He also admitted that he was surprised to be cast as Ginsberg. "If I ever played a Beat, I thought it would be Neal Cassady or Jack Kerouac. I'm not sure why they chose me!"

Director Yony Leyser's *Slamdance* documentary, William S. Burroughs: *A Man Within*, entailed a fantastic *Howl* companion piece—an interviews-loaded look back at the Beat elder and the banning of his tome, *Naked Lunch*.

Speaking of bans, Reed Cowan and Steven Greenstreet's *8: The Mormon Proposition* exposes the Mormon Church's substantial involvement in California's successful Proposition 8 campaign,

the extremes it has taken to persecute its gay members and families and the heartbreaking casualties.

At the film's world premiere at Park City's Racquet Club, the directors were joined onstage by narrator Dustin Lance Black and interview subject/San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. During the lively Q&A, a practicing Mormon female expressed her support for same-sex marriage. "There is not one Mormon mind," she shared, "and I've seen change come to my church." Newsom reminded the audience that the narrative of the same-sex marriage struggle is similar to that of interracial marriage and, ultimately, "history bends towards justice."

Some queer-interest works were screened, and performed live, in the festival's New Frontier On Main tempo/multimedia art space, including Kalup Linzy's southern-gay-black-drag hotpot, *Sweet*, *Sampled* and *LeftOva*, and Nao Bustamante's Jack Smith-meets-Maria Montez trip-out, *Silver & Gold*.

Many grieved about the lack of a fulltime Queer Lounge space, yet LGBTs did get to converge at the annual Outfest Queer Brunch for gossip and networking (to wit: filmmaker Phillip Bartell informed me that *Eating Out 4 & 5* have been greenlit by Ariztical, and he's also set to

work on a sequel to Jason Bushman's *Hollywood Je T'aime*, entitled *Hollywood Te Amo*) as well as a handful of GLAAD and Queer Lounge-sponsored panels, cocktail parties, and the annual Homos Away From Home shindig.

The closing weekend's Sundance Awards proved celebratory for writer/director Javier Fuentes-León, whose *Contracorriente* (aka *Undertow*) won the World Cinema Audience Award for Dramatic Feature honor. The affecting tale of a deeply closeted Peruvian who carries on an affair with the ghost of his recently deceased gay lover, *Contracorriente* was picked up by distributor Wolfe Releasing. Coming up empty but worth mention are director Eyad Zahra's *Taqwacores*, set in the emerging Islamic punk music scene and featuring a queer Muslim character; Jamie Travis' visionary, colorful whilst dark short about a little boy repressing a dark secret, *The Armoire*; Ira Sachs' profound *Last Address*; and Jonathan Lisecki's fun gay-guy-and-straight-woman-want-a-child short, *Gayby*.

Perhaps, and in fact most likely, no Precious will emerge this year as the dust settles, but keep eyes peeled at your local festivals and theaters for a taste of rebellion.



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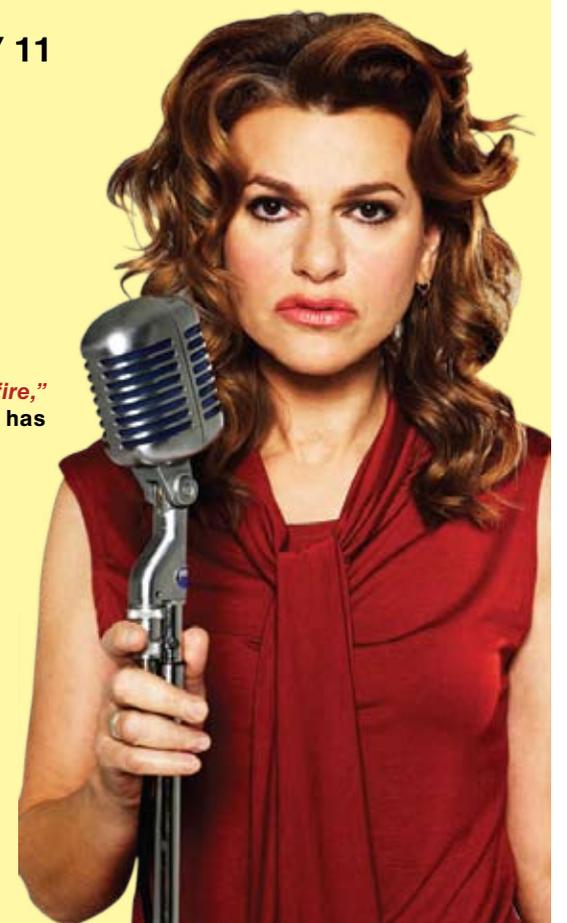
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AIDS from cover

Meanwhile, former ACT UP/Chicago member Debbie Gould has a more personal connection to the epidemic, and that is evident throughout her book *Moving Politics*. She looks closely at the Chicago, New York and San Francisco ACT UP chapters, and gives a detailed accounting of both the rise and fall of the ACT UP movement.

The books, both recently published, come at a time when AIDS/HIV activists and donors are fatigued by both the long-standing epidemic and the new recession. They can be used as tools for activists working on same-sex marriage and other issues, and perhaps the book can inspire a new generation to continue the fight against HIV and AIDS complacency.

What follows are reviews of these two new books.

This Friday, Feb. 5, Chicagoans can remember the work of AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor. His brilliant editorial cartoons once appeared in gay media including *Windy City Times*, *Outlines* and *Nightlines*. He became a street fighter once he himself was diagnosed with the disease, and he fought with an intensity rarely matched in any movement. He lost his battle Feb. 5, 1992, and his life will be remembered on the 18th anniversary of his death, on Friday, Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m. in a free event at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, 3015 W. Division. The rarely seen Sotomayor documentary, *Short Fuse: Portrait of an AIDS Activist*, will be shown.



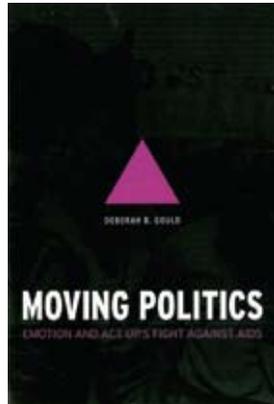
The late Chicago AIDS activist Danny Sotomayor, who died 18 years ago. Photo from the *Outlines/Windy City Times* archives

ACT UP's fight traced

BOOK REVIEW

Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS

Written by Deborah B. Gould
University of Chicago Press; 524 pages



REVIEW BY TRACY BAIM

Deborah Gould was among the most visible members of ACT UP/Chicago in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and she used that first-hand knowledge and access to other activists to create a detailed account of the rise and fall of one of the most important activists movements of the last century.

While AIDS and HIV continue to kill people every day, the peak years of street activism have passed, much to the dismay of people like Gould and many of the activists she quotes. *Moving Politics* is an important look at the convoluted paths that lead to the formation of ACT UP, but also the many possible reasons it eventually imploded.

