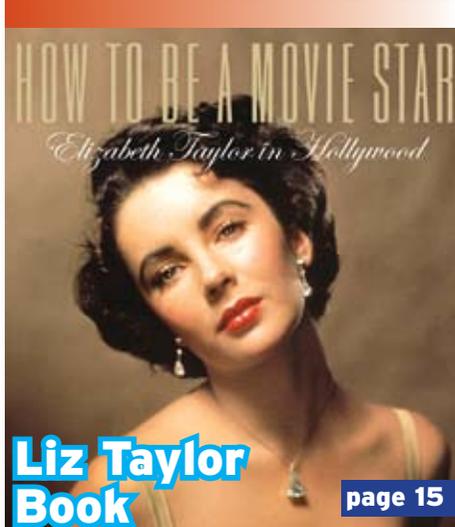


POW-WOW

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Liz Taylor Book

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nightspots pick it up take it home

Silent protest has everyone talking

BY SARAH TOCE

Adam Bouska and Jeff Parshley are at the helm of something pretty spectacular in the LGBT community. Their thought-provoking silent protest against hate and Proposition 8 helped to create the widely-popular NO H8 Campaign that has transcended race, color, religion, sexuality and party lines (Cindy McCain just posed).

I recently joined "the boys" in their studio in Los Angeles to have my photograph taken and chat with Adam and Jeff about Proposition 8, the upcoming pool party at The Dinah in Palm Springs and how the whirlwind that is the NO H8 Campaign all began. Oh, and Rosie O'Donnell—if you're listening, they want you to call them.

Windy City Times: By now, I'm pretty confident that almost everyone has seen or at least heard of the NO H8 Campaign. For the few people who are unfamiliar with the NO H8 Campaign, can you describe what it is about and how it started?

Adam Bouska: The NO H8 Campaign is a silent photo protest we started in our living room in our apartment after the passage of Proposition 8 in California. It was never intended to be this big campaign. We just wanted to speak out to our social networks (our own friends and

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Adam Bouska (above) co-founded the "NO H8" campaign. Photo courtesy of Bouska

Ladies and gentlemen: Joan Rivers

BY JERRY NUNN

For over four decades Joan Rivers has kept audiences rolling in the aisles at her performances. This comedic icon juggles more plates than a circus act with her stand up act, writing books and selling jewelry. With an upcoming show in Illinois, Windy City Times asked her, "Can we talk?"

Windy City Times: Hi, Joan. What an honor it is to talk to a legend. Did you always have a desire to be a comedienne?

Joan Rivers: I never wanted to be a comedienne. I wanted to be an actress. But if you make an agent's secretary laugh then she will like you. I was always making people laugh. Someone said you can make six dollars a night making people laugh in comedy clubs, so it is what started me doing that.

WCT: You did some acting, though.



Joan Rivers. Photo by Charles William Bush

JR: I still do, all the way through college. I have been on Broadway three times and been nominated for a Tony. It goes back and forth and now I do both, which is so great. I just did a play in London. Also, Nip/Tuck—all that stuff.

WCT: I read that you once played a character in a show about a lesbian who had a crush on Barbara Streisand.

JR: Yes, that was the first show that I did Off Broadway. It was the first thing that we both did.

WCT: And you have been friends ever since.

JR: Not friends, good acquaintances. We don't call each other every night to say, "What a day I have had!" [both laugh] But we are very happy to see each other when we see each other.

WCT: Who have you wanted to arrest with the Fashion Police on the E! Channel?

JR: Oh, there is so many! You just say, "Who in

Turn to page 16

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The Department of Housing and Urban Development held a groundbreaking town-hall meeting. Read page 7.

Photo of Helena Bushong by Mark Corece



Tim Miller has written a first-person perspective on his newest project, Lay of the Land. Read more on page 16.

Photo courtesy of Tim Miller

Photos on left side of cover (from top): Photo of C.C. Carter courtesy of Carter; photo of the cover of How to be a Movie Star; photo of Greg Perrine courtesy of Perrine

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ONLINE INDEX

KAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

This week's Pop Making Sense features entertainers such as Le Kat (right) and Sade.



Photo by Jon Abeyta

IT'S A DIFFA WORLD



See photos from DIFFA's gala that awarded grants to HIV/AIDS agencies.

Photo courtesy of Karen Hyland

ACE OF 'FACE'

Makeup artist Scott Barnes (right) talked with WCT about his new book, About Face; Jennifer Lopez; and the top makeup mistake women make.



Photo courtesy of Ilisa Wirgin

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Officers testify about DADT

BY CHUCK COLBERT

In the same week that Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., said he would introduce legislation to repeal the military's ban on openly gay service members, top officials from the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy testified on Capitol Hill, voicing reservations to the president's call to end "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

Only Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, in offering his personal view, said gays should be permitted to serve openly.

Both Pentagon and White House spokespersons as well as gay-rights repeal advocates downplayed testimony, but they also struck back with a media campaign to combat what they say is misinformation about the effects of ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)," a 1993 policy and federal law that bars gays from openly serving in the armed forces.

The top officers' hesitancy surfaced last week on Capitol Hill when Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, pressed Secretary of the Army John McHugh and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey on their views about a moratorium on all gay-related discharges under DADT during the one-year implementation study period established by Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

Earlier this month Gates said would appoint a high-level working group to report, by the end of 2010, on how the military can adapt if Congress were to repeal DADT. Department of Defense General Counsel Jeh Johnson and Commander of the U.S. Army in Europe General Carter Ham head the study group.

The impetus for the working group came from President Obama, who called for a lifting of the ban in his State of the Union Address.

"If you're asking for my personal opinion, as to the effects of a moratorium," McHugh said, "We have many cases underway pursuant to the current law that would be greatly complicated." Specifically, McHugh cited the Army's Lt. Dan Choi, who came out on The Rachel Maddow Show last year. A West Point alumnus, Choi is a high-profile Arabic-language expert whose discharge is currently pending under DADT.

For his part, Casey said a moratorium would "complicate" the implementation process already set in motion by Gates, explaining, "We would be put in the position of actually implementing it while we were studying the implementation."

Casey went even further. "I do have serious concerns about the impact of repeal of the law on a force that is fully engaged in two wars and has been at war for eight and a half years," he said. "We just don't know the impacts on readiness and military effectiveness."

Before the House Armed Services Committee, moreover, Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, chief of staff for the Air Force, voiced a "strong conviction" that now "is not the time to perturb the force, this is, at the moment, stretched by demands



Secretary of the Army John McHugh.

in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, without careful deliberation."

Top Navy and Marine Corp leadership said they, too, opposed a moratorium on gay discharges. "I would encourage you to either change the law or not," said Gen. James T. Conway, Marine Corps commandant. "But halfway measures will only be confusing in the end."

And Gen. Conway left little doubt about his views. "At this point, I think the current policy works," he said. "My best military advice to this [Senate Armed Services] committee, to the secretary, to the president would be to keep the law as it is." For Conway, the issue is combat mission, he said, how any change "would enhance the war-fighting capabilities of the US Marine Corps by allowing homosexuals to serve openly."

For his part, Adm. Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations, said, "There has never really been an assessment of the force that serves," adding, "Equally important is the feelings of the families that support that force." Lift-the-ban reviews, he said, should focus mainly on military readiness.

By the end of the day Feb. 25, the last day of top brass testimony, Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell, said that Gates and military officials want Congress to hold off on lifting restrictions on gays in the armed forces until the yearlong review is completed. "Taking action now would pre-empt the review process that everybody agrees is needed to do this smartly," he said, according to Reuters. "Taking action before [the review] is done is putting the cart before the horse," Morrell added, referring to either passage of repeal DADT legislation or a moratorium.

On Feb. 26, moreover, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters that "Don't Ask, Don't Repeal" is on the right track. Responding to a question from D.C. Agenda reporter Chris Johnson, Gates said, "I think [the military and Pentagon process initiated by Sec. Gates and Adm. Mullen] is a very strong start for a process that the president believes will end—will end in overturning—rightfully overturning that law."

In his remarks, Gibbs took note of Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen's testi-

mony last week when he told the Senate Armed Services Committee "My personal belief is that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do." As Gibbs explained, "You heard for the first time ever the chairman of Joint Chiefs discuss the need to repeal 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

Although military officials' comments contrasted with Mullen's full-throated call for openly gay service members, repeal advocates voiced optimism about the review process and eventual repeal.

In response to the Casey-Schwartz testimony, for example, Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), said, "Neither Gen. Casey nor Gen. Schwartz expressed opposition to the plan their bosses—Sec. Gates and Adm. Mullen—put before them earlier this month. We expect that they will work within the framework the Pentagon has outlined."

Alexander Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United, said he expected "senior military leadership would oppose a moratorium," because "although a moratorium may be politically easier to deal with than full repeal, military leadership evaluates proposals based not on politics, but rather on their substantive outcomes."

Explaining further, Nicholson said, "A moratorium would have the same practical outcome on the ground as full repeal, and that is how the service secretaries and service chiefs are going to evaluate it." From their perspective, he said, "It would not make sense to support a proposal that has the same impact as full repeal while they are still undertaking an analysis of how to mitigate any issues that may arise from full repeal."

Other gay-rights activists, meanwhile, have focused their attention to how mainstream media covers DADT. Media Matters for America, a Web-based not-for-profit progressive research and information center (www.mediamatters.org), released a what it calls "a comprehensive review of the myths and falsehoods [that] media conservatives" hold out "in an effort to prevent repealing 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

In a display of solidarity with activists, more

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NATIONAL NEWS



than a dozen individuals and LGBT organizations have endorsed the Media Matters project. Pointing to "outrageous myths," the signatories pledge to ensure "fair and accurate news reports" because "the public deserves an honest debate—not one marred by blatant falsehoods and anti-gay attacks."

Still, other repeal advocates are calling for a more aggressive posture. Longtime national LGBT community activist David Mixner advocates a three-point "tough and uncompromising approach." First, he insists that Obama issue a "stop-loss" order that would, in effect, stop all discharges among troops deployed in combat.

Second, Mixner calls on LGBT leadership and organizations to pressure Congress and insist on an amendment to the "Defense Authorization Bill" and repeal DADT this year.

Third, if those pleas fall on deaf ears, then the LGBT community should stage sit-ins—nonviolent civil disobedience—at congressional leadership offices until there is a vote. "Under no circumstances should we wait another year for a worse Congress to vote," according to Mixner's "Act on Principles" no-more excuses call to arms, posted at www.actonprinciples.org.

Md. may recognize out-of-state marriages

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Just days before Washington, D.C.'s new marriage-equality law is set to go into effect, the attorney general of neighboring Maryland issued a long-awaited opinion on whether same-sex marriages validated in other jurisdictions will likely be recognized by courts in that state. The answer is "yes."

"The answer to that question," wrote Attorney General Douglas Gansler, in an opinion dated Feb. 23 and released Feb. 24, "is clearly 'yes.'"

And the answer ricocheted around the state quickly, drawing both praise and promises of undoing. Gay-rights groups were understandably happy and right-wing entities, such as the Catholic Church, were predictably unhappy with the opinion. And one delegate in the state House suggested the attorney general should be impeached.

But importantly, Gov. Martin O'Malley, choosing his words carefully, said the state would be "guided" by the "thorough analysis and legal advice."

"I expect all State agencies to work with the attorney general's office to ensure compliance with the law," said the Democratic governor.

Gansler's 55-page memorandum is addressed to openly gay state Sen. Richard Madaleno, who requested an opinion last May as to whether Maryland could recognize same-sex marriages licensed elsewhere. Madaleno also asked whether

the governor could issue an executive order—similar to that issued by New York Gov. David Paterson in 2008—that directed state agencies to recognize same-sex marriages licensed elsewhere.

Gansler noted, however, that Paterson's executive order had been based on a state court order and no such court decision had been rendered in Maryland, so O'Malley was not at liberty to issue a similar directive.

The memo "is not itself the law of Maryland in the same sense as a statute ... or court decision," said Gansler. "Rather it is an interpretation of the statutory or common law that can guide a client agency and may be persuasive to a court reviewing agency action based on the opinion."

And, in his opinion, the state court would "likely respect the law of other states and recognize a same-sex marriage contracted validly in another jurisdiction."

"While this is welcome news for those couples who were legally married in one of the growing number of states with equality in marriage, nothing in the Attorney General's opinion changes the fact that same-sex couples cannot obtain marriage licenses in Maryland," said Madaleno.

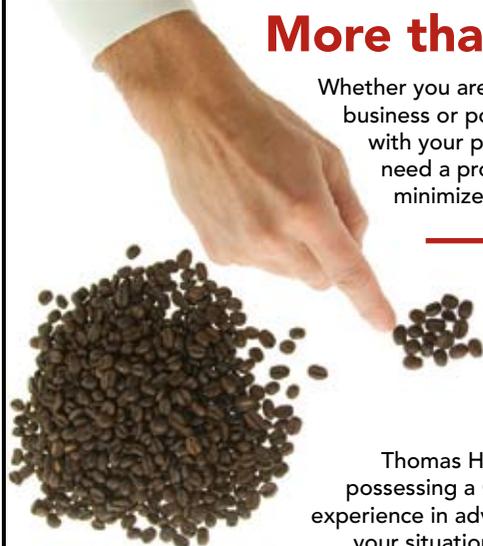
Currently, only five states issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and only two others—New York and Rhode Island—recognize marriage licenses validly obtained elsewhere, according to the national Freedom to Marriage group. The states that issue marriage licenses are Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont and New Hampshire.

Washington, D.C., is set to begin implementing its new marriage-equality law Wed., March 3.

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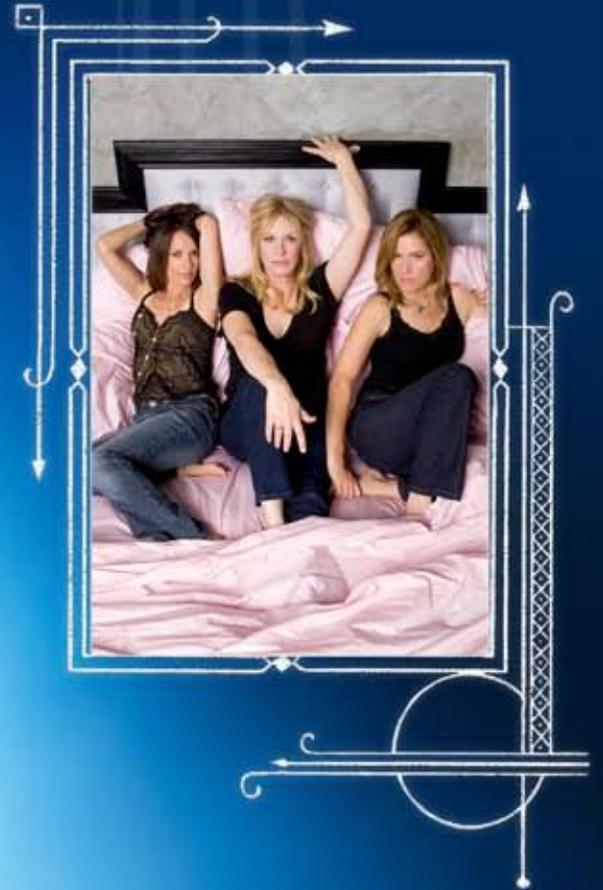


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NO H8 from cover

family). The first photo was actually of Jeff. We took his photo after seeing victim of hate logos online. People had posted those, but we wanted people to lend their face to the cause and not hide behind logos. So, we started with Jeff's image and he posted it to his Facebook and then from there some of his friends saw it and it just grew and grew.

WCT: Was it hard for you to pose for the campaign, Jeff?

Jeff Parshley: No, well, I'm not a model or anything. We weren't actually intending for the photos to be anything huge at first, but then we started really getting into it and we were like, "let's do a protest photo. Like an anti-Prop 8 photo or something like that." It's so simple and so easy—it's just the white shirt and the white background and it's very quick and makes a big statement we think.

WCT: Where did the name NO H8 come from?

JP: Well, we feel that any form of discrimination is a form of hate. Proposition 8 just kind of took on the name of Prop Hate in itself so we just kind of wanted to turn it into a no hate thing.

AB: Yeah and then it became a campaign essentially because of the photos and the way it was growing. It is a media campaign that has become a way to educate the masses. We want to get these images out there to show exactly who is in support of the cause and who is being discriminated against because it's good to see that and have a look in their eyes and be able to see that it's hate written on their faces. That is essentially what it is.

WCT: How did the silent part come into play with the duct tape?

AB: The duct tape is a symbolism of our voices not being heard.

JP: 48 percent of the state of California voted for "No" on Prop 8 but because the majority rules here, the 48 percent of the vote doesn't matter because 52 percent voted the other way. So, half of the state wants marriage equality but it doesn't matter because the majority doesn't want it.

AB: Yeah, if the majority of the people can vote on the rights of the minority, then the minority population is always going to lose. It's a failed system and there are a lot of errors with the whole system altogether.

