DADT repealed: Ban to be history

BY REX WOCKNER

"Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell," the military’s ban on open gays, is headed for the dustbin of history. The Senate voted 65-31 on Dec. 18 to authorize the policy’s repeal and sent the measure to President Barack Obama for his signature.

Eight Republicans joined all but one Democrat in voting to repeal the ban. They were Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine, Scott Brown of Massachusetts, Richard Burr of North Carolina, John Ensign of Nevada, Mark Kirk of Illinois, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and George Voinovich of Ohio. Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia did not vote.

Obama plans to sign the bill quickly, but that will not end the ban. Gay servicemembers will need to stay in the closet for a few more months.

After Obama signs the measure, he and the secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must certify that the military is ready for the change and that it will not harm military readiness or effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting or member retention.

Then, after that, DADT repeal will take effect 60 days later. The process is expected to proceed relatively smoothly.

“No longer will patriots be forced to lie in order to serve the country they love and are willing to die for,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. “This vote by the United States Senate will have extremely positive ripple effects well beyond Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.

“Our government has sent a powerful message that discrimination, on any level, should not be tolerated.”

Rick Garcia’s bitter split from Equality Illinois

BY YASMIN NAIR

Rick Garcia was let go from his post as political director of Equality Illinois last week. He is fighting back against the termination.

Equality Illinois Executive Director Bernard Cherkasov announced Dec. 17 that Garcia, a co-founder of the agency, was no longer working with the organization.

Coming on the heels of the civil-unions bill and in the midst of the holiday season, the news has caused ripples of shock as well as a great many questions on many sides. Garcia has had a long career in the arena of gay rights and has, over the years, engendered as much support as criticism due to his style of advocacy. He has not been known to mince his words, a trait that was in evidence in an initial interview he did with Windy City Times immediately following the announcement.

In the intervening few days, Windy City Times has been speaking to a number of people about the controversy in order to get a fuller sense of the events that led to the decision; the following is a compendium of initial responses. In the following weeks, we will continue to gather more responses, information and analysis on an ongoing basis.

June LaTrobe is a longtime friend and political associate of Garcia. The two have worked together on numerous campaigns. Asked what she thought might be the reasons for the ouster, she said, “I don’t know. I can’t imagine that whatever the executive director’s motivation was, he would not have anticipated the firestorm that it would cause. I’ve gotten the impression that the morale among staff is not what it could have been and part of that.” She said that was the impression she got from staff members, but she

President Obama makes Congressional calls before the Dec. 18 Senate DADT-repeal vote. White House photo by Pete Souza

Rick Garcia. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

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Celebrate the Passage of the Civil Unions Bill

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**A MORE PERFECT UNION**
Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal held an informative civil-unions forum Dec. 15. Read about what happened.

Photo of panelist Simon Anonoff by Kate Sasin

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**STEAK ‘N SHAKE**
Dish List returns with a look at two steakhouses: Chicago Cut Steakhouse and Grotto Oak Brook.

Photo courtesy of Megan Osterhout

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**EDWARD ALBEE’S WHO’S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?**
Directed by: PAM MACKINNON
Featuring ensemble members: TRACY LETTS & AMY MORTON
with CARRIE COON & MADISON DIRKS

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- Passages; Salvation Army
- Rick Garcia/Equality Illinois divide
- Viewpoints by Salm & Burks; letter

Photos on cover (left, from top): Photograph of Gery Chico from Brooke Anderson; Michael Feinstein PR photo; Katharine McPhee PR image

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**DAILY BREAKING NEWS**
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The U.S. Senate approved a bill Saturday, Dec. 18, to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT), the 17-year-old law banning openly gay people from serving in the military. The roll-call vote on the measure, which came to the Senate Dec. 15 from the House, was 65 to 31. It had passed the House 250 to 175. Because both bills are identical, it now moves to the president’s desk for his signature. The White House issued a statement, calling the vote the “historic step forward ending a policy that undermines our national security.” The Senate vote to repeal the DADT, which came at about 3:20 p.m. ET on Dec. 18, seemed almost anti-climactic. It came three hours after a procedural vote (known as cloture) to send the bill to the Senate floor. The procedural vote was 63 to 33, with one senator not voting.

Two previous motions on cloture—one in September and one last week—had failed. But this time, six moderate Republicans voted for sending the bill to the floor and for repeal: Sens. Scott Brown of Massachusetts; Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine; Mark Kirk of Illinois; Lisa Murkowski of Alaska; and George Voinovich of Ohio. On previous cloture votes, they had stood by a Republican Party demand that the Senate not consider any legislative item until the Senate has acted to fund the government and we have prevented the tax increase.... Both the House and Senate passed a Republican-sought tax extension earlier in the week have passed a continuing resolution to fund the government until final appropriations bills can be approved.

Aubrey Sarvis, head of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, issued a statement immediately after the cloture motion passed, praising the vote and asking that Defense Secretary Robert Gates “use the authority” he has until such time as the repeal can be certified and implemented, as called for in the legislation.