As someone who started reporting about AIDS in 1984, it was fascinating to see a historical look back at groups, events and people I was covering weekly for *GayLife*, then *Windy City Times* and *Outlines/Nightlines*. Gould interviewed me for her book, and she also quotes from editorials and articles written by myself, *Outlines/Windy City Times* reporter Rex Wockner and other Chicago and national lesbian and gay media.

Because of Gould's connection to Chicago, it is refreshing to have so much of this town's work recognized on a national scale. She focuses especially on New York, Chicago and San Francisco, through research of gay and lesbian media, books, the ACT UP Oral History Project (coordinated by Sarah Schulman and James Hubbard), and first-person interviews. Many Chicagoans are quoted in her book.

This is an academic book so at times I felt too immersed in terms and definitions, but those are a necessarily part of this approach to history. I was relieved when the book turned to the stories

and the lessons learned. Gould clearly knows this subject well, but she also is able to take an outsider's perspective, so that we have the benefit of both views. Some activists may disagree with Gould's history and conclusions (Larry Kramer may disagree with her theory on the founding of ACT UP), but she does provide solid arguments and evidence. Many of the movement's leaders died during the ACT UP years, while some like Ferd Eggan died more recently, but Gould does a good job of allowing their voices to be heard through original source material, media interviews, newsletters, and her own interviews.

The early part of the book *Moving Politics* focuses on emotions and how they were eventually channeled into the formation of ACT UP, something that was not an inevitable result of AIDS. In fact, Gould points out that early responses were about service provision and not street activism, and even during the height of ACT UP many gays and lesbians did not like the approach of in-your-face activists.

Gould says that the 1986 U.S Supreme Court decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, affirming anti-gay state sodomy laws, was among the most critical sparks to activism that led to ACT UP. Gould writes: "In the context of ever-increasing AIDS-related deaths, continuing government failure to address the crisis, and increasingly repressive legislation, the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision was a turning point, an event that profoundly affected the emotional habitus in lesbian and gay communities and the prevailing political horizon. ... [The] *Hardwick* ruling contributed to the emergence of the confrontational and defiant direct-action AIDS movement."

In Part II of her book, Gould looks at the passions behind the ACT UP movement, with activists fully engaged at an incredible level, from meetings and actions, to love and caring. Funerals became activist moments, and rage fueled the organization. "A sense of urgency about the AIDS epidemic and about the need to save lives motivated this insistent pace, but other forces help to explain why we all put in so many hours and kept coming back week after week, for years," Gould writes. "From its start and throughout its life, ACT UP was a place to fight the AIDS crisis, and it was always more than that as well. It was a place to elaborate critiques of the status quo, to imagine alternative worlds, to express anger, to defy authority, to form sexual and other intimacies, to practice non-hierarchical governance and self-determination, to argue with one another, to refashion identities, to experience new feelings, to be changed."

Gould is nostalgic for those days, but she also illuminates the problems inherent in a group based on idealism and passion. Sometimes, people's motivations differed, and there were frequent divisions based on race, class, gender, and HIV-positive status. Gould does not shy away from these; indeed, the latter part of the book is about how the differences eventually became too great, and shattered the perceived utopia of the movement. The added element of despair, as the fight dragged on and people kept dying,



Author Debbie Gould in 2007. Photo by Hal Baim

further depressed many of the activists.

But *Moving Politics* is not only about the difficulties of maintaining the movement, it also shows just how important ACT UP was. Whether that was in fighting drug companies about slow research and high prices, pushing the federal government's drug trials process, or targeting the complacent gay community, ACT UP was an extremely successful movement. What is interesting in retrospect, just focusing on Chicago's ACT UP, is that it was usually a few dozen main people doing the work, which sometimes attracted a few hundred to demonstrations. Their impact was huge, partly because of brilliant media and graphics strategies. A few people really did change the world.

That is not to say there was universal support for their approach. In Chicago and elsewhere, ACT UP was at odds with traditional "suit-and-tie" activists, some who angrily opposed their confrontational approach. Once a few gay folks got their seat at the political table, they were worried ACT UP would ruin it for them. So when ACT UP's Danny Sotomayor and others confronted Mayor Richard M. Daley, early in his reign, on his lack of response to AIDS, some gay leaders denounced the efforts.

The attacks on ACT UP from mainstream media were difficult, but often the attacks from other gays were more disheartening. Gould writes: "Disparaging criticisms of ACT UP contributed to the decline of the movement indirectly as well by producing feelings of isolation and betrayal among many AIDS activists who dealt with those feelings in part by becoming contemptuous of other lesbians, gay men and AIDS advocates."

But as a whole, most in the gay community realized that all approaches were needed during the peak of the AIDS years. Even the most conservative gays woke up as the epidemic reached into all parts of the gay community—AIDS did not discriminate based on political views.

The last part of *Moving Politics* was probably the most difficult for Gould to write. She was there for the last breaths of ACT UP/Chicago, and witnessed the difficult divisions within the organization. But these are necessary roads to travel to more fully understand how movements

continued on page 17



Debbie Gould (left), Sandra Johnson and the late Ferd Eggan at an ACT UP demo. Photo by Rex Wockner/*Outlines* newspaper archives.



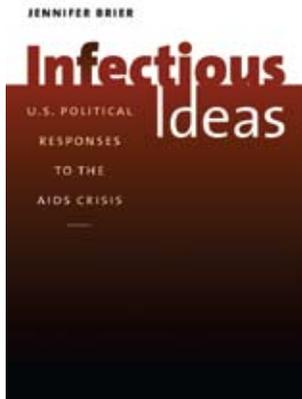
Robert Castillo (front) at a 1992 ACT UP demonstration at Daley Plaza, protesting for more Chicago AIDS funding. Photo by Genyphyr Novak

Infectious Ideas book focuses on AIDS and politics

BOOK REVIEW

Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis

Written by Jennifer Brier
\$35; The University of North Carolina Press; 312 pages



REVIEW BY TRACY BAIM

What was the Reagan Administration's response to AIDS? How did ACT UP confront the slow and biased medical and political establishments? What did foundations do to support HIV and AIDS education?

These and other questions are answered in a new book by University of Illinois at Chicago scholar Jennifer Brier. Brier is an assistant professor of gender and women's studies and history; her book includes the perspective of how feminists and lesbians played a role in the early years of the AIDS crisis.

There is no way any one book could investigate all the tentacles of HIV and AIDS, so Brier's book focuses narrowly on a few key areas. She does not, however, stay within the borders of the U.S. She also compares the U.S. and the "global south." She addresses efforts in Brazil, Thailand, Haiti and parts of Africa.

Probably the most politically interesting part of the book for me was reviewing what happened during the Reagan years, when President Ronald Reagan and conservatives dominated the political landscape. I started covering the gay community in 1984, for GayLife newspaper, when there were just a few dozen AIDS cases in Chicago, and the country was in a right-wing swing. Progressive activists were stifled but also divided, because gays were not quite welcomed into the fold. Without strong support from ei-

ACT UP from page 16

flare up, and fizzle out. She does an excellent job of capturing the despair of the early 1990s, prior to new drug regimes that would better fight off the disease. People were dying, and ACT UP simply could not overcome its internal fracturing and the emotional despair of so much death.