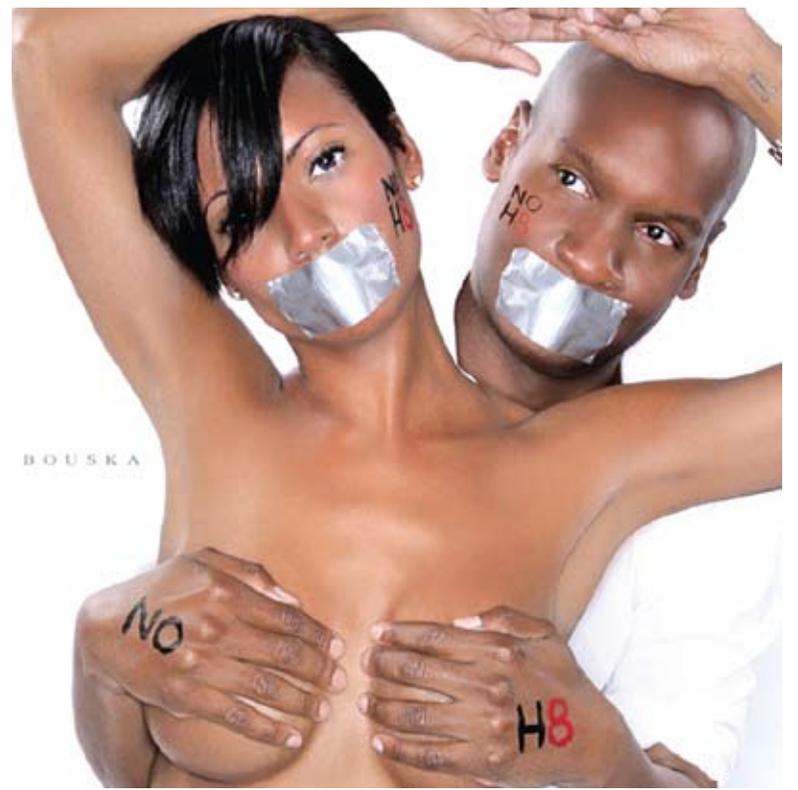
WCT: I agree. So, tell us some of the people who have posed for you.

AB: Oh, gosh, I mean, it's been overwhelming in support. We have had a lot of celebrities as well as every day people. Most recently we had Cindy McCain, which got us a lot of good support.

JP: That is what is so good about the campaign because there may be someone out there who supports equal rights or marriage equality that you don't know. Not a lot of people out there knew that Cindy McCain supported marriage equality but now that she has done the campaign, everybody knows that she supports marriage equality. That is what is good about the campaign because it takes people and it shows them who really does support equal rights and it puts a face to it and puts it out there.

I think anybody who is following you or following us or anybody who is supportive of the campaign should tell other people and get the word out there so that everybody knows what is going on and the things that need to change.

AB: We've had all sorts of different people from all walks of life come out to support the NO H8 Campaign. We've had Kathy Griffin, Adam Carolla, Dr. Drew, Fran Drescher, Ashley Simpson-Wentz, Pete Wentz, Gloria Allred, Shanna Moakler, Steve-O, Isaiah Washington and others. It's been really cool to see these people coming out to support the cause. It's re-igniting the whole fire and the fight. I mean, it (Proposition 8) happened back in November 2008 and nothing is being done about it. It needs to be an issue



Among those who have posed for the NO H8 campaign are (from left) Kathy Griffin; and model Candace Jones and openly gay Big Brother alumnus Marcellas Reynolds. Photos by Adam Bouska

that's talked about every day.

JP: Every time we have someone come through that puts their face to it that is a high-profile person, it puts even the words "gay marriage" back on the TV and back in the newspapers. As long as we're talking about it, then people will know that it's still a problem.

AB: It's more than even just gay marriage. It's a human rights issue. We have "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and adoption rights. In the majority of the States, you can still be fired for being gay so that is a huge issue. So, even though Proposition 8 will be overturned one of these days, our fight will not be over. They won't put all of this in the media unless we talk about it and get it out there. It's our job in the LGBT media and community to protect these rights and fight for them. Even 20 years ago there wasn't a voice for our community and now there is and we have to make use of that privilege.

WCT: Too bad Harvey Milk isn't here.

AB: He would do a photo for us, I'm sure.

WCT: I'm sure he would!

JP: Cleve Jones, one of Harvey Milk's close friends, did a photo and Larry Kramer, founder of ACT UP also did a photo for us. It's just really a great, diverse group of people.

AB: It would be great to go up to the Castro District in the community outside of Harvey's photo shop sometime and shoot in that area.

WCT: Speaking of getting out into the community, NO H8 is going to The Dinah.

JP: The good thing about going to The Dinah is that a lot of people think of gay people as men, but there are a lot of gay women. It's about same-sex couples and it doesn't matter if they are male or female. The Dinah is all women and that is important. We all need to come together. Proposition 8 was formed to tear us apart and we need to come together.

AB: That's the silver lining of it all. Even though this was meant to tear us apart, we are going to use this to unite our community and re-ignite the fight. We need to make sure that this never happens again.

JP: Yeah, it's been about unacceptance when it should be about acceptance.

AB: A lot of people tend to hate things that they don't know. I feel that education is the tool to inform people about differences. It's just about fear of the unknown.

WCT: Exactly. So, you put well-known faces to the cause and there you go. It opens a whole new door of communication.

JP: Yes. So, we'll be at The Dinah. We'll get the Sunday pool party set up and do a shoot and then everybody will have the NO H8 on their faces and we'll try to take the biggest shoot that

we have so far.

AB: We may need a very long lens for this one. We are hoping to get as many people into this one shot to show that, "Hey, we're all here in the same place at the same time for this cause."

JP: I am woman, hear me roar.

WCT: By the way, Suzanne Westenhoefer is going to be there on Friday night and Rosie O'Donnell will be there on Saturday night.

AB: We've been talking to Fran [Drescher] about trying to get Rosie to pose.

WCT: I don't see why she wouldn't do it. Rosie, are you reading this?

AB: I also heard that Ke\$ha might be performing, too.

WCT: Yes, she is and I bet she'd do it, too.

AB: They are going to love her there. It'll be a lot of fun!

WCT: We need more people that just want to speak up for the cause to let it be known that we are not going away. You guys are going to be making this a very visible issue so, thank you for that.

AB: Well, this is going to be just the beginning. There is a lot to be done. We never intended it to be as large of a campaign as it has become. Now that we have everyone's attention, we are going to make use of that. We are still in the early stages and are building up this massive media arsenal. Essentially, anywhere videos and photos can go, we're going to make use of that. Billboards, magazines and broadcasts—anything we have the budget to afford, we will make it possible. Even re-tweeting news stories about the issues seems to be a new way to involve people in an easy way.

WCT: Which cities have you been to with the NO H8 Campaign?

AB: San Francisco, Dallas, Atlanta, Washington D.C., New Hampshire, New York and San Diego. We are hoping to go to Vegas, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, Miami, Denver and everywhere else. There's even been talk about Madrid and Manchester [England].

JP: It's a human right and there are humans in other countries besides America so we'd like to go around the world, too. It's not just this country that feels it. There are other countries going through the same thing. It's a world issue.

AB: NoH8Campaign.com is our Web site. All of our photos are there as well as on Facebook and Twitter. Please follow us and stop by for an open shoot when we get to your city.

Follow Sarah Toce on www.sarahtoce.com and www.lezzbook.com.

LOCAL NEWS

46th Ward race takes shape

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The Chicago aldermanic races will not take place until next year, but in the 46th Ward (which includes Uptown, Buena Park and East Lakeview) things are already heating up.

At least one openly gay individual is running for the position as James Cappleman told Windy City Times that he "absolutely intends" to run for alderman. Cappleman's Web site, www.James-ForChange.com, still contains information from his last run in 2007, when he lost a very close race to current Alderman Helen Shiller. However, he said that the site will be updated "in a couple months."

In an e-mail to Windy City Times, Cappelman stated, "I'm running because I am the front-runner and have the best chances of winning against Ald. Shiller should she decide to run for a sixth term. No other candidate has my campaign experience, my name recognition, and my record of service throughout the ward.

"As it was true the last time (despite what was promoted by the incumbent), this is not a campaign to get rid of any groups of people or to make the 46th Ward into Lincoln Park. It's not about promoting a war between [two] different groups of people.

"It's about building on the shared values of the community and working together for the benefit of all. It's about setting up a process of inclusion that invites and encourages community input. And it's about setting up systems that promote reform and an end to pay-to-play politics."

Cappleman has served as board president of LGBT Catholic organization Dignity Chicago. In addition, he has been very active in the HIV/AIDS community, having, among other things, co-founded a homeless shelter for people living with the disease in the late 1980s.

At least two other individuals are intending to run. Gerald Farinas (www.Chicago46.com) is running on a "weed and seed" program that would "weed out" criminals and "seed" human-services program, according to his Web site; he counts Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart and entertainer Miss Fozzie among his Facebook supporters. Police officer Michael Carroll (www.Carroll46.com), who is completing his master's degree thesis in public policy and administration at Northwestern University, is also running; his platform includes, among other things, an "open and honest government."



C.C. Carter. Photo courtesy of Carter

POW-WOW prepares to wow Chicago

BY YASMIN NAIR

POW-WOW Inc. (Performers or Writers for Women on Women's Issues) has been running for seven years, featuring a spoken-word performance by Chicago's LGBT artists, every Tuesday of every week. This year, at the outset of Women's History Month, it is poised to expand its programming in a special monthlong series as the first Chicago festival for LBT women in honor of Women's History Month.

Some of the highlights include the 2010 premiere of Eve Anslar's *Any One of Us: Words from Prison*, a collection of monologues by over 50 incarcerated or formerly incarcerated women in the United States. The schedule also includes the 1st Annual Rainbow Shoe/Tie Affair, which marks the return of the International Women's Dance. This year's dance is the primary fundraiser for POW-WOW and will include a pre-award ceremony honoring women and men in the community who promote the health of women. This year's honorees are Lora Branch, Dr. Margo Bell, Keith Green, the Rev. Charles Straight and the creators of *The Red Pump/Red Tie Project*. Other events include a screening of the documentary "No! The Rape Documentary," with a discussion following.

While POW-WOW has been a force in the Chicago creative arts world, this new series also indicates a conscious attempt to showcase the work of LGBTs of color in a city where even the queer community tends to patronize businesses and creative arts in ways that mirror the racial segregation of the city. C.C. Carter, founder of POW-WOW, is herself a well-known spoken-word performer and writer whose first book of poetry, *Body Language*, was a 2003 Lambda Literary Award nominee.

Carter told *Windy City Times* she felt the need for this kind of LGBT programming in part because Pride tends to be Eurocentric and middle class while Black Pride is focused on African-American men. That made her question the lack of space for the female segments of the LGBT community: "I asked myself, 'What avenues exist in this city for lesbians?' There was also, within the Chicago women's rights community, a lack of representation of lesbians." In looking for venues and performers, Carter knew she wanted to represent a diverse group that would, for instance, include Latinas as well as African Americans but in more substantive ways than is possible during a one-evening performance. And she knew she wanted to shake up the LGBT community's tendency to gravitate only to the North Side of the city for entertainment.

"The South Side is this cultural mecca, with venues and audiences you don't often hear about," she said. "People tend to imagine that the South Side must automatically be a difficult place to host LGBT events because of the presence of the Black church, but we have found that businesses there are incredibly supportive

of our work. We found venues with no problem." The events are spread throughout the city, and spaces include the Echelon Theatre, 2101 E. 83rd, which will host the burlesque and drag performances of *The Fantomime Follies* March 6. Comediennes Dana Austin and Gloria Bigelow will perform on March 14 at *Jokes and Notes*, 4641 S. Martin Luther King.

Carter is looking forward to the month's events becoming the springboard of a new and dynamic creative arena that encourages and fosters emergent LGBT talent and showcases the South Side as a safe space for all women. She is acutely aware of how the term "safe space" translates differently for women, depending on their ethnic and racial background, and that white women have historically been reluctant to make it out to what might be defined as a "Black space." The performance of Eve Anslar's *Any One But Us*, which will take place at Northeastern Illinois University's Jacob Carruther's Center for Inner City Studies, is the kind of programming she thinks will bring communities together to consider the interrelated experiences of people of color, women and LGBTs.

See <http://powwowwomenspride.eventbrite.com> or sites.google.com/site/powwowinc/powwowwomenspride2010, or search for "POW-WOW's Women's Pride 2010" on Facebook for more information. Send questions to powwowinc@gmail.com or call 773-530-8600.

HUD hears local LGBT housing issues

BY MARK CORECE

What do you get when you provide a speaking platform in a room full of some of Chicago's most active community leaders and advocates on the brink of something new? Essentially, there are penetrating statistics and a transcending reality that get to the core of the LGBT housing dilemma.

A public town-hall meeting was held Feb. 25 at City Hall to address LGBT housing discrimination around the nation. Chicago was the first site of a three-city public dialogue to provide input through collective information and experiences for a new study being spearheaded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistant Secretary Raphael Bostic.

"We were fully embraced by the mayor's office; it is refreshing. ... We are the LGBT community resource and we are here to listen," said Bostic.

Bostic, along with local LGBT mayoral liaison Bill Greaves and Simone Koehlinger, LGBT director for the Chicago Department of Health, presented a plan to conduct this study in Chicago and around the country.

This latest study is one of four that have been conducted. In 2000, the third study, measured "the extent of housing discrimination in the United States against persons because of their race or color," according to www.HUDUser.org.

"This study is really designed to create a framework so that [LGBT people] won't have to live with the fear of their sexuality being a part of why they aren't living somewhere," said Bostic. "The findings that we have can lead to a direct dialogue about the problems that the LGBT community is having in housing and to get us to where no one lives in fear."

The varied audience consisted of concerned community members, local organization affiliates, to bureaucratic supporters. Among those attending were 46th Ward Alderman Helen Shiller; Jose R. Rios (GLBT community liaison officer for the Chicago Police Department's 23rd District); and Helena Bushong of the Chicago Area HIV Services Planning Council.

The presenters revealed youth, elders and the trans community are at the heart of Chicago's LGBT housing plight.

Bushong, a trans activist, expressed the difficulties elderly LGBT people face. "We encounter

safety issues, we are often isolated and we are at risk. ... Elderly LGBT people are coming in high numbers and an epidemic is approaching."

Joe Hollendonner, director of Broadway Youth Center (BYC), provided eye-opening statistics on the state of homeless youth. For example, there are about 1,300 homeless youth while BYC has fewer than 50 official beds; in addition, there is no trans-specific housing while age brackets at some facilities disqualify others. Bostic responded that "LGBT people are multidimensional" and "youth and elders are in vulnerable positions."

Regarding the town-hall meetings, Bostic said, "We are starting from scratch and we need all of your support." Data will be collected into next spring and summer.

New York City and San Francisco are the other cities participating in this study.

Anti-gay bill filed in state senate

A measure that would roll back some of the protections that the Illinois Human Rights Bill—which prohibits discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation and gender identity—currently provides has been filed in the Illinois Senate.

SB3447, if passed, would allow secular non-profit institutions and organizations claiming an affiliation with a religious institution or society to legally discriminate against its employees based on religious belief and sexual orientation.

Several organizations have taken action. For example, LGBT Change is directing people to visit <https://secure.aclu.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1973> to fill out a petition that will be sent to the person's state senator and representative. Equality Illinois is urging individuals to contact their state senators, especially if they are on the 11-member Judiciary Committee, which is considering the measure first.

State Sen. Bill Brady—currently the Republican candidate for governor—originally filed the measure. However, state Sen. John O. Jones now is recognized as the chief sponsor.

The committee was scheduled to vote on the measure March 2.

Sotomayor display ends March 5

"A Hero Comes Home"—an exhibit on the life and times of cartoonist and AIDS activist Daniel Sotomayor (1958-1992), an inductee in the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—is on display until March 5 at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, 3015 W. Division.

The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. It is closed on Wednesday and Sunday.

See www.iprac.org.

WCT seeking 30 Under 30

Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) who are under 30 years of age.

Nominees should be under 30 years of age and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health and/or other areas. (The deadline to nominate individuals is Friday, April 23.) The nomination should be 100 words or less and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. E-mail Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com or fax to Andrew Davis' attention to 773-871-7609.

Honorees will be notified in May and recognized at a ceremony Wed., June 23, at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted.

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Todd Kiech. Photo courtesy of Kiech

'Chicago Takes Off' takes on TV

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The phrase "boob tube" may take on another meaning March 6, when one of the hottest events of the year, Chicago Takes Off (CTO)—which showcases hot male and female dancers—takes on classic television. Windy City Times spoke with CTO co-producer Todd Kiech and Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) Associate Director of Special Events Rhett Lindsay about, among other things, what the audiences can expect.

Windy City Times: Todd, tell me about your dancing background and how you became involved in "Chicago Takes Off."

Todd Kiech: I came from concert dance, from modern dance, so I danced with a couple modern-dance companies here in Chicago: Akasha Dance Company and Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble. So I was in that arena for many years. Then I stopped dancing—but you really never stop dancing. I did some musical theater and some more commercial work—cruise ships, a show for Disney.

Then, I started choreographing special events. I worked with Sidetrack, and I wanted to do something with men—and then with men in less and less clothing. [Laughs] I got introduced to a show in New York City called Broadway Bares; it's amazing. When I saw the first production number, I said, "Oh, my God! That's it!" It's so fun and sexy and [filled with] great performances, so anytime I had an event I patterned it after that.

And I was, of course, friends with [CTO co-founder] Keith [Elliott]; I was helping out with "Dance Divas," which is a spin-off of Dance for Life. He mentioned that he would be doing this event for TPAN and I said that I would be doing these burlesque-y things, and he said, "You should help with this."

WCT: It's being held March 6 this year. Wasn't it held in February in previous years?

TK: The first two years it was in February.

Rhett Lindsay: Yes. The committee decided it was a better fit for March. It allowed for more time for ticket sales after the holidays—and it has been a better fit, not only [regarding] ticket sales but also for the agency; it gives us a chance to break up things more and devote more time to this event.

WCT: How did you decide upon this theme?

TK: I don't remember. [Laughs] I remember just tossing it out at a wrap-up we had last year.

RL: There's always a bucket of ideas and themes, and this one was generated from that bucket last year.

TK: I remember telling one of my close friends about this idea—"Yeah, I was thinking we could do some sort of retro TV theme, like Nick at Nite." And he said, "Oh, that's it! Think of all the options." And that's how other people [responded]. And [with this idea], there's so much to mine from.