The first of two votes on DADT repeal came after more than an hour of vigorous and sometimes emotional debate Saturday morning. Democrats urged their colleagues to “do the right thing” and repeal the policy, and Republicans chided Democrats for not allowing for any amendments and bringing up the issue at a bad time. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., went to the Senate floor around 9:30 Saturday morning, acknowledging that his ability to vote was a large amount of attention in the previous 48 hours because he is scheduled to have prostate surgery on Monday. Some political observers had speculated Wyden might not be available for the repeal vote if it was postponed until Monday, Dec. 20.

Wyden spoke strongly for repeal of DADT, saying it was forcing the military to turn away and discharge many experts in such crucial languages as Arabic, Farsi, and Chinese. But more importantly, said Wyden, the ban is “wrong” and “never should have been perpetuated” against gay servicemembers in the first place. Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo., echoed that favor of ending the policy and quoted the words of a letter published Dec. 16 in the Washington Post by an active duty infantry Marine Corps captain, Nathan Cox. Cox said he is not gay but that, in his experience, “the things that separate Marines in civilian life fade into obscurity on the battlefield.”

“Sure, only one thing matters,” wrote Cox. “Can you do your job?”

“It is time for ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ to join our other mistakes in the dog-eared chapters of history textbooks,” said Udall from the lectern. “We all bleed red, we all love our country, we are all Marines. In the end, that’s all that matters.”

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said the policy is unconstitutional and “does more harm than good.”

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who led the filibuster against repeal of DADT, claimed repeal would cause harm, and he repeatedly suggested it would lead to more soldiers losing limbs and lives.

“This debate is not about the broader social issues that are being discussed in our society,” said McCain, “but what is in the best interest in our national security and our military during a time of war.”

The primary objections of Republicans were about timing and their inability to amend the bill. Democrats “know they can’t get [passed] next January 5, ... that’s why they’re jamming this through now,” said McCain, referring to the fact that Republicans last month won a majority in the House and an increased number of Republicans in the Senate.

McCain also said he filed two amendments to the DADT-repeal bill but that, because Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid had closed any amendments beyond those he wished to consider, McCain’s amendments could not be heard. Sen. Minority Leader Mitch McConnell also criticized Reid’s blocking of amendments, even while acknowledging that, years ago, it was Democrats who were criticizing Republicans for doing the same thing.

McConnell said “tibal interest groups have more influence over personnel military policy than the senior enlisted leaders of the Army and Marine Corps.” He said he wanted to amend the bill to enable service chiefs to participate in the bill’s certification process.

The process for implementation of repeal calls for the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to certify the repeal can be implemented without harming military readiness. After that, there is a 60-day waiting period during which time Congress could presumably “review” the implementation plan. Legal scholar Nan Hunter said the 60-day period is essentially “just a countdown period, though “Congress could always re-enter the picture.” But Hunter noted that an effort to undo repeal “obviously” does not have the votes.

Reid, reacting to McConnell’s complaints, smiled and shook his head, and reminded listeners that the Senate has been “stymied, stopped, and stymied some more” by “procedural roadblocks of this Republican minority.”

But McCain essentially conceded defeat during his remarks, saying he believed repeal would pass Saturday and that “there will be high fives over the liberal bastions around the country. “But don’t think it won’t be at great cost,” said McCain. “...We are doing great damage.”

Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., said it’s a “given” that gays and lesbians serve admirably in the military, but he said allowing them to serve openly now “has the potential for increasing the risk of harm and death to our men and women who are serving in combat today.”

“Should it be done at some point in time?” asked Chambliss. “Maybe so. But in the middle of a military conflict is not the time to do it.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., seemed uncomfortable with the couching of repeal in terms of civil rights.

“Some will say this is a civil rights issue of our time, the day has come, we need to move forward and do it,” said Graham. “The Marine Corps does not have that view.”

Graham, and others, accused Democrats as simply playing politics with both DADT repeal and the DREAM immigration act, trying to pacify specific constituencies.

Senator Dick Durbin, D-Ill., the majority whip of the Senate, said, referring to both the DREAM Act vote and the DADT repeal bill, “This is our moment in history to show our courage.”

And Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, rejected claims that the repeal has come as a political ploy to court gay votes.

“We cannot let these patriots down,” said Levin. “Their suffering should end. It will end with the passage of this bill.”

In his statement, President Obama said he is “absolutely convinced” that repeal will “underscore the professionalism of our troops as the best led and best trained fighting force the world has ever known.”

In a bit of historic irony, the procedural vote was the same as in 1993, when Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., sought to head off passage of the DADT bill by offering an amendment to delete it from the defense authorization bill to which it had been attached. Boxer’s amendment failed 33 to 63.

Senators who did not vote on the procedural roll call Dec. 18 were Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia and three Republicans: Jim Bunning of Kentucky, Judd Gregg of New Hampshire and Orrin Hatch of Utah. With four senators not voting, the motion would have passed with only 58 votes.

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Advocates on DADT-repeal passage

With the repeal to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” passing through Congress on Dec. 18, gay-rights organizations, as expected, praised the development. Here is what a few organizations and individuals had to say:

—U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley, D-Ill.: “Today, we have righted a wrong. We have repealed a policy that was both morally repugnant and counter-productive to our national security. We have taken an extraordinary step toward equal rights for all Americans. Today, we have done the right thing.”