"Exhausted, frustrated, desperate, overwhelmed—of course we were unable to address the emotional undercurrents that were shaping the substance, velocity, and intensity of ACT UP's conflicts," Gould writes. "The historian in me, however, wants to emphasize that the fracturing of solidarity in ACT UP was never inevitable. It may be that assuming solidarity in the early years -- an assumption that derived in part from our shared anger -- prevented us from doing more trust-building work in those years."

The multiple parallel potential reasons for the decline of ACT UP are well documented here, including the fact that Bill Clinton had in some

ther major political party, gays found themselves outsiders at a time when many started dying as if in a war zone.

Brier has researched memos from the Reagan years, documenting that the conservative right was not of one mind about AIDS. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was among those advocating for unbiased and comprehensive education to prevent the further spread of AIDS. But Koop was battling against Reagan appointees, including key Reagan advisor Gary Bauer, who wanted to use the disease as part of a push for "morality."

It took Reagan years to actually focus his attention and public comments on AIDS, but Brier shows that despite this, some work was being done by courageous conservatives who saw a bigger picture of health.

"The historical understanding of the 1980s as a period of unrelenting conservatism also has much to do with how people who considered themselves opponents of the Right experienced the decade," Brier writes. She argues that historians have failed to note "political alternatives existed side by side with conservatism throughout the decade." She says AIDS transformed the political landscape it inhabited, and that it helped shape an "alternative vision of progressive politics."

Even though Brier is now at UIC, her work does not have any focus on Chicago. Her main research is on 1) the federal response during the Reagan years; 2) activism, including ACT UP, especially in New York; 3) safe-sex marketing efforts in San Francisco; and 4) The Ford Foundation's response to AIDS in the global South.

The book begins by linking 1970s gay liberation efforts to the start of a response to HIV and AIDS in the early 1980s. Brier reviews the battle within the gay movement to understand the impact of the disease: there was fierce rhetoric, but many amazing groups were created. The responses included writers fighting it out in gay media columns, people setting up HIV and AIDS services, others protesting for new drugs and faster access to experimental medications, and still more activists pushing back against draconian AIDS legislation.

Because this book is so wide-ranging in its goals, it really is only a starting point for those interested in the politics of AIDS. Fortunately for readers, Brier's notes and bibliography are extensive and provide hundreds of additional resources.

My main complaint with the book is that its academic approach can sometimes seem dispassionate, and I wanted there to be more follow up on some of the early leaders of the AIDS move-

ways co-opted the issues as part of his 1992 presidential campaign, and some activists trusted his paternalism and used it as a chance to walk away from street activism. That trust was betrayed, but it was too late to reignite the movement.

"The story of the AIDS movement is a story of political possibilities," Gould writes, "of what can happen when people collectivize their efforts to address their grievances and enact their desires." The hope for Gould, who is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is that by studying this very recent past, we can "pry open alternative, more expansive political imaginings for the contemporary movement."

For those working on same-sex marriage, military access, hate crimes, trans rights or the myriad other issues facing the LGBT movement of this century, learning more about the ACT UP years would be an excellent research tool, and I highly recommend Gould's Moving Politics for your bookshelf.

ment, especially those she quotes who later died. Many people are mentioned but we are rarely told how their personal stories ended, or if they survived the war's early years. These were often bright young men and women in their 20s or 30s, lives cut short, but not wasted, as they battled for drugs that would save at least some of their generation from the holocaust of AIDS.

But to end on a strong note, it is important to have a feminist perspective on the AIDS epidemic, and Brier documents how early activism and responses to AIDS often included both lesbian and lesbian-feminist thinkers and fighters. This is an important addition to the literature on AIDS, and one of the many reasons I would recommend the book. The chapter on Reagan alone, with excellent original source material, is worth the price of admission.



Author Jennifer Brier.



A Chicago ACT UP-sponsored demonstration in the late 1980s. Pictured, starting second from left, are Pepe Pena of Sidetrack, the late writer Jon-Henri Damski, the late attorney Bob Adams, and the late columnist Alfredo Gonzales. Photo by Genyphyr Novak

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BERLIN Friday's new NIGHTCAPS: Who doesn't love a sexy Spiderman onesie?

Photos by Kirk





Cyon Flare. Photos courtesy of Flare

Performer Cyon Flare is on fire

BY TONY PEREGRIN

Robert Cyon Flare is famous for setting the hearts of Boystown bar patrons aflame (pun intended) with an infectious, positive energy and vibrant, Technicolor costumes. In fact, the appeal of Flare (whose entertainment persona shuns the first name) actually shines far beyond Lakeview, fueled mainly by two Billboard-charting dance hits: In 2008, "Everybody, Everybody," hit number 31 and, just a year later, "Rise" rose to number 36 on the charts.

In his first interview with Windy City Times, Flare, 39, a resident of Lakeview, revealed what it's like to walk into Sidetrack "out of paint," how Cyon Flare has become something of a nightclub therapist and why he's not a fan of RuPaul's Drag Race.

Windy City Times: Do you identify yourself as a drag queen or a performance artist?

Robert Cyon Flare: I live and breathe my feathers every day. It's not as if there is one box for "Robert" and one for "Cyon!" Just look at how I sign my e-mails: Robert Cyon Flare. To put it simply, Robert/Cyon is not a separate being, but wholly one soul, one mind. We, being gay, for whatever reason, have clung to the word "drag," but it is all art. At its essence, what I do is so artistic, but everyone does it to a certain extent. When you get up in the morning and get ready for work, you ask yourself, 'what am I going to wear to work today, am I feeling this blue shirt or this white one?' And that's what I do, but I just take it a few steps further. [Laughs]

WCT: You are known for your vibrant, outrageous costumes. How do you select what you are going to wear each night?

RCF: Every time I go to bed and every afternoon when I wake up—and this is the truth, Tony—the first thing I think about is, how am I feeling, and how am I going to pull something together? Over the years, I've become very aware that when you dress yourself, based on how you are feeling—other people will feel it, and that sort of guides my process. But my favorite color is blue.

WCT: It's no surprise, then, that the color blue was the inspiration for your stage name!

RCF: I researched the color blue and found "cyan," which is a bluish-green. However, I wanted it to be spelled with an "O" and pronounced like "scion," as in "an heir or a descendant." "Flare" comes from solar flare, which is associated with the sun. This flare is what helps to nourish all life on our planet, and it is where

we get our energy to light up our nights. I wanted a name that didn't mean "male" or "female," but something that represented the soul energy that is within us all.

WCT: What was the inspiration behind your famed Mickey Glitter balls headpiece—perhaps your most recognized costume?

RCF: People respond to the Mickey glitter balls with such affection, I can't even begin to describe to you the kind of reaction I continue to get when I wear them! Actually, Tony, I made the headpiece for selfish reasons. Let me backtrack for a second: One thing you should know about me is that I believe in getting what you truly want—and I have always wanted to work at Gay Disney. I don't necessarily love the character of Mickey Mouse per se, as much as I love Disney World and the whole concept of family and joy and wonderment. So, I made the headpiece for myself, because I knew that some day I would be a part of Gay Disney, somehow, someway. In 2008, I flew to Orlando and I was staying at the Parliament House, and I went, out of paint, to the Gay Days management office with my press kit in hand, and I knocked on the door. I spoke to someone in the office, gave them the materials, and don't you know two days later I got the call to be a part of Gay Days at Disney!