WCT: [Joking] I can't wait for the Mr. Belvedere skit.

TK: [Kiech and Lindsay laugh.] That's the thing—we had so many things to pick and choose from. How do you choose? You know somebody's gonna be like, "You didn't do a Dallas number. That was my favorite TV show." [But] we had to think what fit in the show. We had to whittle some numbers out; it was tough. But it's not going to be, like, a literal I Dream of Jeannie number; we're using that as the starting point to make something creative, sexy and, hopefully, humorous show.

WCT: And this is all retro TV, so there's no Jersey Shore.

TK: There will be no Snookis; the stage will be a Snooki-free zone. I think the way we start the show is fun—and I'm going to leave it at that.

WCT: People want to know. Can you provide one detail to tease the readers?

TK: One detail from the show? [Kiech and Lindsay whisper to other, hands over mouths, leading the interviewer to say, "I feel like I'm at a congressional hearing." Kiech and Lindsay laugh.]

One thing I'm very excited about is our MC, [drag king] Murray Hill. I met Murray a couple years ago in New York—just hilarious. I've seen him a couple times since; [he] totally knows

how to work an audience and is so connected and fun. I saw him again in Key West earlier this year and I said, "You have to come to Chicago." He was this '50s-'60s lounge-act comedian vibe.

WCT: So he fits in perfectly with the theme of the show.

TK: Yes. I'm really excited to have Murray in the show.

"Chicago Takes Off: TV Land—Outside the Box" will take place Saturday, March 6, 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m., at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage. See www.ChicagoTakesOff.org and www.TPAN.com for tickets and more information.

Find out more about the show—including the return of an esteemed choreographer—online at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

LGBT college confab covers politics, media

BY BLAIR MISHLEAU

Snow fell gently on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison, Wis., as college students dashed from their hotel to a nearby restaurant or to attend a workshop.

They were meeting for the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender and Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) 2010. The conference, which ran Feb. 19-21, is the oldest Midwest college conference, according to organizers.

Conference attendees were easy to spot, as many were wearing the purple T-shirts given out at registration and even more were lugging the neon orange tote bags that carried their program books and other paperwork.

It took place near the Madison Capitol, at the Monona Terrace Conference Center. Students from every Midwestern state as well as a few states out of the area, such as Florida, attended to attend workshops, network and shape the gay movement that they will inevitably someday control.

Activities began with an opening session Feb. 19 featuring keynote speaker Loren Cameron, who has been taking pictures of those in the transgender movement for over a decade, beginning with a photographic documentation of his transition.

Workshops began Feb. 20 and were as diverse as the crowd attending, including staples such as bisexuality and retention for student groups, as well as distinctive workshops such as "Media Marginality: TV's Effects on LGBT Student Self-Perception."



Kate Bornstein. Photo by Blair Mishleau

"MBLGTACC provided an insight into how other campuses run their GSA's and makes it possible for us to collaborate our ideas," said Taralee Morgan, president of Augustana College's gay-straight alliance, PRISM. "Being able to hear what has worked and what hasn't for other GSA's has helped me to feel more confident in going ahead with the next term for PRISM."

In the first workshop block, bright and early at 8 a.m., Natalie Klueg chronicled the history of how media portrays the LGBT population with an presentation entitled "The Big Bad Bisexual Woman." The workshop ended with how bisexuals have been unfairly portrayed in the media, mentioning examples such as the MTV show True Life.

The audience smiled or laughed constantly during the forum. At one point, Klueg compared the portrayal of lesbians to "hulking vampires, except they don't sparkle," referring to the Twilight saga.

After a short break, the second set of workshops began, one of them featuring a panel of Northwestern University staff talking about allies and the importance of educating them.

Another highlight of the day was the media workshop "Media Marginality: TV's Effects on LGBT Student Self-Perception." Audience members faced an intensive session: They watched a clip from Family Guy. In an episode of the popular animated series, a character is injected with the "gay gene" and becomes every gay stereotype imaginable. The audience had to analyze this clip to judge how much harm and good it did, evoking an interesting conversation between those who found it appropriate and those who did not.

"Media has become a super-peer in the last generation. TV influences us a lot more than it has in the past," said Joshua Johnson, one of the presenters.

Another session, "For Hearing People Only," chronicled common misconceptions of deaf people that hearing people have, and reminded the LGBT community how to be all-inclusive.

The weekend wrapped up with Kate Bornstein. She wrote the suicide-alternative book 101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws.

Bornstein gave a unique presentation centered around the fact that people can do anything they need to do to stay alive. "Just don't be mean," said Bornstein. She mentioned that sometimes things like anorexia or cutting are alternatives to suicide, but cautioned that they are extremely dangerous and only temporary.

As the conference ended, Bornstein had ushers at the doors hand out "Get Out of Hell Free" cards that stated, "Do whatever you need or want to do in order to make life worth living. Love who and how you want to love. Just don't be mean. Should you get sent to Hell for doing something that isn't mean to someone, I'll do your time in Hell for you. Kiss kiss -Kate."

The University of Michigan will host MBLGTACC 2011 on Feb. 24-27.



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Photo allegedly taken of the Jan. 10 incident involving Daniel Hauff. Photo by Chris Davin

Red Line suspects charged with hate crimes

BY SAMUEL WORLEY

Shortly after having misdemeanor battery charges against them dropped Feb. 23, three men alleged to have beaten up a gay man on a northbound red line train last month were re-arrested—this time on charges of felony hate crimes, as well as aggravated battery. The three defendants—Sean Little, Kevin McAndrew and Benjamin Eder, all of Evanston—were jailed overnight and released on a \$10,000 individual recognizance bond the following day.

The charges stem from a Jan. 10 incident in which the three are alleged to have beaten a Rogers Park man, 33-year old Daniel Hauff, after Hauff attempted to intervene in an altercation on the train. Hauff, who was taken to the hospital for injuries sustained in the attack, told Windy City Times that the hate-crimes charges filed against the three were the result of pressure that he placed on the police department and the Cook County state's attorney's office.

"If I hadn't pushed," Hauff said, "nothing would have happened."

The state's attorney's office said that it had decided to upgrade the case to include the hate-crimes charges after conducting an investigation in conjunction with the Chicago Police Department. Hauff, who said that he was interviewed several times over the course of the investigation, said that a witness has also come forward to corroborate his allegations.

That witness, Chris Davin, released photographs to Windy City Times that he says show McAndrew, Little and Eder attacking Hauff on the Argyle train platform, including a dramatic image that appears to show one of the defendants' fists making contact with Hauff's face.

Davin was critical of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) for its handling of the situation. He said that though clear pleas were made for the CTA operator to stop the train and call the police—numerous people on the train had pressed the emergency button—that operator continued to move the train. The three men attacking Hauff, said Davin, told the operator that he was drunk and that she shouldn't take his complaints seriously.

"What's the whole purpose of the emergency button on the train?" Davin asked.

Last month, CTA told Windy City Times that a preliminary investigation showed that the train's operator "responded appropriately."

In a statement announcing the hate crimes charges, State's Attorney Anita Alvarez said, "The damage of a crime such as this goes well beyond the original victim and permeates the

entire community. These crimes are taken seriously and they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

Daniel Coyne, a lawyer representing Kevin McAndrew, declined to comment on the facts of the case. "There's really nothing to say," Coyne said, "until we know specifically what the nature of the complaint is."

The three defendants are next scheduled to appear in court March 17.

Annual Darrow event March 13

CHICAGO—A group led by attorneys, labor leaders and social-justice advocates that has gathered annually for more than 50 years to honor the memory of attorney Clarence Darrow will meet at the Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park Saturday, March 13, at 10 a.m. for its traditional wreath-tossing into the Jackson Park Lagoon. Darrow's ashes were strewn in the Lagoon after his death March 13, 1938 in Chicago.

The annual event is convened by the Clarence Darrow Commemorative Committee. This year's program will feature a special tribute to the late Leon "Len" Depress, who co-founded the committee in 1958 and remained a leader of the group. Depress (1908-2009) attended last year's event, one of his last public appearances. More than 100 Darrow devotees, civil libertarians, and First Amendment buffs are expected to attend the outdoor wreath-throwing ceremonies behind the Museum of Science and Industry and indoor symposium that follows in the Columbian Room of the adjacent Museum of Science & Industry.

This year's symposium will feature a performance by Gary L. Anderson, a renowned and lauded portrayer of Darrow. Anderson tours year-round as America's only full-time Darrow portrayer. This performance, "Search for Justice," portrays Darrow as legal warrior, engaging the justice system in a presentation that trembles with inescapable timeliness. Anderson is the CEO of The Clarence Darrow Foundation. See www.clarencedarrowfoundation.org.

Judy Besser, great granddaughter of Clarence Darrow, will read a letter from Darrow to Judy's grandmother, in 1929. This letter illustrates Darrow's great wit and sense of humor little known by the general public.

Loyola Law Professor Anita Weinberg—daughter of Arthur and Lila Weinberg, authors of three books on Darrow and founders of the annual Darrow event—will preside over the indoor program. Tracy Baim—publisher of Windy City Times and daughter of Darrow's great grand-niece Joy Darrow—will preside at the bridge.

Darrow, characterized as the "attorney for the damned," who was born in 1857 in Farmdale, Ohio, practiced in Chicago and represented the underdog and vigorously opposed capital punishment. None of his many clients was sentenced to death.

Darrow's death was memorialized throughout the world. His ashes and, later, the ashes of his wife Ruby and his son Paul, were scattered from the Darrow Bridge, which was dedicated to his memory by the Chicago Park District in 1957.

'Flirting' March 3

The Auxiliary Board of the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago is hosting "Flirting for Disaster" Wed., March 3, at Circuit, 3641 N. Halsted, 7-10 p.m. Miss Foozie will host.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door; attendees will receive three cocktail passes and can indulge in free hors d'oeuvres. See www.FlirtingForDisaster.com.

Correction

In the Feb. 17 article "Lesbian's eateries honor Frida Kahlo," the article stated that entrepreneur Marlene Benitez moved from California to Mexico to open a gym in the state of Huitzuco when she was 21. Huitzuco is actually a town.

Windy City Times regrets the error.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"NOW THAT EXPLICIT ANTI-GAY ANIMUS IS AN ALBATROSS, those who oppose gay civil rights are driven to invent ever loopier rationales for denying those rights, whether in the military or in marriage. (Sen. Orrin) Hatch, for instance, limply suggested ... that a repeal of 'don't ask' would lead to gay demands for 'special rights.' Such arguments, both preposterous and disingenuous, are mere fig leaves to disguise the phobia that can no longer dare speak its name." — *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich, Feb. 6.

"TWENTY YEARS AGO THE MILITARY WERE THE STRONG ADVOCATES of Don't Ask, Don't Tell when I was secretary of defense. I think things have changed significantly since then. I see that Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has indicated his belief that we ought to support a change in the policy. So, I think my guess is the policy will be changed. I think that society has moved on. I think it's partly a generational question. I'm reluctant to second-guess the military in this regard because they're the ones that have got to make the judgment about how these policies affect the military capability of our units, and that first requirement that you have to look at all the time is whether they're still capable of achieving their mission, and does the policy change—i.e., putting gays in the force—affect their ability to perform their mission. When the (Joint) Chiefs come forward and say, 'We think we can do it,' then it strikes me that it's time to reconsider the policy, and I think Adm. Mullen said that." — *Former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney on the ABC-TV show This Week*, Feb. 14.

"THE FIGHT AGAINST INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION, and the consequent efforts to respect human nature, including sexual orientation, have guided our government since its first mandate." — *Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in a message sent to the Latin America and Caribbean regional conference of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, which was held Jan. 26-31 in Curitiba, Brazil.*

"BLOGGERS THIS WEEK CALLED FOR THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE THE LEAD, but also focused their attention on the Human Rights Campaign, the most powerful gay rights group in the world, which has been accused of championing repeal (of Don't Ask, Don't Tell) publicly, while privately assuring the White House that it can continue to go slow. Some feel that HRC would rather fundraise for several years on

the illusion of momentum than actually help to achieve repeal. If HRC wants to disabuse the community of that suspicion, it will need to ensure that its prized access to Washington power is used to have a real impact, rather than to enjoy that access for its own sake. One reasonable option would be to publicly tell the president that it will not endorse him for re-election if he does not secure repeal in his first term, a promise that Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said he believed the president would keep." — *Nathaniel Frank, author of Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America, writing at the Huffington Post*, Feb. 17.



GLAAD is beyond useless.

—Dan Savage



Photo by Rex Wockner



"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. INFINITE PATIENCE IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION IS IRRESPONSIBLE. Our clients suffer every day from unfair taxes and denial of basic legal protections that every family in Hawaii needs." — *Lambda Legal's Jennifer Pizer announcing Feb. 1 that the group is suing Hawaii for its failure to pass a civil-union law.*

"KELLI AND I ARE STILL CLOSE. LIKE MANY GAY FAMILIES THAT I KNOW, gay women especially who have children together, we remain friends. Not that heterosexual people don't or can't do it, but every gay woman I know is friends with her exes, and they're involved with their lives in some capacity. Kelli is a big part of what made this family so amazing and what continues to." — *Rosie O'Donnell to the Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 31.

"I DIDN'T WANT TO BE GAY. ... I wanted an easy life. And you know what? I am gay and I still have an easy life." — *Actress Jane Lynch, who plays coach Sue Sylvester on Glee, to London's Sunday Mirror*, Jan. 31.

"GLAAD IS BEYOND USELESS. DID YOU KNOW THAT GLAAD ONCE DESCRIBED—way back in teh (sic) day—"Savage Love" as an anti-gay hate crime? Because I used the word fag. So this 'F-word' crapola isn't new with them. And for the record: fag, fags, faggot, faggoty, faggery." — *Gay writer Dan Savage on his blog*, Feb. 12.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

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Black, queer and in Nazi Germany?

Missing from the annals of African-American history and the history of Nazi Germany are the documented stories and struggles of African Americans, straight and "queer." Valaida Snow, captured in Nazi-occupied Copenhagen, Denmark, and interned in a concentration camp for nearly two years, is one such story.

Born in Chattanooga, Tenn., Valaida Snow came from a family of musicians and was famous for playing the trumpet. Named "Little Louis" after Louis Armstrong (who called her the world's second best jazz trumpet player, besides himself, of course) Snow played concerts throughout the United States, Europe and China. On a return trip to Denmark after headlining at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, Snow, the conductor of an all-women's band, was arrested for allegedly possessing drugs and sent to an Axis internment camp for alien nationals in Wester-Faengle.

While in pre-Hitler Germany all-female orchestras were de rigeur in many avant-garde entertainment clubs, these homosocial all-women's

bands created tremendous outrage during Hitler's regime. Snow was sent to a concentration camp not only because she was Black and in the wrong place at the wrong time, but also because of her "friendships" with German women musicians, implying lesbianism.

Although laws against lesbianism had not been codified, and lesbians were not criminalized for their sexual orientations as gay men were, German women were nonetheless viewed as threats to the Nazi state and were fair game during SS raids on lesbian bars, sentenced by the Gestapo, sent to concentration camps and branded with black triangles. As a matter of fact, any German woman, lesbian, prostitute or heterosexual, not upholding her primary gender role—"to be a mother of as many Aryan babies as possible"—was deemed antisocial and hostile to the German state.

Because Nazis could not discern between the sexual affection and social friendship between straight and lesbian women, over time they dismissed lesbianism as a state and social problem, as long as both straight and lesbian women carried out the state's mandate to procreate.

Nazi Germany's extermination plan of gay men is a classic example of how politics informed their science. Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code differentiated between the types of persecution non-German gay men received from German gay men because of a quasi-scientific and racist ideology of racial purity. "The polices of persecution carried out toward non-German homosexuals in the occupied territories differed significantly from those directed against Germans gays," wrote Richard Plant in *The Pink Tri-*

angle: *The Nazi War Against Homosexuals*. "The Aryan race was to be freed of contagion; the demise of degenerate subjects peoples was to be hastened."

Hans J. Massaquoi—a former *Ebony Magazine* editor, and the son of an African diplomat and white German mother—in his memoir, *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany*, depicts a life of privilege until his father returned to his native Liberia. Like all non-Aryans, Massaquoi faced constant dehumanization and the threat of death by Gestapo executioners. "Racist in Nazi Germany did their dirty work openly and brazenly with the full protection, cooperation, and encouragement of the government, which had declared the pollution of Aryan blood with 'inferior' non-Aryan blood the nation's cardinal sin," he wrote. Consequently, the Gestapo rounded up and forcibly sterilized and subjected many non-Aryans to medical experiments, while other just simply mysteriously disappeared.

There was no systematic program for elimination of people of African descent in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945 in Nazi Germany because their number were few, but their abuses in German-occupied territories, like the one in which Snow was captured, were great and far-reaching.

After 18 months of imprisonment, Snow was one of the more fortunate Blacks to make it out of Nazi Germany, released as an exchange prisoner. She was, however, both psychologically and physically scarred from the ordeal and never fully recovered. Snow attempted to return to performing but her spark, tragically, was gone.



LETTERS

Mass action

I am writing this letter in response demonstration outside Holy Name Cathedral Feb. 14 at 10:30 a.m. Curiosity, more than anything else, motivated me to both go to Holy Name to see the demonstration sponsored by the Gay Liberation Network (GLN), and attended the 11 a.m. liturgy.

What was the purpose of this demonstration? Was the purpose to engage in dialogue and not make people uncomfortable? Or was it something else? GLN co-founder Andy Thayer said, "Our goal here today is to pull Cardinal George and the Catholic leadership out of the closet for their anti-gay bigotry. You don't see the Catholic leadership out on the frontlines opposing our equal rights. What is happening, though, is that they're quietly and effectively lobbying legislators against equal rights for gay people. We want to make everyone aware of that because it's not right."

Some have suggested such as Nora Doherty, a young Catholic attorney—and mother of two—who has been very active in pro-life demonstrations outside abortion clinics that some of demonstrators were not very polite, and that she witnessed anger. Even from our own community Brother Michael Oboza, an orthodox Catholic monk and founder of Straight and Gay Alliance Ministry, said, "If we want to be equal and be treated with respect, if we're yelling at people without any real dialogue, then we're not really respecting them."

Both responses seem to indicate a naïve understanding of the situation. Doherty appears not to recognize the double standard she is promoting when she ignores the nature of her demonstrations in front of abortion clinics, and Oboza, while well-intentioned, has totally missed the purpose of the demonstration and its overall peaceful nature given the circumstances. On the contrary, the deeper question for both of these individuals should be, "Is the gospel message of justice relevant in our world today?"

While attending the 11 a.m. liturgy I could

hear the chanting outside of the cathedral and saw the response from my fellow parishioners. Clearly this had an educational affect on the many within the cathedral. I might add it had the same affect on those individuals leaving the 9:30 a.m. Mass. As a gay Catholic I saw the demonstration as balanced given the nature of Cardinal George's attacks on our community. Calling for dialogue and making people uncomfortable are not mutually exclusive, as some may indicate.

My only regret was that that it was not Catholic social-justice organizations instead of GLN outside the cathedral Valentine's Day giving voice to the voiceless within the Church, and proclaiming that "every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ and, therefore, is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family."

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank GLN for doing what we could not do.

The Rainbow Sash Movement has video of the demonstration at www.rainbowsashmovement.com, and it is also posted on YouTube.

Sincerely,
Joe Murray
Executive Director
Rainbow Sash Movement

Demonstration a success

Dear Editor:

Gay Liberation Network's Freedom to Marry Day demonstration at Holy Name Cathedral Feb. 14 was a huge success. I know because I was one of the participants. There were well over one hundred of us in what I believe to be the largest, pro-gay demonstration ever in front of Holy Name. It was a spirited, in-your-face protest against the church and its laity with visuals, i.e., placards, banners and signs as well as chants ("Holy Name, Holy Shame!" and "Homophobia is a sin!"), affirming our rights and pointing the

finger at the laity for its compliance with hateful Catholic dogma.

Over 150 flyers were put into the hands of parishioners either on their way into church or on their way out explaining how, in so many words, "if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." To be sure, as it was stated in our flyers, it is the laity, through its weekly tithe, that contributes important financial support to the Catholic Church. Far from being docile sheep at the whim of the papacy or Cardinal George, the Catholic laity is an important voting block that exerts powerful influence on what church leaders say and defeats pro-gay legislation, including gay-marriage laws in California and Maine. The Knights of Columbus is a perfect example of a powerful grassroots Catholic group having little do to with church hierarchy that has contributed millions of dollars to quash our civil rights.

I say "Right on!" to the activists who were out there on a cold Valentine's Day taunting the real movers and shakers of Catholic demagoguery and hate.

Craig Teichen
Chicago

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GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Photo by
Phil
Bray

PENN AT WORK

James Franco and Sean Penn (right) co-starred in *Milk*, which is part of Richard Knight, Jr.'s, queer Oscar roundup. See page 14.

THEATER

Say 'Uncle.'
Page 12.

Photo by Chris Ocken



MUSIC

Strum belle.
Page 13.

BOOKS

Patti's 'Kids.'
Page 19.Photo by Kat Fitzgerald
(MysticImagesPhotography.com)Speaking to
Sondheim

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

A living legend of American theater, composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, comes to Chicago to chat at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in an unscripted conversation with moderator Gary Griffin, associate artistic director of Chicago Shakespeare Theater and associate producer for Drury Lane Oakbrook.

"I'm thrilled that I get the opportunity," Griffin said. "It's fantastic to get the chance to sit and have a conversation about his work."

Griffin's selection as moderator makes sense, since he has locally directed a plethora of professional Sondheim productions this past decade for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Pacific Overtures, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *A Little Night Music* and *Passion* were all included in seasons that featured works by masters like Shakespeare and Moliere. Griffin also directed a critically acclaimed production of *West Side Story* last summer at Canada's Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

"It's exciting to see musical theater arrive and be embraced in a classical theater," Griffin said. "Audiences can see the power of *West Side Story* along side classical works like *Cyrano de Bergerac* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

Griffin also acknowledges other Chicago institutions have played an important part in nurturing Sondheim musicals. The Goodman Theatre hosted the world premiere of Sondheim and John Weidman's musical *Bounce* in 2003 (it would later be refashioned into 2008's *Road Show*), while Pegasus Players in the late 1990s staged the American premiere of Sondheim's early unproduced musical *Saturday Night*.

"Chicago has always been a Sondheim town," Griffin said. "I think our audiences really love the work."



Gary Griffin.

This Harris Theater chat is a prelude to many Sondheim 80th birthday celebrations that are taking place this year around the world. Locally, the Ravinia Festival continues its multi-year Sondheim spotlight by staging an 80th birthday concert on July 31. Frequent Sondheim producer Porchlight Music Theatre also gets in the act with an upcoming production of *Into the Woods*.

Griffin wishes he was more artistically involved with Sondheim's 80th birthday celebrations, but he is glad to converse with him in front of a Chicago audience.

"I know he doesn't want a tribute," Griffin said about the approaching chat. "But one of the things I'm hoping to talk about is the people he's worked with and how those specific collabo-

rators inspire what he's done—I think that's one of the most fascinating parts of the process."

And since audiences get a chance to ask questions, Griffin suspects there might be controversial topics raised like reduced orchestrations for Sondheim revivals (notably the a flap about the current Broadway revival of *A Little Night Music* starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Lansbury), or perhaps why Sondheim waited until 1998 to come out publicly as gay in Meryle Secrest's biography *Sondheim: A Life*.

Griffin knows that the evening should be all about Sondheim, but he himself might get a question that is frequently put to him.

"Every time I'm in the lobby in previews for anything (at Chicago Shakespeare Theater), people always come up to me and ask, 'When's the next Sondheim?'" Griffin wouldn't divulge what the next Sondheim show is that he plans to direct, but he said, "Definitely, there will be something."

A Conversation with Stephen Sondheim: A Life in the Theatre is 7:30 p.m. March 4 at Millennium Park's Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph. Tickets are \$35-\$65; call 312-334-7777 or visit www.harristheaterchicago.org.

Holly Hughes goes to the dogs

Lesbian performance artist and feminist Holly Hughes returns to Chicago with *The Dog and Pony Show* (*Bring Your Own Pony*). It's a new piece Hughes is presenting as part of Victory Gardens Theater's *Fresh Squeezed* series, but she questions whether she should have named it differently.

"There's a part of me that wishes that I had gone with my first choice of a title, which was 'Teaser Bitch,'" Hughes said with a laugh. "If people come to the show, then they'll find out what 'Teaser Bitch' means and how they can become one."

Hughes wouldn't divulge more about that tantalizing expression, but she said her show would be about her experience moving from New York to the Midwest after being a "professional ho-

mosexual taking my dog and pony show around the country and getting a respectable job" at the University of Michigan as a professor. Her first day of school was a memorable one since it fell on Sept. 11, 2001.

But what's most surprising to Hughes herself is that since she has taken up the sport of competitive dog agility training. It's a hobby that most people wouldn't associate with Hughes, since she's most famous for being one of the "NEA 4" (performance artists like herself, Tim Miller, Karen Findlay and John Finch, who each faced a political firestorm and court battles in the 1990s when their National Endowment for the Arts performance grants were turned down due to the "controversial" material of their work).

"Everywhere I go, I'm an out queer person," Hughes said noting how her performance piece examines that in relation to the dog show world she has become a part of.

When asked about if there are any parallels with dog agility to the Christopher Guest film comedy *Best in Show*, Hughes said, "It's a parallel world... Those people are not too exaggerated from that world, but it's a slightly different set of characters."

When she's not talking about training dogs, Hughes is also continuing her work that she developed with Megan Carney for About Face Theatre's XYZ Festival earlier this season called *Let Them Eat Cake*. Hughes said that they are in talks with Lambda Legal Defense Fund to remount and refashion the show about gay marriage in other communities around the country.

"It's not a simple advocacy piece," Hughes said. "It's about starting a civic dialogue."

Holly Hughes' *The Dog and Pony Show* (*Bring Your Own Pony*) plays 7:30 p.m. March 18 and 21, 9:30 p.m. March 19 and 5 p.m. March 20 at the Richard Christiansen Theater at the Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. The show runs as part of the *Fresh Squeezed* series in repertory with Tim Miller's *Lay of the Land*. Tickets are \$25; \$40 for both shows. Call 773-871-3000 or visit www.victorygardens.org.

THEATER REVIEW

Twelve Angry Men

Playwright: Reginald Rose

At: Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark

Phone: 773-338-2177; \$25-\$30

Runs through: April 17

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

"We shouldn't make this into something personal" says one of the men sitting at the conference table where the fate of a teenage boy, accused of murdering his father, is being deliberated. But how can any human being, whether in a courthouse (or a theater, for that matter) ignore what they bring with them in terms of experi-

ence? Never has the fallacy of "objectivity" been more vividly illustrated than in Reginald Rose's locked-room drama—nor its remedy, as, goaded by a lone dissenter, the 12 who will pass judgment pool their knowledge to arrive at a conclusion none of them could have foreseen.

This production being staged in 2010, the all-male jury mandated by the 1957 play's title displays hints of demographic diversity—four of the men are African-American, two Latino, one Asian, with their occupations a mix of professional, industrial and trade skills. The contrast between their respective social and economical backgrounds, however, is no less pronounced, and their attitudes toward the suspect—whose ethnicity is never specified—even more revealing. We may, as they do, fall into the trap of

thinking we know this or that character's mind, only to be confronted by sudden outbursts of compassion, defiance or outright violence where we least suspect it.

The screenplay (adapted from Rose's original television script) comprising the text employed by Raven Theatre director Aaron Todd Douglas allows for considerable physical action—e.g., reenactments of witness testimony (including some tricky switchblade maneuvers)—to keep the stage picture always vibrant and mobile. The array of ensemble-sensitive talent on display likewise presents a carefully balanced vocal and visual portrait of urban America, ranging from C.L. Brown as the agnostic juror—significantly, an architect, interested in how things are assembled—to Bryson Engelen as the effete

stockbroker (who, when asked "Don't you ever sweat?" calmly replies "No") to J.J. McCormick and Leonard Kraft as a pair of feisty old codgers. Dan Loftus and Reginald Vaughn, too, deserve hardship pay for their fearless portrayals of personalities proclaiming repugnant sentiments (the worst of them, fortunately, delivered upstage) to unnerve even trained actors.

The heroes of crime stories nowadays—whether fictional or actual—are most often lawyers or police, authority figures being more attractive to mainstream audiences. But this glimpse of our judicial system from half a century ago serves to remind us of the power invested in a jury of peers—something to think about next time you're called for duty.

THEATER REVIEW

Uncle Vanya

Playwright: Anton Chekhov;

Translation: Curt Columbus

At: Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway

Phone: 773-528-9696; \$10-\$40

Runs through: March 27

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Anton Chekhov's self-labeled "comedies" like Uncle Vanya and The Cherry Orchard are so thoroughly studied and artistically esteemed in drama schools that it can be nearly impossible for any production to fully live up to the heightened expectations.

So if you can give up your ideal of Chekhovian perfection, director Kimberly Senior's take on Curt Columbus' adaptation of Uncle Vanya for Strawdog Theatre has plenty to recommend for it.

Senior starts things off nicely by teaming with set designer Tom Burch with a cozy concept of framing scenes amid lace and object-filled cabinets that are reminiscent of artist Joseph Cornell's glass box collages. The gauzy quality to



Uncle Vanya. Photo by Chris Ocken

the set gives the effect of looking back to an earlier age (in this case, pre-Revolutionary Russia) and the cloudiness of memory in general.

Amid these panels, the cast (handsomely attired by costumer Aly Renee Greaves) navigates some emotionally fraught territory that features lots of unrequited love and the shattering of life-long ambitions and world-views (there's also a startlingly relevant environmental message packed in).

As the embittered estate manager Vanya, Tom

Hickey is great at playing up his middle-aged character's simmering anger. So when Vanya violently lashes out at his entitled brother-in-law, Serebryakov (an appropriately confounding and out-of-touch Tim Curtis), you know exactly where this outburst is coming from.

But I would have liked Hickey's Vanya to stress more of his moody defeatism in ruefully pining for Serebryakov's unobtainable wife, Yelena (Shannon Hoag, who nicely plays up her character's boredom and flattery of being desired by so many men).

As Vanya's no-nonsense niece, Sonya, Michaela Petro comes across as strong, but perhaps too in-control of her emotions. Particularly when Sonya reveals her burning passion for the alcoholic country doctor Astrov (a sleepy-eyed Kyle Hamman), Petro seems to laugh it all off more than truly being fragile at unburdening her building passion.

The rest of cast offers up capable performances, even if they aren't fully embodying the world-weariness and resignation that any great passion in their lives is all but gone now.

Ultimately, Strawdog's handsome take on Uncle Vanya is one that will inspire lots of admiration and respect for its look and the though-provoking acting choices taken by its not-always-age-appropriate cast. Just don't go expecting to have your heart broken.

(And if Strawdog's version of Vanya isn't to your liking, you can hold out for the forthcoming production of the same play at Chicago Shakespeare Theater courtesy of by the touring Maly Drama Theatre of St. Petersburg, Russia, March 17-21. Just be sure that you don't mind hearing it in Russian with projected English translations.)

CRITICS' PICKS

Abigail's Party, A Red Orchid Theatre, through March 28. Shade Murray directs a Mike Leigh drama with a cast that includes Red Orchid ensemble members Kirsten Fitzgerald, Mierka Girten, Larry Grimm and Danny McCarthy. 'Nuff said. Get tickets while you still can. SCM

The Analytical Engine, Circle Theater, through March 28. Jon Steinhagen's new romantic comedy may be old-fashioned, but it's delightfully so. Everything about this Victorian period piece about computer dating (!) is also lovely to view. SCM

Master Harold and the Boys, TimeLine Theatre, through March 27. South Africa, 1950. Will teenage Hallie become a white racist like his father? Or will he absorb the wisdom of his older Black servant? Athol Fugard's exquisite play examines a nation's soul. JA

The Old Settler, Writers Theatre, through March 28. All-female households exist for playwrights to disrupt with handsome male intruders, but John Henry Redwood shuns stary-eyed romance to paint a picture of 1943 Harlem culture as real and gritty as a newsreel photograph. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge,
Morgan and Sullivan

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THEATER REVIEW

Living Quarters

Playwright: Brian Friel
 At: Strangeloop Theatre at
 Trap Door, 1655 W. Cortland
 Phone: 773-276-0458; \$15
 Runs through: March 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

There's this career officer in the Irish Defense Forces, you see, who married a much younger wife just before he left for the Middle East to serve with the United Nations peacekeepers. When he returns, a decorated hero, five months later, he learns that his wife and his son have succumbed to sexual attraction leading to a brief, but intense, affair. If this story calls forth vague memories of Greek and Roman literature, it's not your imagination—indeed, our play is sometimes subtitled, "After Hippolytus"—but you can discard all that classroom cant about "the inevitability of tragedy." Brian Friel is not about to let the Fates take the blame for his characters' unhappy outcome.

Friel was still at a stage in his literary development in 1977 to employ a convention invoked by many beginning playwrights—namely, an omniscient narrator, identified only as "Sir," whose duties are to deliver exposition, comment on the action, and ascertain that we understand everything the author is trying to do (cf. Pirandello, Brecht and the role of the chorus leader

in classical drama, for you ambitious playgoers desiring homework). Structurally, this should reduce the action to mere audio-visual assistance for the analysis delivered by the aforementioned writer-surrogate.

But Friel refuses to bully his creations. Sir may remind his unfortunate clan that this is a re-enactment of events taking place in their memories, but they are still permitted to argue their cases—even attempt to alter the facts—as they (and we) consider the individual deeds contributing to the dissolution of a good family and the death of its innocent patriarch. In performance, what this means is that our attention remains focused on the Chekhovian dynamics simmering below the placid surface of a modern, small-town, middle-class household, now forced to re-live their transgressions until they come to terms with them and move on.

Living Quarter's slippery (some might say, sophomoric) multidimensional conceits might exceed the skills of most theater troupes embarking on only their second production, but the company assembled by director Thomas Murray is more than equal to the task. The adroit cast keeps us firmly anchored in the intimate scenario (in particular, Jillian Rafa's minimalist approach to the potentially disruptive Sir), while the technical staff delivers environmental artistry ranging from Kate Jordan's pitch-perfect dialects to Glen Anderson's museum-accurate scenic design and Leigh Barrett's seamlessly shifting lighting scheme.

THEATER REVIEW

The Damnation of Faust

Composer: Hector Berlioz,
 after Goethe's Faust
 At: Lyric Opera of Chicago
 Tickets: 312-332-2244;
 www.lyricopera.org; \$33-\$207
 Runs through: March 17 (in repertory)

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Hector Berlioz's exquisite music for The Damnation of Faust sports more string passages, delicate woodwinds and sublime choral episodes than braying brass and tympani. Except for the famous Rakoczy March and the scene of Faust's damnation, the score is surprisingly free of richly colored Berlioz bombast, yet under conductor Sir Andrew Davis it's full-blooded and nuanced. The quartet of singers (unusually, all Americans) project beautiful vocal lines, plangency (what's French opera sans plangency?) and act convincingly. Paul Groves (Faust), John Relyea (Mephistopheles), Christian Van Horn (Brander) and Susan Graham (wow! Marguerite) perform with brio.