WCT: Who have been your biggest influences?

RCF: Sylvester, Boy George and RuPaul have been big influences on me, in that order.

WCT: It sounds like you might be a big fan of RuPaul's Drag Race?

RCF: You know, Tony, I watched RuPaul's Drag Race for Jade and for Nina Flowers. I actually knew Jade before the show; he's an amazing dancer and has a gorgeous and sweet spirit, and I was rooting for both of them. But I have to tell you that I am not what you would call a fan of the show. I have an issue when someone is over you and telling you that you are not good enough. As a young performer or drag queen, someone could walk away from the show thinking that they have to look a certain way or act a certain way in order to be fierce or in order to be successful—and that's simply not true.

WCT: Tell me something about Robert Cyon Flare that might surprise people?

RCF: I do a lot of listening, Tony, when I am out. It's interesting because people feel a certain level of comfort with you and they will share with you their day or their week, or they will tell you someone in their family has died or that they have just discovered their boyfriend or their girlfriend is cheating on them.

Now, my purpose, my goal, is to be a host and an entertainer, of course, I'm *not* a counselor, but I can be because I am open to people. Every night someone comes up to me and tells me about a broken heart, or that they are having relationship problems—every night! I remember there was a bachelorette group in the bar, and one of the girls came up to me and said the bride was crying and that she could not stop. I didn't know what I could possibly say to this person, but I went over to her, gave her a hug, took off my wig and put it on her head. People started



taking pictures of her and, before you know it, she was fine!

WCT: Are some people seemingly freaked out by your appearance?

RCF: You know, Tony, I don't approach everybody, because different people are in the club for different reasons. Some people are freaked out by the way I look! Some drag queens are known for embarrassing people, but I don't do that. I will never say anything embarrassing to people in the club that I do not know.

WCT: Do people recognize you when, as you say, you are not "in paint?"

RCF: I go out when I'm not in paint, sure. I love going to Showtunes at Sidetrack on Sunday. It's funny because some guys who are really nice to me when I see them on Friday night are bitches when I approach them on Sunday! I usually just smile, and tell them I am Cyon Flare, and that I was the one that they were huggin' and kissin' and taking pictures with earlier in the weekend and they usually go "Ooooh, Okay!"

WCT: Are you dating anyone?

RCF: I haven't dated anyone in six years. I haven't met what I would consider "the one" for me. I'm not gonna give you a list of what I am looking for in a guy; I won't go there [laughs], but I will tell you that I believe it is all about timing. You know, I tell guys in the bar all the time that they hot and, because of that, I think the biggest misconception about me is that I am some love-hungry, love-starved individual. But, you see, when I tell guys that I find them attractive, it doesn't mean that I want to date them! Look, I am fine with myself, from the time I get up to the time I go to bed. I am fine with who I am, so I have no problem telling others how I feel about them—but I am not some love-starved drag queen!

WCT: You are obviously very comfortable in your own skin, Cyon. Did your upbringing have any influence on who you are today?

RCF: Well, my mom, Ida, is gay. She came out when I was around four years old. I think she had just grown tired of living a lie. I have multiple siblings, some with different fathers ... and then one day I noticed that there were no men coming over anymore and, the next day, I noticed that women were coming over. For me, I didn't really notice anything different. I believe I had a normal life growing up, I had the same growing pains that everybody else had. For me, the shock wasn't my family's reaction to my mom, because they were very accepting of her. What was shocking to me was the outside world, and how they reacted to her. You have to remember this was in the '70s in Detroit, so that was a very different time. I came out to her when I was 13. She said she knew, probably because I was walking around in cha-cha heels by the time I was 5 years old!

WCT: You've had two songs on Billboard's dance charts: "Everybody, Everybody" and "Rise." Talk about your newest release, "Fire."

RCF: I worked with a new producer on this track, DJ Dealer, who is a Chicago house DJ. The song is about what music does to you. It's about the beat, which is like fire shut up in your bones. I took that concept from church, when the preacher always used to say, "The spirit of the Lord is shut up in your bones," and I translated it to music. It's a basic house beat, and not as techno as the other two tracks. I love it! We're working on the video for it now.

WCT: You've conquered the dance charts and the local nightlife scene, Cyon. What's next for you?

RCF: You know, Tony, I really wish that all those who bring light to our community nightlife would work together more often—since we all have a common goal to entertain the community and make them feel happy. Separately, Circuit Mom, Ms. Foozie, Frida Olay, Ms. Kitty, Veronica, Sal-E, Jo Jo Baby [and] Bobby Pins are amazing at what they do! But I want to see all of us come together for an event where we all use our energy and charisma to raise money and



consciousness, for HIV/AIDS; or for the homelessness; or for youth and equality issues. Can you imagine how powerful that would be? I'm calling out to you ladies. Let's come together and make some big magic for our community as a fierce Chicago force!

Cyon Flare performs weekly at Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted. Visit www.hydratechicago.com for more information.

Mariah Carey in Chicago Feb. 13-14

Superstar recording artist Mariah Carey (who has 18 number-one hits) is embarking on her "Angels Advocate" tour this year. The tour began in Atlantic City Jan. 2 and will wrap up in Las Vegas Feb. 27—with a stop at the Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, Saturday, Feb. 13-14.

The tour is the first major tour by Carey since "Adventures of Mimi: The Voice, The Hits, The Tour" in 2006. The opening act on the "Angels Advocate" tour is RydazNrtist, a new R&B group signed to husband Nick Cannon's NCredible Entertainment. Carey's latest CD is *Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel*.

See www.ticketmaster.com for tickets.

Live P!nk DVD available

On the heels of her acrobatic circus performance at this year's Grammys, P!nk's live concert is available on the new DVD *Funhouse Tour Live In Australia* plus bonus live CD, out now via Jive.

The DVD features P!nk performing her hits from the past decade and songs from her fifth studio album *Funhouse*, which has sold over 5 million units worldwide. The concert was filmed entirely in HD in Australia, where she sold out a record-breaking 60 shows.

The performance is also available on Blu-ray.

Queer Eye's Filicia hosting new show

Design guru Thom Filicia (*Dress My Nest*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*), is hosting the show *Tacky House* on The Style Network this spring. This show plans on "bringing viewers a fresh and funny take on design intervention," according to a press release.