This new production's musical values are not in question, yet one question always lingers over The Damnation of Faust: Is it an opera? Berlioz wrote it for concert presentation, with only four soloists plus chorus and orchestra. Decades after his death, it was adapted for opera-house presentation. I think it's neither opera nor oratorio, but a tone poem for orchestra and voices. It's a character study more than a work of dramatic action, lacking the arias and ensemble pieces that are hallmarks of 19th-century opera.

Eventually, The Damnation of Faust focuses on Faust's seduction of Marguerite, as do the other two chief operatic adaptations of Goethe's romantic-era *opus magnus*, thereby reducing Goethe's metaphysics to lust. Hey, if Faust really loved Marguerite, he'd take her to a priest first and to bed second. But it's damn difficult to turn metaphysics into good theater, perhaps because no author—not Goethe, Berlioz, Shakespeare, Mozart or even Tony Kushner—can provide satisfactory answers to the spiritual and philosophical dilemmas of Mankind.

This new production offers neutral, abstract modern design elements and an amusingly tawdry interpretation by director Stephen Langridge.

Faust never is old; there are mice-with-whips dancers; Marguerite, her mother and the chorus are portrayed as 1980s Soviet-era Eastern European conformists. Choristers are in five groups, each group identically costumed and bewigged as plus-sized women, old men, soldiers, etc. The central abstract scenic design is a vast white shadow box allowing free use of colored light strips and John Boesch's projected textures. Stage elevators create smaller boxes for specific scenes (such as Marguerite's apartment, the only realistic design). The 1980s-era costumes are intentionally dull, although placing tall Relyea in a purple tux makes Mephisto look like Lurch in lavender.

The disappointing choreography runs mostly to athletic staging with few formal dance elements. Are dance soloists needed to portray soldiers doing push-ups? This failure of imagination seems as much the fault of Langridge as of choreographer Philippe Giraudeau. Langridge's overstated anti-clericalism and anti-militarism are as subtle as a hammer blow, making the entire Rakoczy March an old-hat anti-war dumbshow. The net effect is vigorous—this meta-theatrical production never bores—but less profound than the music alone.

Classical guitarist Sharon Isbin reflects

BY STEVEN CHAITMAN

World-renowned classical guitarist Sharon Isbin will be coming to Chicago's Harris Theater March 6, fresh off the heels of her most recent Grammy win. The musician and out lesbian is the first classical guitarist in 43 years to win a second Grammy for classical guitar, which continues to prove why she is one of the instrument's modern pioneers.

Windy City Times: How was this second [Grammy] win different or more meaningful for you in any way, or maybe the question to ask is, "Why is it special for this particular album, Journey to the New World?"

Sharon Isbin: This is an album that was something really close to my heart. I really wanted to pay homage to Joan Baez; I've admired her work for many years both as an artist and a civil rights advocate and this was a beautiful way to be able to do so. The centerpiece of the album, of course, is the "Joan Baez Suite," and when she heard it she offered to sing two songs: "Wayfaring Stranger" and "Go 'Way from My Window." Seeing as the entire journey of the music is from the 16th-century British Isles up through just before the evolution of bluegrass, really tracing the development of folk music in the New World from the British Isles, it was really something that all made sense in terms of paying homage to what I think is what I think is one of our world's greatest folk singers.

And one of the things that was different about this experience at the Grammys is they have now created in the [pre-televized event], the opportunity to feature a couple of performances, so they asked me to perform a solo and to be joined by a bluegrass band, which was enormous fun. Then, of course, one has the opportunity when the award is given to go up and receive that, and I was very honored that the person who presented it to me was none other than Roberta Flack—who, of course, I listened to all through college.

WCT: Your performance here in Chicago March 6 is with renowned violinist Mark O'Connor. You've played in so many different venues: by yourself, with orchestra. In what ways are you looking forward to these few concerts with just Mark?

SI: Every kind of collaboration that I have involves a different style of music, whether I'm playing my Amazonian Brazilian music with Paul Winter and *Thiago de Mello*, a group I've worked with for a number of years, or whether I'm working with a singer or with Mark



Sharon Isbin.

O'Connor—with Mark of course it gives me the opportunity to explore some of the different styles in his music from bebop and blues and ragtime, waltzes, jigs all kinds of fun music that is part of the popular folk culture of the violin in the United States.

WCT: You grew up in a time where most girls who picked up a guitar wanted to learn folk and pop. Did you ever feel like what you were learning was counterculture or did you relish the opportunity to do something much more unique?

SI: I was very aware that playing classical guitar in the late 1960s was exotic, so that was definitely attractive to me.

WCT: What has it meant to you to be a revolutionary musician in terms of being a woman, a lesbian and a classical guitarist, especially now coming off another Grammy win?

SI: Well I'm just very gratified that an instrument that has taken so many years to become recognized on the mainstream stage, beginning really with Segovia in the 1950s, has now really come into its own and is being celebrated. I'd have to say it was an honor that it was the first time in 43 years that a guitarist has received a second classical Grammy. When I received mine in 2001 it was the first time in almost 30 years that any guitarist had received a classical Grammy. History is still being made and, for me, it's all about the music and having the opportunities to share music that I find really beautiful and is meaningful and that touches people's hearts.

For more on Isbin and to watch videos of her live performances, visit sharonisbin.com. Tickets to the March 6, 7:30 p.m., performance at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph, see www.harristheaterchicago.org.

For more on this interview—including where Isbin sees the future of classical guitar—visit www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

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KNIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Queer at the Oscars; film notes

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

The announcement that the Oscar nominations for Best Picture would expand from five to 10 has proven a wise one. From *Avatar* to *Up in the Air*, there's seemingly something in the nominations for all audiences. And, yes, I include queer moviegoers with the inclusion of *Precious* because of its inherent queer sensibility and positive lesbian characters.

Yet once again I find myself irritated with the Oscars. (I'm still not over Bette Midler losing the Oscar for *The Rose* to Sally Field for *Norma Rae* in 1979; neither is Bette.) This year I'm a crabby pants because neither *Valentino: The Last Emperor*, *Outrage* nor *Capitalism: A Love Story* got documentary nominations. I'm also a sorehead when it comes to the queer movie of the year, *A Single Man*. Not only was it one of the best-reviewed films of 2009, it's still doing well at the box office. But there was no nod for Best Picture or one for Julianne Moore for Supporting Actress or the eye-popping cinematography or that gorgeous set design and art direction. And that wistful, achingly beautiful film score—easily the year's best? Another shut-out.

Is this another case of fuddy-duddy Academy members dissing a queer movie or a cash-strapped Weinstein Company putting its considerable Oscar campaign finesse behind a proven winner, *IngLOURIOUS BASTERDS*? Whatever the reason is, when I get all pissy about such matters I take heart by looking back over the history of queer at the Oscars. With a little delving under the red carpet, it comes to light that from its very first ceremony queer movies, actors and filmmakers have been part of the Oscars.

So here are a few queer Oscar highlights through the decades:

—1927: The very first Best Picture Oscar winner is *Wings*, the story of two WWI fighter pilots. The film, excerpted in *The Celluloid Closet*, fea-



Melissa Etheridge.



Heath Ledger in *Brokeback Mountain*.

tures a homoerotic relationship and death-bed kiss between stars Richard Arlen and Buddy Rogers.

—1932-1933: The closeted Charles Laughton wins Best Actor for *The Private Life of Henry VIII* and suspected bisexual Katharine Hepburn wins Best Actress *Morning Glory*.

—1939: Gay icon Judy Garland wins a child Oscar for her performance as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. (Almost 20 years later she would lose for *A Star Is Born*—still one of Oscar's biggest oversights.)

—1949: An Oscar goes to gay classical and film composer Aaron Copland's score of *The Heiress*, a movie with queer star Montgomery Clift and Olivia De Havilland (who wins Oscar gold for Best Actress). Openly gay music arranger/composer/producer Roger Edens also wins for *Easter Parade*.

—1958: *Gigi* wins nine Oscars, including Best Pictures and Best Director for unacknowledged bisexual Vincente Minnelli, gay costume designer Cecil Beaton and lyricist Frederick Loewe for the film's title song.

—1968: Gay and lesbian icons Barbra Streisand and Katharine Hepburn tie for the Best Actress Oscar—uniting both communities in one fell swoop.

—1969: *Midnight Cowboy*, which is essentially a gay love story, is the only X-rated film to ever win the Best Picture Oscar. Openly queer director John Schlesinger also wins.

—1972: Gay icon Liza Minnelli wins Best Actress for *Cabaret*, a film with unapologetic gay characters.

—1983: Lesbian actress Linda Hunt wins Best Supporting Actress for *The Year of Living Dangerously* for playing a male character—a gender-bender first at the Oscars.

—1985: William Hurt wins Best Actor playing gay in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*—another Oscar first.

—1988: Jodie Foster, who is believed to be a lesbian, wins the first of two Best Actress Oscars for *The Accused* playing opposite now-out actress Kelly McGillis. Foster would win again three years later for *Silence of the Lambs*.

—1993: Tom Hanks wins his first Best Actor Oscar playing a gay man with AIDS in the film *Philadelphia*.

—1994: The first openly gay actor, Nigel Hawthorne, is nominated for Best Actor for *The Madness of King George* and attends the ceremony with his partner.

—1999: Hilary Swank wins the first of two Best Actress Oscars playing the murdered trans individual Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry*.

—2003: Charlize Theron gives a career-altering performance as lesbian serial killer Aileen Wuornos in *Monster* and wins Best Actress in the process.

—2005: The year of the Queer Oscars—*Brokeback Mountain* loses Best Picture to *Crash* but wins several other awards; Philip Seymour Hoffman bests Heath Ledger's *Brokeback* performance and wins Best Actor playing gay writer Truman Capote in *Capote*; and Felicity Huffman gets a Best Actress nod playing a transwoman in *Transamerica*.

—2006: Lesbian icon Melissa Etheridge wins Best Song for "I Need to Wake Up" from *An Inconvenient Truth*.

—2008: *Milk* wins multiple nominations and Oscars go to Sean Penn and out screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, who both give moving acceptance speeches directed at the gay community. Lesbian fave Penelope Cruz wins Best Supporting Actress for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*.

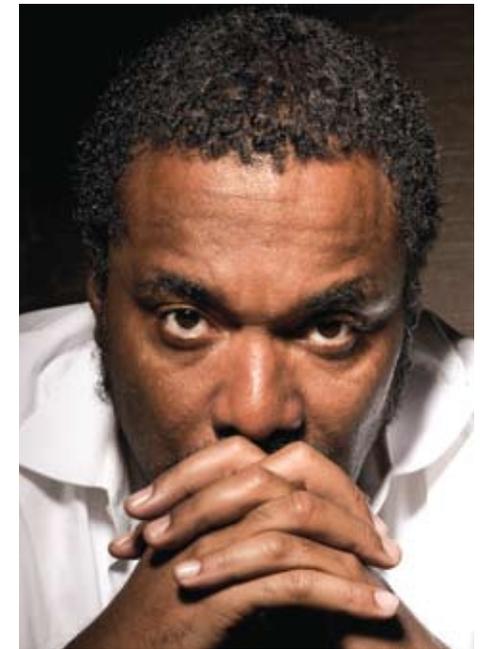
Film notes:

—The Gene Siskel Film Center is kicking off its monthlong 13th Annual European Union Film Festival Friday, March 5, with 59 features of all genres—all Chicago premieres. Several queer-themed films and movies of interest to LGBT audiences are included in the festival. The first week's line-up includes the Irish romantic mystery *Ondine*, which stars hottie Colin Farrell, playing March 6 and 10; *Mid-August Lunch*, a change-of-pace comedy from the director of the Italian mob drama *Gomorra* also screening March 6; and *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, a Swedish thriller from local distributor Music Box Films, also on the bill for March 6. I'll be highlighting other selected titles as the series progresses. See www.siskelfilmcenter.org.

—Battle of the Oscar parties: Two of the Windy City's swankiest Academy Award parties battling it out Sunday, March 7, are "On the Red Carpet: Center on Halsted Oscar Party 2010," which is being held at the Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus, as a benefit for the Center. It begins at 6 p.m. with a red-carpet reception followed by the 7 p.m. viewing party that includes cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. General admission is \$75; \$100 for VIPs includes reserved seating and table service. Nearby, the Gene Siskel Film Center will host "Oscar Night America 2010," with tickets at \$100 per person. The 6 p.m. red-carpet

call comes with a glass of champagne offered by hostess Amanda Puck followed by the 7 p.m. viewing party, which includes food, cocktails, auction items and, as Chicago's only officially sanctioned Academy Awards party, the official Oscar program booklet—an enviable keepsake. See www.centeronhalsted.org and www.siskelfilmcenter.org for complete information on both soirees.

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



Openly gay Lee Daniels (above) is nominated for Best Director this year for *Precious*. Photo courtesy of Amanda Wehr



From left: Megan Fahlenbock, Alison Reid and Angela Vint.

Baby Formula out on DVD

BY TRACY BAIM

Mockumentary-style filmmaking is among my favorites, but it has been over-indulged and not true to its form in some recent TV shows and movies. However, *The Baby Formula*, now available from Wolfe Video, is among my new favorite lesbian films.

I had a chance to meet the film's director, Alison Reid, and her partner, Cheryl Izen, at San Francisco's Frameline Film fest last summer, when *Hannah Free* premiered, and they were very generous in offering advice about their road so far with their first feature film. I had loved the trailer for *Baby Formula*, but as with a lot of lesbian films, I feared the trailer would not live up to my expectations. It does, and I highly recommend this comedy.

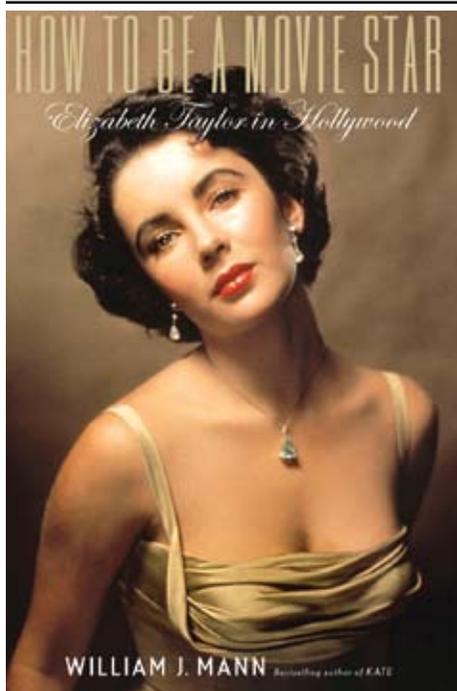
The Baby Formula, made in Canada, follows the exploits of a lesbian couple who are on the sci-fi fertility cutting edge, in a perhaps not-too-distant future when lesbians can actually have each other's babies, rather than needing an outside donor.

Angela Vint (Athena) and Megan Fahlenbock (Lilith) are well-cast as these partners in parenting, and you have a real sense of their screen partnership. In real life, director Reid managed to shoot this film timed to the actor's real pregnancies. The water breaking? That was happening in real life the same day. I can't even imagine how difficult this shoe-string budget was with the added dimension of real pregnancies.

The science in *Baby Formula* has the spark of reality because Reid did her research, speaking to scientists and bioethicists.

"Until recently, it has been impossible for gay couples to conceive of the idea of being able to combine their genetics and have their own biological children," Reid writes in her press kit. "That has always struck me as sad. When I read an article about some science that made it possible to create offspring from two female mice, it resonated with me, and inspired me to make this film."

The two leads are wonderful, but particularly great is Jessica Booker as Grandma Kate, who steals the scenes she is in. Each of the family members has her own troubles, and the actors are allowed to seem human, not stereotypes.



William J. Mann's look at Elizabeth Taylor

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Openly gay author and film historian William J. Mann must be an agent's dream client: Not only is he a talented fiction writer (having penned a series of best-selling gay-themed novels) but he's also able to craft compelling, exhaustively researched and fabulously entertaining non-fiction books. A devout film historian, Mann has written best-sellers on William Haines, the movies' first openly gay star; a history of gays and lesbians in Hollywood; and fascinating biographies of Katharine Hepburn, director John Schlesinger and, most recently, the woman who broke the movie-star mold—Elizabeth Taylor. Mann's book, *How to Be a Movie Star: Elizabeth Taylor In Hollywood*, tracks the rise of Taylor from child star to the pinnacle of worldwide renown. Among other things, the book tackles Taylor's ability to utilize her MGM studio training in dealing with the press when it has come to her many husbands, illnesses and her larger-than-life fame, which essentially created the groundwork for the celebrity culture of today.

Along the way, Mann's richly detailed book, which focuses on important facets in Taylor's life, is sprinkled with the large coterie of gay men—Montgomery Clift, Rock Hudson, James Dean, Roddy McDowall, etc.—who have surrounded, delighted and helped shaped this one-of-a-kind movie star. The book arrives in paperback in late April. Mann, a bit of a dreamboat himself, talked about the Taylor book and his next project.

Windy City Times: I loved that you focused on key aspects of Elizabeth Taylor's life, [including] the years when she really was a movie star because there are already, like, 50 biographies of her.

William Mann: Exactly, and that's why that approach appealed to me when my editor suggested we do this—get behind the scenes and show how she laid the groundwork for everybody from Madonna to Britney and all that. I realized that I would need to do it in a different way than what had been written before.

WCT: It's your contention that her [MGM] training helped her in dealing with the press on one hand and her inner strength on the other—using the press to her advantage, right?

WM: Yes. She wasn't a Judy Garland who was going to crumble in that system. She didn't like the studio system and fought against it, and it made her tough and turned her into a survivor. I think the experience of her first marriage to Nicky Hilton, which was completely studio-arranged and basically a photo op wedding, was

something she learned from—that she would need to take her career into her own hands and do things her way.

WCT: I think this is the first time I've read that her father was bisexual or gay.

WM: It's been mentioned before in David Heymann's book probably 15 years ago. People kind of said, "Well, we shouldn't touch that because Elizabeth herself has never talked about that," and my background is something that isn't going to ignore something as pertinent as that—and the evidence does seem to be there. I just decided to treat it as normally as anything else in her life.

WCT: That's one reason why I loved your book so much. You really do write a lot about how gay men have been so influential in her life.

WM: Oh, sure. It's the same thing with her second husband Michael Wilding. When they've talked about the experience of Hedda Hopper outing him—previous biographers have made it seem as if Hedda were making this up and that's not understanding the way Hedda Hopper works. She never would have made a case for this if she didn't know for certain that this was true. Understanding that made me understand Elizabeth's marriage to him a little better—especially coming off the disastrous marriage to Nicky Hilton. Given the fact that gay men were so much a part of her life and she loved gay men, the idea of marrying a gay man would probably seem terrific to her after that horrible first marriage because she knew her gay friends treated her well. That gave me some insight into her character.

WCT: Talking about her comfort level with gay men—something she shared with Judy Garland and many other stars of that era and today—what about the ladies? Did Liz ever indulge in that area?

WM: [Emphatically] Never. Never. There wasn't a bisexual bone in her body. She loved men. She didn't have any prejudice against lesbians by any means but there was just never any inclination on her part to go there at all. [She] fell in love, madly, with very heterosexual men and her best friends were always gay men.

WCT: Is there any star today who would interest you to write about who would have the impact Elizabeth Taylor had?

WM: Well, I don't know that I'd necessarily want to write about them but I feel that somebody like Angelina Jolie has some of that old-time glamour to her. She has the movie-star glamour; the offscreen persona is glamorous and quirky and unpredictable; and she does some really good onscreen work. She has that balance going on—which is true of Elizabeth as well.

WCT: Let's talk about a few of your earlier books. I know there was talk at one point that a biopic might be in the works about the William Haines book.

WM: It is. In fact, there's also a Broadway musical in the offing.

WCT: [Laughs] "Make it gay, make it gay, make it gay."

WM: [Laughs] Yes, indeed. That book came out in 1998 and I still have people, no matter what book I do, inevitably come up to me and say, "You know, I just loved 'Wisecracker'" so that book has had quite the life and I think William Haines might be do for a little bit of a comeback in the next couple of years.

WCT: Is there a next subject that you can talk about?

WM: Well, yes. I've agreed to stay with Hollywood for at least one more book. So I'm doing another diva—another gay favorite. It's going to be called *Hello Gorgeous: Becoming Barbra Streisand*. But it's just going to be early Streisand. I can't imagine writing about Hollywood much past 1970.

WCT: And she's been covered a lot—like Liz.

WM: Right. So, again, the agreement with my editor is that it's going to be just the early, early Barbra. The young teenage girl from Brooklyn arriving in Manhattan deciding that she wants

to become the biggest star in the world and ending with "A Happening in Central Park" in 1967 when she was making *Funny Girl*. That will be the last big set piece of the book—that concert that brought more people to Central Park than anybody else in history up to that point. In the course of those six years, this little girl who was living in a walk-up hovel...

WCT: Carrying the cot around with her.

WM: Yes, exactly. From that to her drawing a quarter of a million people to Central Park is a very small, short simple story but I also think it's going to be really interesting.

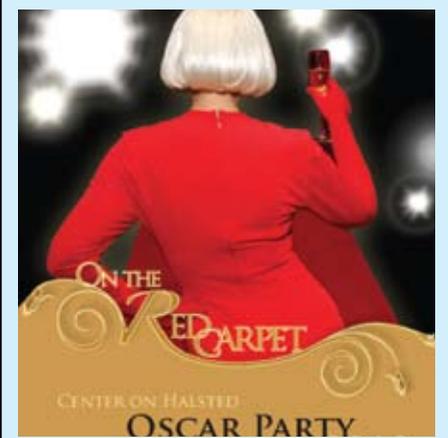
WCT: I assume you're researching now, but any idea when that will see the light of day?

WM: Probably 2012 because technically that's her 50th year in showbiz if we mark it from her first Broadway show and her first record contract.

Visit www.williamjmann.com.



William J. Mann.



Oscar galas March 7

The 82nd Annual Academy Awards will take place March 7 in Los Angeles, Calif.—and two Chicago galas will honor the ceremony.

Center on Halsted will hold its annual Oscar gala, "On the Red Carpet," in the International Ballroom of the Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus. The red-carpet reception is at 6 p.m. with the telecast at 7 p.m. There will be cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; the attire is "absolutely fabulous." Also, Fairmont Chicago is offering a special discount room rate the evening of March 7 for those attending the event; call 800-526-2008 to request this special rate. For gala tickets (\$75-\$100), visit www.CenterOnHalsted.org.

And at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State, "Oscar Night® America 2010" will take place at 6 p.m. This event, according to the film center's Web site, is "the only officially recognized Oscar® celebration by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences® in Chicago." Chaz and Roger Ebert are the honorary chairs. Tickets are \$100; call 312-846-2072 or visit www.Ticketmaster.com.

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Get Laid!

Queer citizen Tim Miller discusses the 'Lay of the Land'

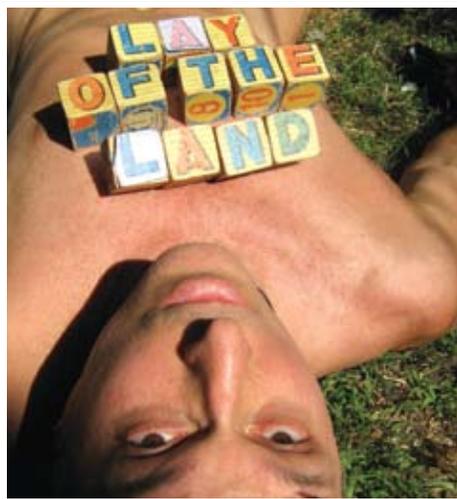
VIEWPOINT BY TIM MILLER

I have always had the ability to regard the lay of the land and I will be sharing some of my kinky perspectives with Chicago at Victory Gardens Theater March 15-21 with my show aptly called Lay of the Land. When I was a very little boy—at a time when my favorite wooden puzzle was called "Ride a Cock Horse"—there was a kids' show I loved called Romper Room. It was on for decades, and if you are over 28 years old you probably had a Romper Room period in your life. Each episode had a segment in which the kindly woman Miss Something or Other would reach out to greet various kiddie viewers in TV Land (by first name only) using her magic mirror. She would look directly into the camera and, thus, into our child-souls. She would hold up a mirror to her face, and would look lovingly into it. We would get some TV psychedelic-spiral special effects, and the glass part of the mirror would disappear and there would just be an open circle with a handle—and she would say several names. ("I see Jimmy and Bobby and Susie and Billy ...") There were never many Lakeeshas or Javiers mentioned when I was a kid. It was uncanny if you heard your name read on TV. ("I see Timmy being stripped naked and pawed by handsome, hirsute coal-miners...") Wow! Miss So-And-So saw me!) I have always had this ability, too. I can really see the Lay of the Land and know what is happening everywhere in queer America. I just hold that mirror in front of my eyes.

After Proposition 8 passed in California and my home state joined the other 45 H8 states—including Illinois—where gay folks are denied these fundamental rights, I found myself marching with a quarter of a million folks in hundreds of cities in all 50 states protesting the anti-gay laws that passed on Election Day 2008 in California, Florida, Arkansas and Arizona. I was preparing to premiere the very first chunk of a brand-new show here in Chicago at Links Hall, and I knew I was going to have to access the Romper Room mirror to see WTF is going on in our lunatic asylum of a country. *Voila*, Lay of the Land—my saucy, sharp-knifed look at the State of the Queer Union during a time of trial! Careening out of that marriage-equality street protest to my sexy misadventures performing in 43 states, to the electoral assaults on gay folks all over the country, to my life as a grade-school flag monitor, to choking on cheap meat caught in my 10-year-old gay boy's throat, Lay of the Land friskily gets at that feeling of gay folks being perpetually on trial, on the ballot and on the menu! Lay of the Land is a "lay" in all kinds of ways: a sex-assignment, a queer-citizenship map and, of course, a narrative ballad with a recurrent refrain (my favorite way-down-the-list definition for "lay"):

I travel a lot—at least 30 states a year. I sometimes feel like a performing "queer Johnny Appleseed, which is a bit redundant since Johnny Appleseed is widely thought to actually have been gay. Johnny Appleseed was a Walt Whitman-y queer fleeing the bourgeois family duties back east for adventures in the world of men in the west! Yeehaw! Plus those apples he was planting weren't baking apples. Nope—they were only good for hard-cider drinking and partying. Johnny Appleseed was a queer Dionysus bringing joy and fermentation to the new nation!

As I do the Lord's work trying to undo homophobia—seriously—I often call on my animal spirit guides. Since I do a ton of university gigs all over the country as I throw my luggage together for my college engagements, I often imagine that all the animal mascots of these institutions of higher learning I work at are gathering to help me. Just as the mice and birds in Cinderella's Disney garret pimp her up for the ball, I visualize the animal mascots of



Tim Miller. Photo by Leo Garcia

the upper Midwest preparing me. I see Illinois State University's Reggie Redbird getting in on the Disney action and dressing me in my so-out-they-are-in cargo pants that I have had to sleep in on the nasty carpet at O'Hare during many airport snowstorms. I see University of Minnesota's Goldy Gopher, with his scary teeth, pulling my roller bag out of the closet. I see Northwestern University's Willie Wildcat fluffing my naturally curly hair, I see Wisconsin's Bucky Badger—the sexiest of all the mascots because he has been seriously working out and is wearing no pants!—meeting me for a quickie in the airport public restrooms reserved for closeted a Republican senator to help me face the horrors of changing planes in Dallas or Dulles!

I hold up that Romper Room mirror and I can really see the Lay of the Land. I see everything, my gaze flying over the states. I can see French Lick, Ind., and Morehead, Ky. I see Fort Gay, W. Va., and Nellyburg, Miss. These are real places! Is this a queer country or what? I can even see the Statue of Liberty all the way from Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater! Have you ever noticed how butch, how gender-fuck the Statue of Liberty is? Uh oh, I see Liberty is choking. America is choking on that MSG-laced piece of tough homophobia trapped in our national throat. I quickly fly through the mirror to the New York harbor and do the Heimlich maneuver on the Statue of Liberty, which is not easy through all that copper! The Statue coughs up a nasty chunk of homophobic gristle that is choking our nation and also four Supreme Court Justices who stand between us and freedom: Roberts, Alito, Thomas and Scalia, who explodes in a toxic cloud when he hits the water.

The Statue of Liberty whips off that tired copper muumu and Planet of the Apes tiara, and lifts that suspiciously vibrator-esque lamp and I hear Liberty sing out the new slam poetry written there on that statue.

*"Give me your fierce faggots,
your strong dykes.*

Your huddled queer masses yearning to love free

Give me your working-class femmes with Lee press-on nails

Your activist queer boys who make out in jails.

.... your cowboy homos in buttless chaps and such

your U-hauling lezzies who move in together too much!

Give me your hope! Your heart. Your queer self possession.

Your families, your future and fierce sex transgression.

I lift my lamp beside this open closet door.

Come out shout out where ever you are.

Welcome.

We're home."

Tim Miller performs Lay of the Land in Chicago at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, March 15, 19-21. He will also be leading a weeklong intensive performance workshop March 16-22 that will create a performance to be performed March 22 at Victory Gardens.

For tickets to Lay of the Land or for workshop information, call 773-871-3000 or visit www.victorygardens.org.

RIVERS from cover

gawd's name let you go out like that?" Shakira, whoever did that to that poor girl should be just kicked out, shocking!

WCT: Your daughter Melissa is producing the show, correct?

JR: Yeah, and it's getting great numbers. She loves to produce. We are doing another show together called Mother Knows Best. It is a reality show. I would love her to produce it as well but she is just going to be in that one.

WCT: What network is that going to be on?

JR: It is going to be on WE tv and start filming in March. We are also doing a second year of How'd You Get So Rich? For TV Land. We start filming that in March as well. It is going to be some March!

WCT: I don't know how you do it. [Last year] was huge for you.

JR: It was a huge year and this year is going to be even bigger, which is wonderful. And then all the running around, concerts, concerts, concerts. I travel all over the country. It is great to see America from a terrific hotel room!

WCT: Do you get to go out a little, at least?

JR: I usually like to go see something in the town. Like if I am in Aurora and they say there is a pioneer exhibit that I have to see, then I will go. We always try to see one thing in each city that we hit.

WCT: So what is your show going to be like in Aurora at the Paramount Theatre?

JR: It is going to be filled with gay men, I hope! If there are gay men in the audience then you automatically get a great show. They are the best audiences in the world. It is going to be about everything. It will be about whatever is happening in the world at the moment. Last week it was Tiger Woods, the week before was Michael Jackson's funeral. It will be about the Academy Awards if anything terrible happened there. It will be about me hating to be on a plane with children, going on a vacation with my grandson and whiny people that I can't stand. It just goes on and on.

WCT: There is always more material out there.

JR: There is always more material.

WCT: Are you excited about the Oscars?

JR: I love them. This is my month of Turner Classic movies.

WCT: Have you seen a lot of the Oscar movies?

JR: No, I only see the ones that they send me for free! If they sent it for free, then I saw it.

WCT: I watched the Sandra Bullock one last night—Blind Side.

JR: I haven't seen that one yet. Is it good?

WCT: It was okay; [it] reminds me of my



Joan Rivers. Photos by Charles William Bush

Tennessee roots too much.

JR: Melissa is very good friend with Jesse James (Sandra's husband), so we are hoping something nice will happen. I loved Inglorious Bastards. I thought that was great. I loved the George Clooney one too. He was amazing.

WCT: Your special on the Logo channel An Audience with Joan Rivers-Unedited was hilarious! Your gay following has stuck with you throughout the years especially the drag queens.

JR: They have stuck with me, Bette, Cher, Lily Tomlin, Liza Liza Liza and, now, Kathy Griffin. I think they just like funny women and funny women love them.

WCT: Last year you even hosted the pink carpet at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade. [Both laugh] You look better than ever and this year is going to be busy for you.

JR: I am one of the lucky ones. I love the business and the business has not deserted me. There are so many friends of mine that are real actresses and are just not working. It is awful, you know. There is not that much work for them anymore. How many grandma parts are there?

WCT: What is your opinion on the late-night talk-show drama?

JR: I think it's wonderful. It's a win-win for everybody. Of course, Conan was going down, his ratings sucked—suddenly everyone likes him now and he got \$40 million. So that's terrific for him. And for Leno, my gawd! How great it is for everyone because we don't have to take Ambient anymore to go to sleep at 11:30. We are back to going to sleep watching him. This is perfect! They save all the viewership money on drugs. Oh boy, he is so boring—such a fucking boring show.

WCT: I know. Why don't they have women on late night?

JR: Somebody decided a long time ago that people like to watch men at night. Some old executive decides.

WCT: A male executive, obviously...

JR: Obviously. It is still very much a boy's club, network television.

WCT: I am excited about seeing your show.

JR: I have never been to Aurora so I am excited, too. Illinois is a good state.

WCT: Well, I am coming to see you so you will have at least one gay in the audience.

JR: Oh, you are gay? Bring a friend for gawd's sake—then at least I will get two!

Joan Rivers will walk the talk at the Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena, Friday, March 5, at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$39.50; call 630-896-6666 or visit www.paramountaurora.com.





taste: Dining

Welcome to the new food section of Windy City Times. Our columnists and photographers will cover all things dining and food related. Most weeks, the columns will be available exclusively online at www.windycitymediagroup.com.



Cuna

BY MEGHAN STREIT



Paolo Acuna, a Chicago businessman who hails from the Philippines and grew up all over the world, has turned an abandoned art gallery into a vibrant Lakeview nightspot called Cuna. Acuna hired former Sepia chef Kendal Duque to dream up dishes that blend South American, Asian, American and Italian flavors. So far, the

pair is off to a good start, serving up inventive cocktails and creative “globally inspired” small plates for sharing.

Exposed brick, concrete floors and oversized lighting fixtures give Cuna some urbane flair, but the rest of the décor is fairly predictable. Loud club music fills the large dining room, and while it's not conversation-stifling, this might not be the ideal place for a romantic date.

I paid a visit to Cuna with three fabulous male dining companions. We kicked off the evening with a round of quirky cocktails (think raw eggs, muddled cherries and absinthe rinse). The “Foi Dog” was a glammed-up eggnog-esque cocktail made with Kilo Kai rum, heavy cream, raw eggs, yam-spiced gomme syrup and a darling cinnamon-stick garnish—probably best as a night cap. The “Apprentice” won my vote for best pre-dinner cocktail. It's an intoxicating (literally) concoction of Grey Goose L'Orange and Thatcher apple-spiced ginger topped off with Prosecco. Yum! The “Love Jones” comes in a champagne flute filled with Absolut Mandarin, Parfait Amour liqueur, raw egg white, lemon juice and sugar. I thought it was too thick and too purple—I'll take champagne in my champagne glass, thank you very much—but the boys seemed to like it. We started with a few \$6 flatbreads. The wild mushroom was a hit, and another combined sausage, grapes, goat cheese and fontina—unexpected, but tasty.