In each episode, Thom and his "Tacky House" duo of experts help makeover disastrous rooms suffering from disastrous decor. The real challenge is convincing the amateur designer that the room needs a makeover (or in some cases, a "makeunder").

calendar

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WINDY CITY TIMES



Wed., Feb. 3

Hydrate's Annual Staff Turnabout Show benefiting TPAN Hydrate's Annual Staff Turnabout Show to benefit TPAN's "Chicago Takes Off Barlesque" Competition. \$10 donation includes hosted bar from 8 to 9:30pm; 8pm, (773) 989-9400, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

Hawaiian/Hula and Tahitian Dance Class Join us every Wednesday night at 8:20pm and learn the basics of pacific island dancing. Learn how to dance Hula including Hula Auana (modern Hula) and Hula Kahiko (ancient Hula), Tahitian dances such as the Otea and Aparima, and dances from other pacific islands like Guam and many more. 4057 N. Damen Ave. 8:15pm, <http://www.islapacificika.com>

Secular and the Sacred: The Right of Same Sex Couples to Marry Justice Albie Sachs is the first Richard & Ann Silver Pozen Visiting Professor in Human Rights at the University of Chicago. This public lecture is based on his new book, Reason and Passion: The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law. A lifelong activist in human rights, in 1990 he took an active part in the negotiations which led to South Africa becoming a constitutional democracy. 7pm, 773-702-8787, http://event.uchicago.edu/maincampus/search.php?who=agrp_HumanRights&when=upcoming

About Face Theatre presents What We Once Felt The Midwestern premiere of Ann Marie Healy's new play featuring six prominent Chicago actresses, Charin Alvarez, Laura Fisher, Patricia Kane, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Ana Sferuzza, and Rebecca Sohn. What kind of future would there be

DEAR JOHN Tuesday, Feb. 9

Historian/UIC professor John D'Emilio will present "Rethinking Gay History or Richard Nixon, Gay Liberationist?" at 701 S. Morgan.

Photo by Hal Baim



if women ran the world? Through March 6. Wednesday through Saturday 7:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 3 pm. 7:30pm, 866-811-4111, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.aboutfacechicago.com>

Hydrate's Annual Staff Turnabout Show benefiting TPAN Hydrate's Annual Staff Turnabout Show to benefit TPAN's "Chicago Takes Off Barlesque" Competition. \$10 donation includes hosted bar from 8 to 9:30pm; 8pm, (773) 989-9400, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, <http://www.hydratechicago.com>

Thursday, Feb. 4

Mary Sylvester Photography Exhibit Photography; 5:30pm, <http://mspho.com>

Frat House Thursday at Scarlet Join ChicagoPride.com and Scarlet as we host all frat guys and their fans! 8pm, Scarlet, 3320 N Halsted, <http://www.scarletbarchicago.com>

I Am A Camera Conceived and directed by Founding Director Greg Allen written and

performed by Caitlin Stainken and Jeremy Sher. Preview two nights. Open Feb. 6, run through March 13. \$15, \$10 for students/seniors; 8pm, 773-275-5255, The Neofuturarium, 5153 N Ashland, <http://www.neofuturists.org>

Cyon Flare with DJ Phil DaBeatz at Hydrate Nightspots presents Thursdays at Hydrate hosted by Cyon Flare with ChicagoPride.com's own, DJ Phil DaBeatz and hot strippers. Win cash and other prizes from 10:30pm to 1:30am; 10pm, Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted, www.hydratechicago.com

Friday, Feb. 5

Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Event Equality Illinois and ChicagoPride.com present this monthly "Make A Difference" event. For a \$10 donation to the Equality Illinois PAC, you receive two drink tickets and a ticket for a door prize drawing. 6pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, <http://www.eqil.org>

A Hero Comes Home, Daniel Sotomayor Retrospective on the life and work of the late syndicated gay political cartoonist and AIDS activist with 100+ Sotomayor political cartoons and a rare showing of the 1990's documentary "Short Fuse: Portrait of an AIDS Activist" on his journey from shy graphic artist to a force behind Chicago's chapter of ACT-Up/Chicago. Sotomayor was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988 and devoted his life to fighting for the rights and welfare of Chicago's growing population of AIDS sufferers. Refreshments. Free but donations to the Institute's restoration welcome. 6:30pm, 773-486-8345, <http://www.iprac.org>

Women & Children First author event Jaimee Wriston Colbert, author of Shark Girls, which explores intersections of loss and desire in a world ruled by accidents of fate. 7:30pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St.

Reeling Monthly Screening Series Burnt Money is a sexy, intense crime thriller from Argentina, hailed as a gay "Bonnie & Clyde." Dark and sensual story of a group of violent bank robbers, two of whom are gay lovers known in criminal circles as "The Twins." 8pm, Chicago Filmmakers, 5243 N Clark

Paula Poundstone: An evening of stand-up The Emmy and ACE Award-winner Paula Poundstone returns to the North Shore when Centre East presents the popular comedian in an evening of stand-up. North Shore Center for the Performing Arts 9501 Skokie Blvd. Skokie, IL 60077; 8pm, 847-673-6300, <http://www.northshorecenter.org>

Saturday, Feb. 6

LookLyric Opera of Chicago's Fantasy of the Opera Fabulous food! Terrific music! Great friends! The Fantasy of the Opera is presented by the Lyric Opera Guild Board of Directors, and has been heating up Chicago's winter social scene for 26 years while raising important funds to benefit Chicago's own world-renowned opera company. It's one of Lyric's most exciting and elegant events - truly "the hottest party in the coldest month," which makes this year's theme, "Hearts Afire," especially appropriate! 6:30pm, 312-827-5656, <http://www.lyricopera.org/fantasy>

Chicago a cappella: Roll, Jordan, Roll: The Spiritual, Old and New Chicago a cappella celebrates the power and beauty of African-American spirituals. The acclaimed vocal ensemble will sing both traditional and contemporary works. \$28-\$35, discounts for seniors and students. 8pm, 773-281-7820, <http://www.chicagoacappella.org>

Nine to Twelve No Tap Bowling Bowling - First Saturday of Every Month; 9pm

Cake Chicago Presents: Cake Chicago Presents, Readers' Choice for BEST LGBTQ Variety Show from Chicago Reader, blending queer artistry into the general public through live music and more. 9p Ripley Caine, 10p Lojo Russo, 11p Ian Wilson; 9pm, 773.274.5463, <http://www.myspace.com/cakechicago>

Sunday, Feb. 7

A New Years' Core Resolution Join Exhale Spa's premier Gay instructor John Nelson on February 7th, and February 14th at 2:20 PM for a calorie-torching combination of our popular Core Fusion® and Core Fusion® Sport classes! Exhale Spa 945 N State Street; 2:15pm, 703-304-0521, <http://www.exhalespa.com/locations/ilchicago/ilchicago.aspx#>

Roman Catholic Mass Dignity-Chicago celebrates a Roman Catholic Mass every Sunday, 5PM, at Broadway United Methodist Church 3338 N Broadway St, Chicago, IL 60657; 5pm, <http://dignitychicago.org/current.htm>

Geja's Cafe Valentine's Day Festival Geja's Cafe is planning the most romantic Valentine's Day celebration in its 44 year history. For eight days from Sun, Feb 7 through Sun, Feb 14, the renowned "Restaurant of Romance" will be lavishly decorated and feature sparkling champagne, carriage rides around Lincoln Park, live flamenco and classical guitarists, photo keepsakes, and delicious sizzling hot fondue cuisine. 5pm, 773-281-9101, Geja's Cafe, 340 W Armitage, <http://www.gejascafe.com>

Bailiwick Chicago's Show Us Your Love Bailiwick Chicago's Show Us Your Love, a musical revue, celebrates love and relationships, featuring both comic and dramatic selections from some of Broadway and Off-Broadway's very best. 7:30pm, 773-969-6201, Mary's Attic, 5400 N Clark, <http://www.bailiwickchicago.com>

Monday, Feb. 8

Affinity Junior Leadership Institute (formerly Youth Drop-In) For youth aged 14-19, academic support, facilitated group discussion, occasional field trips, guest speakers, teambuilding exercises, one-on-one discussions, and meals. 4pm, Affinity Community Services, 5650 S Woodlawn Ave, <http://www.affinity95.org>

LGBT Faith Conversation This group will use a variety of resources—articles, guest speakers, personal sharing, short documentaries and more from a variety of disciplines (psychology, religion, theology, science, sociology, etc)—to help LGBTQ people reflect on their spiritual journeys. This group is a joint collaboration of The Center on Halsted and Urban Village Church Chicago and will meet every Monday evening from 7-8:30pm from 1/25-3/1. 7pm, 773 263-9554, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.meetup.com/gay>



FREE TO BE Friday, Feb. 12

The Chicago-made film Hannah Free, starring Sharon Gless, will premiere in Peoria, Ill.

Photo by Hal Baim

and-christian/calendar/12303293/

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Historian/University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) professor John D'Emilio will present a lecture—"Rethinking Queer History. Or, Richard Nixon, Gay Liberationist?"—Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 701 S. Morgan at 3 p.m. D'Emilio, a professor of gender and women's studies and history at UIC, is responsible for numerous publications, including Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970 (nominated for a Pulitzer Prize). or more information, contact Linda Vavra at 312-996-6354.

Chefs and the City: A Stroll through the Gallery for Vital Bridges Join us for a delightful cocktail reception and indulge in delectable hors d'oeuvres prepared by West Loop's finest restaurants, including Blackbird/Avec, Sepia, Meiji and Province; while enjoying Primitive's beautiful collection. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Primitive 130 N Jefferson St. 6pm, <http://www.vitalbridges.org/pages/event-detail/17.php?id=12>

Wed., Feb. 10

Board Game Night with Sapphic Adventures Join ladies from Sapphic Adventures for a night of board games and casual social. Please do bring your own games to share! We have over 900 members and focus on women-only social events outside bars. 7pm, <http://www.sapphicadventures.org>

Friday, Feb. 12

Hannah Free screens in Peoria The Peoria, Ill., premiere of Hannah Free, a film starring former Peoria resident Ann Hagemann opposite Emmy Award-winner Sharon Gless. Hannah Free is an independent Chicago made film about two women who shared a loving relationship throughout their lives, only now one must fight to keep that love alive. Ann Hagemann will attend the screenings of the film for talk-backs afterwards. Hannah Free also features a cast of Chicago stage veterans and was shot entirely on the South Side of Chicago and in Beecher, Illinois. \$10 at the Peoria Theater. Free parking. www.peoriatheater.com One night only. 7pm, 309-202-2278, <http://www.hannahfree.com>

Saturday, Feb. 13

Fat Saturday Ball: Allure! "Revolution Never Looked So Glamorous!" is an annual fundraiser for EdgeAlliance (AIDSCare). The theme for this year's gala is promising to reprise the glory days of 1930s and '40s cinema. 7pm, Westin Chicago River North, 320 North Dearborn Street, http://www.edgealliance.org/pages/fat_saturday_ball/52.php



FAT CAT

Saturday, Feb. 13

EDGEAlliance (formerly AIDSCare) will host the "Fat Saturday Ball: Allure!" at the Westin Chicago River North, 320 N. Dearborn.

Photo from the 2009 event by Steve Starr

BILLY MASTERS

"And WHY has Joy Behar turned into such a self righteous cooz head? CHEATING is between a husband and a wife. Not TMZ and Joy Bewhore... God, I want to bash her in the vagina with her microphone."—Kirstie Alley's violent Twitter outburst after watching the non-stop Tiger Woods coverage on La Behar's HLN show. I smell a catfight—in bikinis and mud.

We're in the temporary lull that sets in between the Golden Globes and the Oscars (the SAG Awards, while fun, don't really count—and I'm a member!). So life in Hollywood goes on as normal—or whatever passes for that these days. With all the talk about FOX wanting to pick up Conan (which they will, incidentally), people might have missed the news that the network has also ordered a U.S. version of Torchwood. The UK hit starring our own John Barrowman is must-see TV for those of you with BBC America. We're told that Russell Davies, who created the original, will write the script and the original production team has been signed should this project get off the ground.

But you don't care about that. You just wanna know if John Barrowman will be in the U.S. version? He's indicated he would do it if FOX wanted him. Working against him are two failed domestic series—Central Park West (CBS 1995) and Titans (NBC 2000). On the positive side, he'll be joining Desperate Housewives for the last few episodes of this season. If America warms up to him (despite playing a baddie—more on that later), FOX might be tempted to get into bed with Barrowman, so to speak. For now, we're waiting to see what the brass thinks of the "Torchwood" script and if they'll order a pilot. Fingers crossed.

As you've probably heard, Ugly Betty has been cancelled. ABC hoped moving the show to Wednesdays would bring back viewers, but no such luck. The producers and network came to this decision early so that the show could wrap up some storylines prior to a big series finale. And, along the way, we'll get some interesting guest stars. Hilda's baby daddy Bobby will be gaining some parents—Lainie Kazan and Nestor Serrano. Broadway vet Brian Stokes Mitchell will arrive as Wilhelmina's ex. And Liza will play Justin's drama teacher. She starts shooting this week and is scheduled to end by Feb. 12—just in time for her latest knee-replacement surgery. She's the only person I know who has had four of these. What is she? A horse?

Even someone as cynical as *moi* can appreciate the efforts being made on behalf of the Haitians. Some appear to be more genuine than others. I was particularly touched when I saw photos of the always enjoyable Kellan Lutz donating a basket of clothes to relief efforts. Not surprisingly, most of those clothes were shirts. Well, how often does he wear 'em? Not that I'm complaining. This gesture came on the heels of a professional disappointment. Lutz was up for the lead in a remake of Conan the Barbarian. I had a feeling he was in trouble when I heard sexy Jared Padelecki was being considered. How surprised was I (and those hotties) when Jason Momoa landed the part. For those of you who don't know, Jason is a Baywatch and Stargate: Atlantis alum. I smell a direct-to-DVD release.

I certainly never get tired of watching the ever-earnest Anderson Cooper reporting from Haiti. Is it just me or are his T-shirts getting tighter? And I don't think he's getting any bigger. I think he's shopping at Baby Gap! Maybe he's trying to save money since his search for a new home in New York is over. In September he purchased a former Greenwich Village firehouse for the bargain price of \$4.3 million. The sprawling building is under consideration with the National Register of Historic Places and is still equipped with a spiral staircase and brass firepole—which I'm sure will come in handy. If

it only came with firemen. Eh, I'm sure a few firemen will eventually come—especially when the place is flaming!