There were several winners on the reasonably-priced soup-and-salad menu. The calamari and arugula with chorizo left the boys fighting over the last bite of sausage. The onion soup takes a creative departure from the traditional French onion, made instead with beef short ribs and Gruyère cheese puffs. More cheese puffs please!

The cauliflower-and-potato soup was bland, but the perfectly seasoned smoked trout redeemed it.

Next came the “small bites,” and we could have started and ended the meal right there. The butternut squash risotto with applewood-smoked bacon stole my heart. All three boys were gaga over the pasta with smoked duck breast. The fried market potatoes with garlic-rosemary aioli were like an upscale version of the infamous garlic-mayo cheese fries at T's Restaurant and Bar. Do yourself a favor: Order these potatoes! The roasted sea scallops were tender, flavorful and paired with Brussels sprouts that gave the world's most hated vegetable a whole new name. Our waitress recommended the Ferrari-Carano fume blanc, a sturdy white wine that stood up to the exotic flavors of the second course.

If you're splurging, try the pricier “big bites.” The skate wing with collar greens (bacon-braised to perfection!) was an amazing dish. I didn't want to share a single bite. The boys reported that the bison burger was too chewy and gave it a unanimous thumbs-down. The cauliflower with lentils was crisp as promised and surprisingly good.

All in all, Cuna is a welcome addition to the Belmont strip—a fun option for a night out with friends and a perfect way to sample foods you won't find on every menu at recession-proof prices. Go for the drinks (and if you're not into \$10 cocktails, there's a reasonably priced wine list and good beer selection) and stay for the



Baby octopus with endive, orange and pine nuts. Photo courtesy of Good Life PR



Cuna chef Kendal Duque. Photo courtesy of Good Life PR

food. Definitely save room for dessert. The *pot de crème* got rave reviews from the staff, but I highly recommend the apple-and-walnut bread pudding, served moist and warm with caramel ice cream—to quote Bravo's favorite strung-out stylist, “I die!”

Cuna is at 1113 W. Belmont; call 312-224-8588 or visit www.cunachicago.com.

AMUSE BOUCHE

BY GREG PERRINE AND AMES HAWKINS

As defined by The New Food Lover's Companion, an “amuse bouche” [ah-mewz-BOOSH] is a French derivative for “appetizer,” typically referring to a small one- or two-bite portion of something special or exotic to tickle the tastebuds. Such offerings are not on the menu and are presented to diners before the meal begins.

Just as the definition explains, this column, Amuse Bouche, is meant to inspire your appetite, getting you out of your daily hum drum routine of turkey sandwiches and bar food, and into the world of culinary exploration. We live in the age of five-dollar foot longs and overpriced restaurant experiences, paying to wait in overcrowded rooms for a taste of something over-processed and unhealthy—completely forgetting about family, friends, and the simple joys of cooking at home. Instead of bringing you reviews of the latest and best restaurants, this column is meant to shed light on what food means to the LGBT community.

Entering the kitchen in earnest nearly 10 years ago in order to relieve some of the pressure of parenting from her partner, Ames writes from a queerly traditional notion of family and what it means to cook and to create home. Ames considers cooking to be a definite form for gender expression, believing that nurturing others with food is foundational to making family. Having, during this decade, come to consider gender-queer, transgender and lesbian to be alternately

suitable labels for her personal experience, Ames believes that food can always provide a cornerstone for community.

Working in restaurants since the age of 16, Greg Perrine, 22, has seen his fair share of rude bosses, roaches and ridicule when it comes to the food industry. Finally fed up with wasting money on things he could make better at home, he took to exploring food and wine, coming up with The Perfect Pair, a food blog at www.pairperfect.blogspot.com. Having a boyfriend of three years, and finally coming out to his father this past summer, Greg is exploring what it means to be young, gay, and hungry.

Because it is our intention to provide the reader with more than recipes or reviews, we have decided to present a series of columns that, though capable of standing alone, also work together to address a particular theme or idea associated with cooking and food. Writers Ames Hawkins and Greg Perrine will alternate columns in nine-week cycles, offering their differing perspectives and recipes associated with a particular thematic arc. As our first focus, we offer stories, recipes and reflection that serve to reframe a definition of family, how the notion of family is connected with community. How family tastes to us both, how we use it to season our lives, to satisfy our hunger in what we hope to share.

All people eat, but we want you to know how we understand what it means to cook queer! It is our goal to inspire you to choose to perhaps stay home a little more often, cook for your friends, those you consider to be family; for family who you feel could be your friends. We write out of a conviction of the power of food to bring people together, to create community, to form family.



Greg Perrine.



Ames Hawkins.



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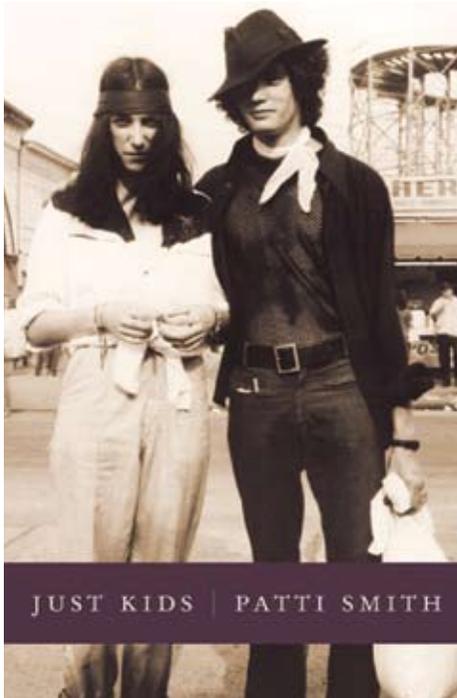
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The kickoff preliminary round of Gays Got Talent at Spin, 800 W. Belmont Ave. on Thu., Feb. 25, did not disappoint. Singers, performance artists, a belly dancer and a burlesque showgirl advanced to the BIG SHOW at Sidetrack on March 20. The crowd was also treated to a special performance by judge and burlesque artist Michelle L'Amour. Photos and text by Kirk Williamson; see more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and in this week's issue of Nightspots.

Check out video from Gays Got Talent at Spin at our video site QueerTVNetwork.com.



JUST KIDS | PATTI SMITH

BOOK REVIEW

Just Kids

Written by Patti Smith
\$27; HarperCollins Books;
304 pages

REVIEW BY VERN HESTER

"What will happen to us?" I asked.

"There will always be us," he answered.

Typical words spoken by typical lovers in the rush of a typical young romance, but in this case those words were actually prophetic.

Patti Smith asked the question and her lover Robert Mapplethorpe answered, but neither of them had a clue as to how right they were and on such an immense level. It was at the close of the 1960s in the seediness of the dank Allerton Hotel in N.Y.C. and neither of them had the slightest clue that they would reshape not only their world but the whole world with their art.

It's a bit of a head-spinner to embrace Smith's new memoir *Just Kids* from the standpoint of the present; it's almost impossible to picture Smith and Mapplethorpe as unsure artistically and sexually [him, anyway] or to have such a naive perspective on the world and life. *Just Kids* works on three levels simultaneously: how the two of them evolved into the artists that they became, and as documents on time and place.

New York City and the years 1968-1973 were that time and place where American rock culture evolved into what it would ever be, all in one nutty, maddening, atomic smash up. The Velvet Underground, Bette Midler, Talking Heads, Blondie, the Ramones, Paul Simon, The New York Dolls, Billy Joel—the list could go on and on. As a document of an era that splintered off into several alter eras [disco, punk, wave—all of it started at this time and at this place], *Just Kids* has a nonstop parade of personalities whirling through it [Aleister Crowley, Jimi, Janis, Dylan, International Velvet, Genet, Manson, Edie Sedgwick, Thomas Wolfe, Viva, Arbus, Candy Darling, Warhol, Ondine, Clive Davis] with a number of memorable cameos [Grace Slick, Allen Ginsberg, Johnny Winter, Wayne County, Bob Neuwirth, Sam Shepard, Jim Carroll, Tom Verlaine, Todd Rundgren] like nuclear-powered pinballs bouncing about in an arcade.

The first achievement of the book though is that it reveals how fully both Mapplethorpe and Smith became their art. It's hard to see either of them as the innocents at the start of the book or imagine the spontaneous romance of their first meeting. How they appeared later on [she as a chanting, furious high-priestess-punk-rock-poet-bard and he as a slightly dangerous, oddly beautiful lord of black leather and darkness] seemed so complete that it's impossible to see them for what they really were: two kids on their own.

What attracted them and held them together

was twofold: their art [though it actually took them years to get into the mediums that they would rule] and their understanding of each other. When Smith talks of Mapplethorpe's curly brown hair and green eyes she forces us to see him as the beautiful boy that she saw. When we see his early portraits of her she has a crisp, uncomplicated simplicity that makes her almost unrecognizable. Obviously, we don't know either of them like we thought we did.

At one point when Mapplethorpe starts to realize that he's gay it's not only a surprise to her but to him as well. But though they swiftly end up with different partners heading in different directions, their bond stays unquestionably strong and fluid right up until his AIDS-related death in 1989 at age 42. Of course when they parted romantically she wasn't a rock and roll star and he wasn't the most controversial if not famous photographer in the world. And that's the fascination of the book, the odd link between them that onlookers couldn't fathom.

Toward the end of the book Smith ruminates, "To me, Robert and I were irrevocably entwined, like Paul and Elizabeth, the sister and brother in Cocteau's *Les Enfants Terribles*. We played similar games, declared the most obscure objects treasure and often puzzled friends and acquaintances by our indefinable devotion."

At the close of the book Smith reveals that *Just Kids* is a promise that she made to Mapplethorpe to "one day write our story." I'm glad that she did it, not so much because it documents an already mythical time with mythical personalities [having breakfast with Ginsberg, whiskey with Johnny Winter, or Kris Kristofferson sitting in a hotel-room floor singing his "Me and Bobby McGee" to an enchanted Janis Joplin for the first time], but because in telling this story she let us see who she and Mapplethorpe really were.

Terkel Award winners announced

Old and new media are included in the roster of the 2010 winners of the Studs Terkel Community Media Awards, announced today by the nonprofit Community Media Workshop at Columbia College. Honorees include Kate Grossman, Deputy Editorial Page Editor, *Chicago Sun-Times*; Natalie Moore, Public Affairs Reporter, *Chicago Public Radio*; and Progress Illinois, a news blog produced by Josh Kalven, Adam Doster and Angela Caputo.

They join the roster of more than four dozen journalists recognized by the workshop and the late Studs Terkel as representing some of Chicago's finest media professionals. They will receive their awards at the Workshop's annual benefit—co-chaired by Tracy Baim of *Windy City Media Group* and Dan Haley & Andy Johnston of *Wednesday Journal*—March 10 at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, 5-9 p.m. More information is at www.communitymediaworkshop.org.

Terkel was patron saint of the Workshop's Studs Terkel Community Media Awards before passing away in October, 2008, according to co-founder and president Thom Clark. "Studs was one of the world's most effective communicators, multi-talented as a writer, an actor, a journalist, an orator. His was a unique voice, both a rascal and a statesman; he brought dignity and hope to the hopeless and powerless and had a raw, respectful and honest insight about those who succeeded in life. Winner or loser, celebrity or nobody, saint or sinner—Studs reached out to us all. He was an organizer, a community organizer if you will. He talked to and, more importantly, listened to all of us," Clark said.

Since 1989, Community Media Workshop has coached thousands of nonprofit communicators to tell stories in ways that advance their missions or grow their organizations. Based at Columbia College Chicago, it works in Chicago and across the Midwest.

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Wed., March 3

Screening of Dreams Deferred: The Sakia Gunn Film Project You've probably heard of Matthew Shepard, but you may have never heard of Sakia Gunn, a 15-year-old out and proud young woman from New Jersey who identified as an "aggressive" homosexual woman of color. She was stabbed to death in 2003 by one of the two much older men whose sexual advances she rebuffed that night. The documentary follows the reaction of the Newark community where several rallies and vigils were held, galvanizing the community and prompting several LGBT organizations to form, including the Newark Pride Alliance and Sakia Gunn Aggressives & Femmes, as well as a scholarship fund in her name. 6-9 p.m. at Affinity, 5650 S. Woodlawn, <http://www.blackyouthproject.com>

In Her Shoes Chicago Launch Party Get inspired & inspire others. Women helping women. Massages, appetizers, live guitar folk and jazz music by Chris Parsons; 6pm, 847-867-9585

Cirque du Soleil presents ALEGRIA Critically-acclaimed touring production Alegria will perform eight performances through March 7, 2010. International cast of 55 from 15 countries showcase breathtaking acrobatics; 7:30pm, 800-745-3000, <http://www.cirquedusoleil.com>

Thursday, March 4

The American Veterans for Equal Rights (gay veterans) Monthly meeting. AVER is a non-profit association dedicated to full and equal rights for all present and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces. 7:30am, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Hal-

OF NOTE Thursday, March 4

Artemis Singers (right) will give a free concert at Sulzer Public Library, 4455 N. Lincoln.

Photo courtesy of Artemis Singers



sted, www.averchicago.org
Artemis Singers free concert Artemis Singers lesbian feminist chorus Winter Concert will include old favorites plus new selections being developed for the upcoming Sister Singers Network 10th National Women's Choral Festival June 30 - July 4 at Loyola University Chicago; 7pm, 773-764-4465, <http://www.artemissingers.org>
Stephen Sondheim 80th Q & A: Harris Theater Presents... Just prior to his 80th Birthday, composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim will offer a personal and engaging view in a live, unscripted conversation. 7:30 p.m., Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph Dr, <http://www.harristheaterchicago.org>

"A Night at the Oscars" starring Shirley Jones The Academy Award-winning star of classics including "Oklahoma!", "Carousel," "The Music Man," "Elmer Gantry" and hundreds of other film, stage and television appearances, will join the 32-piece Hollywood Concert Orchestra for a night saluting the greatest music composed for

and used in Hollywood films. "A Night at the Oscars" is a one-night-only event. \$30.50 through Paramount Theatre box office at 630.896.6666 or online through Ticketmaster. 7:30pm, 630-896-6666, Paramount Theatre, 23 East Galena Boulevard, <http://www.paramountarts.com>

Queer Latinos: Art and Change Fascinating exploration of Chicago's long standing and diverse queer Latino community. Scholars Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes and Amigas Latinas' own Lourdes Torres share their insights on the intersection of art and political change over the last twenty-five years. \$12; \$10 members and students. 5:30pm, Chicago History Museum, 1601 N Clark, <http://http://chicagohistory.org/planavisit/upcomingevents/out-at-chm>

Friday, March 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, www.eqil.org

Nancy Stohlman, Searching for Suzi When Suzi, a 30-something ex-stripper now married with kids, begins to question how she arrived at this point in her life, her search for herself means accepting her sexuality in all its contradictions and claiming herself. Denver-based writer Stohlman, who is founder and co-editor of the annual flash fiction collection, Fast Forward, reveals Suzi's story in a novel-in-flashes. 7:30pm, Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark St., <http://www.womenandchildren-first.com>

SalsaChicago All Star Mambo at Temptations Night Club They are BACK! After a successful performance we have decided to bring them back for a hot night of live music including salsa/merengue/bachata and more! No cover before 9pm, drink specials all night long, plenty of free convenient parking. 8pm

Saturday, March 6

11th Annual Jack Daniels Chili Cookoff Taste & judge entries from area chefs. Confirmed participants include: F. O'Mahony, Jack's on Halsted, Hotel 71, Lucky Strike Lanes, J & L Catering, Aja Restaurant at the Dana Hotel & Spa, The Mid America Club and 4-time winner: Kits'ch'n On Roscoe plus more; 2pm, Sidetrack, 3349 N Halsted St, <http://www.glchamber.org>

2010 Cabin Fever Ball, Women of the Western Suburbs 6-7pm cash bar, 7-8:30 dinner, 8:30-12 dancing/cash bar. \$32. Table of 8, \$256. wowssevents@yahoo.com

com; 6pm, 630-289-1000, <http://www.wowschicago.com/>

Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance screens as part of the Chicago International Music and Movies Festival. \$8 Q&A with Director/Producer Madsen Minax and Producer Simon Strikeback to follow; 6pm, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E Washington, <http://www.actorslashmodel.com/film.htm>

Chicago Takes Off Themed "TV LAND: Outside the Box." A production of Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), Chicago's longest standing peer-led, HIV/AIDS services organization. Two shows, 7:30pm and 10pm \$50 to \$300. See participants online. 7:30pm, 773-989-9400 x233, Park West Chicago, 322 W. Armitage, www.tpan.com

Cake Chicago Presents: A Night of Live Music & Spoken Word! Homoticons at Cake Chicago with Ripley Caine, Nicole Reynolds, and The Painted Lady. 21+ \$5; 9pm

Open casting call for Biggest Loser season 9 Do you want to change your life and compete for \$250,000 on television? 10pm, <http://www.thebiggestlosercasting.com>

Lauren Jacobs returns Lauren Jacobs returns to Chicago with The Bitch is Back Tour at Velvet Rope (3/6), Roscoe's (3/9) and Spin (3/11). 10:30pm, Velvet Rope, 728 W. Lake

Sunday, March 7

Gender JUST House Meeting Join Gender JUST for a house meeting to talk more about the issues covered in the Popular Political Education Trainings and other issues! To RSVP and receive the address, contact aidan.strueber@gmail.com. 2pm, <http://www.genderjust.org>

Male Call with Miss Foozie Roscoe's and ChicagoPride.com present Male Call with Miss Foozie. Here's your chance to meet the unexpected and end the weekend right. 5pm, Roscoe's Tavern, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.missfoozie.com>

"Out & Proud" screening "Out & Proud in Chicago" television documentary by WTTW Chicago tells the history of Chicago's LGBT citizens. Its timeline spans from the Civil War through present day. This parallel history of the city tells a story of invisibility, oppression, devastation, revolution and triumph. 5:30pm, <http://www.wttw.com>

ON THE RED CARPET: Center on Halsted Oscar Party 2010 ON THE RED CARPET: Center on Halsted Oscar Party 2010. Co-Chairs Judi Gorman, Wayne Harth, and Gregory Hyder cordially invite you to a glamorous evening to benefit the programs of Center on Halsted; 6pm, (773) 661-0787, Fairmont Chicago, 200 N Columbus Dr, <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/coh/calendar/newevents-details.cfm?id=787>

Monday, March 8

South Asian/Asian/South East Asian LGBT immigration forum Panel discussion about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) immigrants' rights. Panelists will provide an update on developments from both the federal level in Washington, D.C. as well as on the local level in Illinois and Chicago; how immigration reform may affect LGBTQ individuals, and how the audience can get involved. Reception and Networking: 5:30 pm. Program: 6:00 - 7:30 PM. 5:30pm, <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?id=32392916762>

How Old is Too Old, How Young is Too Young Join youth and adults from the LGBT community as we openly discuss how old is too old, and how young is too young to date/be in a relationship with. This discussion is open to people on both sides of the issue and will feature an impressive facilitator. Suggested donation: \$2.00 to support Intergenerational Programs. youthpridecenter@gmail.com; 6pm, 773-690-6790



'RED'-LIGHT SPECIAL Sunday, March 7

Center on Halsted will hold its Oscar gala, "On the Red Carpet" at the Fairmont Chicago, 200 N. Columbus.