We hear that former gay porn star Jay Armstrong is having some trouble in his real life. Reportedly, the power bottom is in law school and one of his professors has threatened him via e-mail, saying he "needed psychiatric help for working in the adult industry" and that there were consequences for his vulgar past career. We're told Armstrong is filing a harassment suit against the professor, which should make for interesting class discussion. Maybe his professor is just doing this to see how he handles it—like a mock trial. If so, I say give him an "A."



Ugly Betty (with Christopher Gorham and America Ferrera, above) is suddenly out of fashion.

Michael Verdugo had quite a nice life going. He was a police officer in Hollywood, Florida and appeared as a contestant on HGTV's Design Star. The police had no problems with him being on HGTV. Alas, the added publicity meant that people learned of his porn past ... brief as it may have been. He literally did a 15-minute bondage scene in Rope Rituals (which you can watch on BillyMasters.com—it's HOT) which shows more than the department was comfortable with. As a result, he was fired—allegedly because he did not disclose his past on his initial application. He also was not invited to the Design Star reunion, which really sucks. Personally, I think a porn past is *de rigueur* for HGTV! Anyhoo, he's filed a civil suit against the Hollywood Police Department for wrongful termination and discrimination. In the meantime, he's put his interior-designing skills to good use with Verdugo Design Group. And he's got a boyfriend who is a field training officer for the Pembroke Pines Police. Someone's doing something right—especially when he looks this good!

Speaking of exposure, someone sent me a nude photo of Jesus Luz. It's allegedly an outtake from the "W" magazine shoot with Madonna. Is it real? Is it a fake? Who knows. But it's on BillyMasters.com.

When Anderson is prepping to slide down a fireman's pole, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Well, now we're back to form. TV, stage, reality, and porn. What more could you want? Well, a Web site that contains it all—which is www.BillyMasters.com. We didn't have time for a question this week, but I still answer all my mail. So write to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Verdugo hires Armstrong as his lawyer! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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The Chicago Rowing Union at the 2009 Outgames. Photo by Ross Forman

'09 Outgames claims financial success

BY ROSS FORMAN

Despite a worldwide economic crisis, more than 5,500 participants from 92 countries attended the eight-day 2009 World Outgames—and organizers delivered a money-making event.

The board of directors of the Gay and Lesbian International Sports Association (GLISA) announced in January that the Copenhagen 2009 Outgames declared a profit of DKK 1.2 Million (\$234,000 USD).

"From day one, we had as ambition to come out with a positive [financial] result," said Uffe Elbaek, CEO of Copenhagen World Outgames. "So we never promised more that we could deliver.

"There is not only one reason, but many, [that the Copenhagen event was a financial success]. Some of [the reasons are], it was the right mix of a highly professional staff, hired not because of their relationship to the LGBT community, but because what they have done before as project managers, and lots of committed activists. This combination of 'keep your mind calm and your heart open' is maybe the most important reason, that the Outgames in Copenhagen was such a success."

The profits from the 2009 Outgames will be allocated to charitable LGBT sports, cultural and human rights-related purposes, in accordance with the articles of the association, said GLISA officials.

Elbaek said it is up to the mayor of culture in Copenhagen, Pia Allerslev, and other members of city council, to decide specifically where the money goes.

So what does this mean for all future LGBT sporting events, including the 2010 Gay Games?

"First of all, it tells something about how important it is to have the right organization mixture of highly professional core staff and a lot of great LGBT-activists," Elbaek said. "But what is also important is, to create a very clear, independent organizational structure, which you can see through both money-wise and decision-wise. So the public and the local LGBT community are able to follow what kind of decision the staff and the board makes during the project period."

GLISA Co-President/Director North America Julia Applegate said she was "thrilled" to hear about Copenhagen's financial success.

"Given the global financial crisis and smaller than expected turn out, it was even more exciting to see that the Copenhagen team managed the event so successfully," she said.

Applegate praised Copenhagen for its "combination of professional leadership, collaboration (both financial and otherwise) with local government and community organizations, and an amazing group of volunteers proved to be a winning equation."

The next World Outgames will be in 2013 in Antwerp, Belgium.

GAY GAMES: TRIATHLON

Richard Sypniewski: Tri, tri again

BY ROSS FORMAN

Every year for the past four years, Richard Sypniewski has been faster in his triathlon time than in previous years.

"I feel it is an accomplishment that every year I get older I get just a bit faster," said Sypniewski, 40, who is single and lives in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood. He is the managing director and chief financial officer for SAGIN, LLC.

"I have been competing in triathlons for six years now and my goal has always been to beat my personal best time. My goal and purpose [for] participating in the [2010] Gay Games [in Cologne, Germany] is to be a part of the spirit of the games and foster inclusion of all people in the spirit of coming together."

Sypniewski competed in the 2006 Games in Chicago.

"The Opening and Closing ceremonies [in Chicago were] an overwhelming display of love and excitement which cannot every really be described in words," Sypniewski said. "Many of us who compete in any of our challenges every day, whether it is having a faster swim time, overcoming a physical disability or fighting for human rights, the spirit of inclusion is never more apparent than seeing the crowds of people coming together from all around the world to either compete or cheer their friends on.

"Whenever I watch the Olympic Games, I could not imagine what it would be like to represent my country in a competition such as that. Now that I am 40, it is well beyond my reach to compete in the Olympic Games. However, the Gay



Richard Sypniewski. Photo courtesy of Sypniewski

Games give everyone that opportunity and it is the most incredible feeling to participate in the Games.

"I believe the symbolism of the Gay Games is a global event that demonstrates to the world that the GLBT community is vast and broad and in every corner of the world and that by coming together in the spirit of competition and inclusion demonstrates to the world the value that our community brings to the world. I also love the building of relationships across the world with people who share a common bond of not only our competitive spirit but our personal being as part of the global GLBT community."

More about Richard Sypniewski:

—**High school:** Curie High School in Chicago.

—**College:** Northern Illinois University, Class of 1991; Kellogg School of Management, MBA, Class of 2002

—**Hobbies:** Scuba, biking, swimming, home improvement, cooking and traveling.

—**Superstitions:** "The only 'superstition' is that I treat people like I want to be treated and then, hopefully, nothing 'bad' will happen to me. But I [also] never defy a superstition, such as walking under a ladder, just in case they are true."

—**Little-known fact:** Was bitten by a shark while scuba diving the Lesser Antilles

—**Favorite sports team:** Jamaican bobsled team

—**Favorite pro athlete:** Michael Phelps

—**Quote:** "I grew up on the South Side of Chicago and have always been a native Chicagoan. I've been very fortunate to travel to other countries and live in some for work. I'd strongly encourage anyone to find an event in the Gay Games which they enjoy and to participate. I know during these difficult economic times the cost of registration and expense of travel can be hard. However, where there is a will there is a way and the emotion and spirit captured during the events of the games is overwhelming and participation through either competition or volunteering is an incredible feeling."

Gay Super Bowl ad rejected

CBS has rejected an advertisement from Toronto-based gay dating site ManCrunch.com that would have run during the Super Bowl, according to CNN Money.

Network spokeswoman Shannon Jacobs said, "After reviewing the ad, which is entirely commercial in nature, our standards and practices department decided not to accept this particular spot. We are always open to working with a client on alternative submissions."

Elissa Buchter, spokeswoman for ManCrunch.com, said, "It's straight-up discrimination." CBS said that it did not accept the ad for financial reasons. A letter Buchter provided CNN Money stated, in part, that the ad "is not within the Network's broadcast standards for Super Bowl Sunday."

Meanwhile, an ad from the organization Focus on the Family—known for its anti-gay stance—is slated to air during the Feb. 7 sports event. The ad, which features University of Florida quarterback Tim Tebow, has generated controversy because the spot reportedly has an anti-abortion message. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Tebow said, "There are a lot of people watching. It's a great opportunity to share a very happy and special story about my mom fighting for me. There are a lot of great things in that."



Dee Mosbacher. Photo by Nanette Gartrell

SPORTS DVD REVIEW

Training Rules

BY STEVE WARREN

In Training Rules, a documentary about homophobia in women's collegiate sports, filmmaker Dee Mosbacher gives herself an added degree of difficulty by focusing on the case of two women, neither of whom was available to interview.

Jennifer Harris appears briefly to read a letter from her attorney explaining that she can't comment in accordance with the terms of the settlement of her suit against the Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and Rene Portland, who coached the Lady Lions basketball team from 1980 until her resignation in 2007.

(Full disclosure: I'm a Penn State grad and a member of the Penn State Lambda Yahoo group, but I never played women's basketball there.)

Harris' claims that Portland systematically discriminated against players who were or appeared to be lesbian, or just didn't look "feminine" enough, are substantiated by a number of players going back to Portland's earliest days at PSU. They include Cindy Davies, Lisa Faloon and twins Chris and Corinne Gulas.

It's said that Portland's "training rules" were "No Drinking, No Drugs, No Lesbians." Once she tagged a player with the L-word, the rest of the team was forbidden to socialize with her. If Portland didn't throw the woman off the team the social ostracism was enough to make her quit. This could destroy the future of a woman who was dependent on an athletic scholarship to remain in school.

Portland's "no-lesbian" policy first came to light in an interview she gave the Chicago Sun-Times in 1986 and got more attention in a Philadelphia Inquirer story in 1991. The university turned a blind eye because the team had 23 winning seasons out of Portland's first 24.

Even when sexual orientation was added to Penn State's nondiscrimination policy in 1992, Portland was allowed to carry on as usual. Because athletics bring in a lot of alumni dollars, coaches are allowed to set their own rules.

Activists discuss lesbophobia in women's sports in general, where ponytails are practically mandatory, and point out that Portland must have received votes from some lesbians to have been named Coach of the Year twice in national voting.

I don't believe the film mentions that Harris is not lesbian-identified, but it does bring that out about Courtney Wicks, who played for the Lady Lions in 1996 and '97. When Harris decided to stand and fight she joined forces with the National Center for Lesbian Rights to bring the federal suit, which was settled out of court in February 2007. Portland resigned the following month.

Dee Mosbacher shoots and scores with this documentary that's newsworthy as well as praiseworthy.

2010 WCAA Men's Basketball

Competitive	W	L	Intermediate	W	L	Recreational	W	L
Jackhammer	3	0	Crew	3	0	Big Chicks	4	0
Sidetrack	3	1	T's	2	1	T's	3	1
3160	2	1	Sidetrack	2	1	Spin	2	1
Hamburger Mary's	1	2	Sofo	2	2	Taste of Heaven	2	2
Roscoe's	1	3	Gotcha Covered Blinds	2	2	The Green Team	0	3
Solfire Realty	0	3	Apocalypse	1	2	Triad Entertainment	0	4
			Hamburger Mary's	0	4	—Teams listed by sponsor		



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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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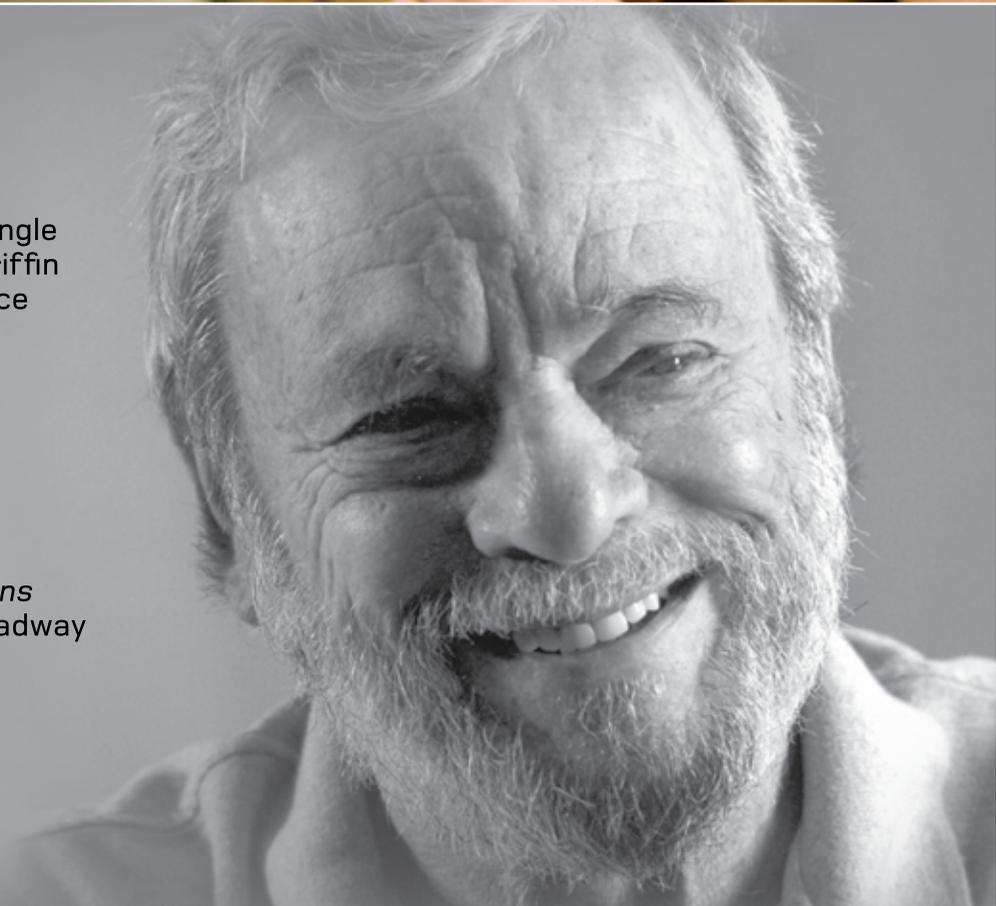


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