2009 photo by Steve Starr

Tuesday, March 9

Tix on sale for Kathy Griffin at Milwaukee PrideFest Funny, frequently controversial, and unashamedly self-promoting Kathy Griffin in a one-night exclusive tour stop in the midwest region. Pre-sale tickets March 9, 10 am, with password PF2010. All tickets on sale March 12, 10 am. 8:30pm, <http://www.pridefest.com>

Drag Race with Frida Lay Frida Lay hosts Chicago's only amateur drag contest every Tuesday at 11pm in Roscoe's front bar. Drag Race has been a hit since its premier in 2000. 11pm, 773-281-3355, Roscoe's Tavern, 3356 N Halsted St, <http://www.roscoes.com>

Wed., March 10

"Building Our Next City: How the LGBT Community Can Cultivate the Creative Out Professional Executive Network (OPEN) first; 5pm, <http://guestlistapp.com/events/13098>

Bisexual Panel Discussion Group Casual, peer-led conversation group on the second Wednesday of each month. 7pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, <http://www.centeronhalsted.com>

Thursday, March 11

IL HIV/AIDS Lobby Days Training Some refreshments. RSVP to bcadoff@aidschicago.org; 5pm, 312-334-0963, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, 200 W. Jackson, Suite 2200, www.aidschicago.org

Speed Dating for women The first round will begin at 7:15 pm. Rounds will continue until everyone has had a chance to meet, or until 8:45 pm, whichever comes first. Bring your agenda book! "Like to get together for coffee" cards will be matched after the last round ends. Speed Dating is scheduled on the 2nd Thursday of every month, alternating between Men's Night and Women's Night. 6:45pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, www.centeronhalsted.org

Friday, March 12

Equality Across America Midwest Regional Conference Unite and Fight: Strategizing for LGBTQ Civil Rights and Equality through March 14. Featuring Staceyann Chin, performance poet and LGBTQ civil rights activist; Dan Choi, infantry officer in the US Army discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"; Adam Bouska, photographer and creator of the "NO H8" campaign. lgbtrightsmakinganimpact@gmail.com; 1pm, <http://http://equalityacrossamerica.org/conference/>

Saturday, March 20

Freedom to Serve 18th SLDN annual dinner with keynote speaker Rep. Patrick Murphy and special guests. Open Bar, Business Attire, Valet Parking provided. Tix \$225 individual, available online. Info: dah@sldn.org. 6:30pm, 202-621-5419, www.sldn.org/dinner



FEEL THE HEAT

Saturday, March 6

The 11th Annual Jack Daniels Chili Cook-Off will take place at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Photo from 2009 by Kirk Williamson

BILLY MASTERS

"In New York, we don't sleep together. I like it this way. It's my decision."—Diane von Furstenberg talks about her marriage to Barry Diller. I assumed they didn't sleep together, but it's nice to hear it was her decision. Now we know who the top is in that relationship!

If there was an Olympic medal awarded for worst plastic surgery, Bob Costas would definitely take the gold. I dunno what he's had done—a face lift, an eye lift or maybe the Botox needle hit an optical nerve. But every time they cut to him, he's got this crazy bug-eyed stare. It's a kinda spooky look—like he just saw the ghost of Dick Button. What? Dick's still alive? Could have fooled me! He certainly wasn't wearing those shoes in the Ramble!

While wife Catherine Zeta-Jones is entertaining the masses on Broadway, hubby Michael Douglas is practicing the piano. Why? He's going forward with a big-screen biopic about pianist Liberace that will be directed by Steven Soderbergh. The hold-up was casting the role of Lee's lover, Scott Thorson. Michael was hell-bent on landing Matt Damon—who isn't? And he got his wish. Damon's in...perhaps that was a poor choice of words under the circumstances.

Lord knows where Matt Damon will squeeze this in ... again, perhaps a poor choice of words. He has just been announced to play JFK in a biopic, is reuniting with buddy Ben Affleck for a movie, and has at least two other films in pre-production. Busy boy.

As you know, James Franco has been studying film at NYU. His short, "The Feast of Stephen," has raised more than eyebrows after screenings in Las Vegas and Berlin. Based on Anthony Hecht's poem, the subject matter is a teenage boy's sexual awakening, with lines like: "Boys for the first time frankly eye each other, inspect each others' bodies at close range." Well, Franco delivers. We see said boy watching a shirts vs. skins basketball game. And then we see the boy's fantasy—the skins being not only shirtless, but pantless. Franco is happy to show every inch of these ball players' skin (including foreskin) in a way reminiscent of those early Bruce Weber A&F commercials. You can sneak a peek at BillyMasters.com.

Law & Order: SVU is really pulling out the guns when it comes to guest stars. Last week, we told you about Kathy Griffin. Keep your eyes open for another redhead to pop up—Ann-Margret. The legendary lady will pop up on the March 31 episode, playing an actress who used to make television commercials in the '70s (think Rula Lenska). The episode also includes Jaclyn Smith who will play a retired cop who comes out of retirement to help solve an old crime that Rula ... er, I mean A-M was involved in. A bigger crime is that no one even thought to simply hire poor ole Rula! Even worse, the brass found a way to fit in cameos by both Morgan Fairchild and Susan Anton. Oh, the injustice of it all...

You may not believe this, but I can't wait till I start getting gray hairs. Of course, I could already be going grey. God knows, I haven't let the poor follicles breathe! But I think the salt and pepper look is so hot on guys. Take Matt LeBlanc, who was recently snapped sporting an almost completely gray head of hair. First time I've found him sexy in eons.

I've been getting a steady stream of Olympic "Ask Billy" questions, like this one from George in Dallas: "Evan Lysacek. Straight? So tall and lean and muscular. Really? And what's his body like under that Lycra?"

Certainly all reports indicate that the gold-medal winner loves the ladies. And during an interview with spooky old Bob Costas, his speech pattern was eerily reminiscent of Brian Boitano—another confirmed pussy hound. But, you know, there are other things to take into consideration. Vera Wang, feathers, hair gel, just the



Is Evan Lysacek skating an issue?

right amount of face stubble. Hmm...I dunno. The only females he's been linked to are fellow athletes (shades of Mr. Button). Then there's his body. We must tip our hat to the folks at "OK" magazine, who did a spread featuring shirtless Olympians. Evan's ripped, taut torso (and that little tattoo below his waistline) is certainly something to behold (I'm thinking of something in particular I'd like to behold, but that's another story). Skier Andy Newell was also quite impressive—enough so that I'll post both pics on BillyMasters.com.

Could it be that we haven't seen all of Scott Brown? Sure, there's that nude "Cosmo" shot, but he's covering up the goods. I wondered what else I'd find if I did some digging. For example, didya know he was a successful male model represented by the renowned Wilhelmina in New York for a few years? When he came back to Boston, he was repped by Boston legend Maggie Trichon for about a decade. That's lots of shoots—with a day rate well into four figures. So we dug a little deeper and what do you think popped up? A full-frontal nude photo. It certainly appears to be his face and body. And it's certainly an impressive penis—even if it does lean to the right. But is it real? And where did it come from? And are there more? All of that will be revealed on BillyMasters.com.

When a straight guy has even heard of Vera Wang, it's time for me to roll my eyes and end yet another column. As you all know, I'll be appearing at Jeffrey Sanker's White Party in Palm Springs, Calif. But I won't be alone. While I'll be joined on the white carpet by the glamorous Candis Cayne, pop sensation Ke\$ha will be entertaining the hot, shirtless, sweaty masses with "TiK ToK," among other hits. To get your tickets and more information, go to www.JeffreySanker.com or, better yet, go to www.BillyMasters.com for the latest info and links. If you've got a question, feel free to write me directly at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Ann-Margret gets an endorsement deal with V05! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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The Chicago Blackwolves. Photo courtesy of Stephen Leonard

Gay hockey hits membership high

BY ROSS FORMAN

The Chicago Gay Hockey Association (CGHA) is taking its show on the road, at least for one night.

The CGHA team, known as the Blackwolves, will play a game March 13 against the Columbus (Ohio) Gay Hockey Team at the same arena used by the Columbus Blue Jackets of the National Hockey League (NHL).

The CGHA has about 50 members, its largest membership ever, with 16 full-time players ranging in age from about 20 to 50. The majority are gay, but the CGHA also has bisexual, trans and straight players. Most live within the Chicago city limits.

"It's a great group of individuals and everyone has been having a good time over the past few months; it's been great watching the team succeed and grow," said Stephen Leonard, 25, of Chicago, who, in mid-February was elected the new CGHA president.

"We are all very excited about kicking off the next generation of the CHGA. There is a lot of energy right now with the players and we're looking to bring that to both the hockey and LGBT community in Chicago."

The new CGHA board of directors also includes Andrew Sobotka (vice president), Randy Saeks (treasurer) and Tony Tiet (secretary). Plus, John Adams, Mike Kelly, Ryan Ruskin, Benji Michalek and Tom Economou make up the CGHA's advisory board. Chuck Jacobson, who lives in Lakeview, is the team's founder.

"It's a changing of the guard, so to speak, as all officers are relative newcomers to the team," Leonard said. "Yes, the new Board consists of a handful of team members, mostly fresh new faces with some whom have been with the team for quite awhile."

"We're really aiming to provide a fun and non-discriminatory environment within the hockey community. By doing so, we hope to assist with developing skilled players and build membership while simultaneously providing community outreach. We want to bring the sport to anyone and everyone interested."

The Blackwolves are now in their second season playing at the North Shore Ice Arena in suburban Northbrook. The team is 3-1, most recently defeating the first-place team.

"We have a really strong and diverse team," said Leonard, who plays defense and noted that the team has not had any gay-related issues in the North Shore league. "On the ice, with everyone in competitive mode, things get a little rough from time to time. But when on the ice, sexuality and stereotypes don't seem to play a role. Everyone is there to play and have a good time. And, of course, win."

"It's important to us to keep a fun and safe environment for everyone. We all are connected through the love of the sport."

Leonard, who stopped playing hockey before entering high school in his native Michigan, said the team's skill-level has been steadily increasing over the past year or so.

"We're shaping up to be a really strong group,"

he said.

The CGHA has long participated in the annual Chicago Pride Parade, with most players roller-blading with sticks along the route. The CGHA also will likely have a presence this summer at the annual North Halsted Market Days.

"We're always accepting new members; however, we are mid-season right now, so the chance to be a full-time player," for the remainder of the current season, which ends in the spring is limited," Leonard said. "[New players] will have to wait until next season, which likely will be in the fall. However, we also are in talks of putting together a floor hockey team for the summer."

For more information on the CGHA, visit www.chicagogayhockey.org.

Red Stars open season April 11

The Chicago Red Stars and Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) have announced their 2010 schedules. The season will comprise 24 games (12 home, 12 away) for each team.

The Red Stars' first game will take place Sunday, April 11, at defending champion WPS champion Sky Blue FC; it will shown on Fox Soccer Channel. The Red Stars' first home game (at Toyota Park, located 7000 S. Harlem in Bridgeview) will be Saturday, April 17, vs. Saint Louis Athletica at 7 p.m.

Tickets start at \$15 each; see www.chicagoredstars.com or call 866-WPS-2009.

The schedule is as follows. (Home games are in bold.):

—Sunday, April 11, at Sky Blue FC, 5 p.m. (Fox Soccer Channel)

—**Saturday, April 17, vs. Saint Louis Athletica, 7 p.m.**

—**Sunday, April 25, vs. Sky Blue FC, 5 p.m.**

—Saturday, May 1, at Boston Breakers, 5 p.m.

—Saturday, May 8, at FC Gold Pride, 9 p.m.

—**Saturday, May 15, vs. Philadelphia Independence, 6 p.m.**



Chicago Red Stars.

2010 WCAA Men's Basketball

Competitive	W	L	Intermediate	W	L	Recreational	W	L
Sidetrack	5	2	T's	5	2	Big Chicks	7	0
Jackhammer	4	2	Sidetrack	5	2	T's	5	2
3160	4	2	Sofo	5	2	Spin	3	4
Hamburger Mary's	4	3	Gotcha Covered Blinds	4	3	Taste of Heaven	2	5
Roscoe's	2	5	Crew	4	3	Triad Entertainment	2	5
Solfire Realty	1	6	Apocalypse	2	5	The Green Team	2	5
			Hamburger Mary's	0	8			

—Teams listed by sponsor

Ruck wild



The 2010 Miss Ruck & Maul Pageant, a fundraiser for the Chicago Dragons Rugby Football Club, took place Feb. 27 in the glass bar at the Boystown nightclub Sidetrack. Photos by Kirk Williamson



—Saturday, May 29, vs. FC Gold Pride, 7 p.m.

—Sunday, June 6, vs. Atlanta Beat, 5 p.m. (Fox Soccer Channel)

—Saturday, June 12, at Washington Freedom, 6 p.m.

—Saturday, June 19, at Atlanta Beat, 6 p.m.

—Friday, June 25, at Boston Breakers, 6:30 p.m.

—**Wed., July 7, vs. Washington Freedom, 7:30 p.m.**

—**Saturday, July 10, vs. Philadelphia Independence, 6 p.m.**

—Sunday, July 18, at Saint Louis Athletica, 7:10 p.m.

—Wed., July 21, at Atlanta Beat, 6:30 p.m.

—**Sunday, July 25, vs. Boston Breakers, 3 p.m.**

—Sunday, Aug. 1, at Sky Blue FC, 6 p.m.

—Saturday, Aug. 7, at FC Gold Pride, 9 p.m.

—**Wed., Aug. 11, vs. Atlanta Beat, 7:30 p.m.**

—Sunday, Aug. 15, at Philadelphia Independence, 5 p.m.

—**Sunday, Aug. 22, vs. FC Gold Pride, 5 p.m. (Fox Soccer Channel)**

—Saturday, Aug. 28, at Saint Louis Athletica, 7:10 p.m.

—**Sunday, Sept. 5, vs. Washington Freedom, TBD (Fox Soccer Channel)**

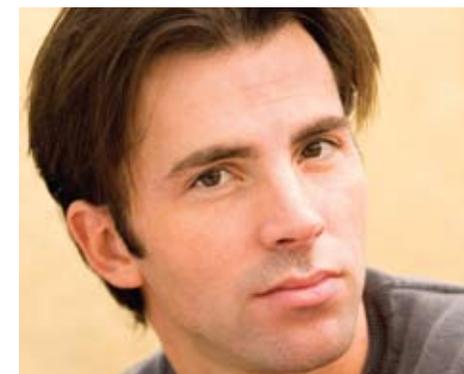
—**Saturday, Sept. 11, vs. Saint Louis Athletica, 6 p.m.**

Smuckers on Ice at Rosemont May 8

The Smucker's Stars on Ice Tour—which will include several Olympians—will stop in the Chicago area with a performance at Rosemont's Allstate Arena Saturday, May 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Among the skaters scheduled to perform are 2010 Olympic gold medalist Evan Lysacek; 2006 Olympic silver medalists Tanith Belbin & Benjamin Agosto; 2006 Olympic silver medalist Sasha Cohen; world champion and six-time national champion Todd Eldredge; and two-time world bronze medalist and three-time national champion Michael Weiss.

Tickets start at \$25 each; stop by the Allstate Arena box office or any Ticketmaster centers, charge by phone at 800-745-3000 or visit www.ticketmaster.com.



Michael Weiss.

Weir fires back

Figure skater Johnny Weir, who represented the United States in the 2010 Winter Olympics, has criticized Canadian broadcasters Claude Mailhot and Alain Goldberg, who intimated Weir's costumes and "body language" were in bad taste, according to People.com.

The broadcasters also joked that Weir might have to take a gender test like South African runner Caster Semenya did. Weir told reporters, "It wasn't these two men criticizing my skating; it was them criticizing me as a person, and that was something that really, frankly, pissed me off. Nobody knows me. ... I think masculinity is what you believe it to be."

Interestingly, out singer Adam Lambert has come to Weir's defense. According to MTV.com, the musician told the entertainment show Access Hollywood, "I'm glad he's a trailblazer. He's comfortable in his own skin, clearly. And he's expressing himself. I think that's what art's all about."



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Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC

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

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

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



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