—Robin McGehee, GeEQUAL: “Repeal of DADT is just one of the things that GetEQUAL sees as a priority in order to work toward full legal and social equality. Far from being a lob-bying group or political insiders, we are committed to doing whatever it takes to smash down the walls of discrimination and inequality that surround us. Yes, that includes military discrimi-nation—but it includes so many other things, as well.

“Today, we honor those who have taken action with GetEQUAL over the past nine months, knowing that we need many more to join them. Please join us in honoring them—and by reaffirming your own commitment to work toward a day in which we are all equal.”

—Mitchell Gold, founder of Faith In Amer-i-can: “Today’s vote in the U.S. Senate is a monument-al achievement in the annals of the LGBT civil rights movement. First, it means our gay service men and women can live their lives with the same human dignity as others. An incredible burden of inequality has been lifted from these men and women.

“Second, this effort signals the end of reli-gion-based bigotry within one of the largest and most revered institutions in our society. That is historic as well.”

“Most importantly, today’s vote sends a mes-sage to our gay youth that one of the largest institutions in our society considers them fully deserving of human dignity and equality. That is a powerful message, and one that all youth and their families need to hear.”

—Jo Smith (pseudonym), the active-duty co-director of OutServe: “OutServe looks forward to the day that repeal of this law is signed by our commander in chief and the certification process is complete so we can all begin to serve our country and has resulted in the lack of clarity among the ranks.”

—U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.: “The Senate vote today finally marks the end of a sad chapter in American history. Since its inception, the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy has been an un-American assault on our most fundamen-tal tenet—that ‘all men are created equal.’ The policy discriminates against gay and lesbian service members. People who currently serve or wish to serve in the military, including those previously discharged who wish to rejoin, ... The repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is long overdue, but no less welcome.”

—American Psychological Association President Carol D. Goodheart, Ed.D: “This long-awaited action is an important step toward allowing gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to serve openly and honorably in the armed forces. Re-pell of the ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy will lift a heavy psychological burden of secrecy from gay, lesbian and bisexual military personnel.”

—GLAAD President Jarrett Barrios: “To deny brave men and women the ability to serve their country openly and honestly is to reject the fundamental American principles of fairness and equality for all. Today’s vote by a majority of the overwhelming majority of Americans who support the repeal, moves us one step closer to ending a ban which undermines our national se-curity and has resulted in the loss of critical and skilled service members.”

—American Foundation for Equal Rights: “Today’s vote to end the egregious and discrimi-natory ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy is a major vic-tory for the millions of patriotic gay and lesbian Americans who have and who continue to serve their country honorably. This historic vote is also a victory for the principles on which our nation was founded: all Americans are equal under the law and no one should be subject to discrimina-tion.

“Today it further evidence that the fight for equal right for gay and lesbian Americans, which has historically been seen as a partisan issue is increasingly becoming bipartisan.”


“It is ... important that our men and women in uniform understand that while today’s historic vote means that this policy will change, the im-plementation and certification process will take an additional period of time. In the meantime, the current law and policy will remain in effect. “Successful implementation will depend upon strong leadership, a clear message and proactive education throughout the force. With a contin-ued and sustained commitment to core values of leadership, professionalism and respect for all, I am convinced that the U.S. military can success-fully accommodate and implement this change, as it has others in history.”

—Chicago mayoral candidate Miguel del Valle: “I applaud the Senate for moving the United States one step closer to full repeal of the obsolete and unjust ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy.”

“This passage marks a shift in the country’s military culture, where now individuals will be able to serve proudly and openly, regardless of their sexual orientation.”

U.S. Senate fails to advance Dream Act

U.S. Senate voted 55-41 Dec. 18 to not ad-advance a vote on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act to the floor.

The Dream Act would have provided afford-able post-secondary education and military service opportunities for undocumented im-migrants who came to the U.S. as children.

First, it means our gay service men and women can live their lives with the same human dignity as others. An incredible burden of inequality has been lifted from these men and women.

“Second, this effort signals the end of reli-gion-based bigotry within one of the largest and most revered institutions in our society. That is historic as well.”

“Most importantly, today’s vote sends a mes-sage to our gay youth that one of the largest institutions in our society considers them fully advancing a vote on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act to the floor.

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INDICATION: REYATAZ is a prescription medicine used in combination with other medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). REYATAZ has been studied in a 48-week trial in patients who have taken anti-HIV medicines and a 96-week trial in patients who have never taken anti-HIV medicines.

REYATAZ does not cure HIV or lower your chance of passing HIV to others.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not take REYATAZ if you are taking the following medicines due to potential for serious, life-threatening side effects or death: Verapamil® (modazemil) when taken by mouth; Halcinon® (triazolam), ergot medicines (dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®); Migrelate®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotate maleate, Metherazine®, and others); Propulsid® (cyclosporine), or Orap® (ilmocidid). Do not take REYATAZ with the following medicines due to potential for serious side effects: Camptosar® (cyclophosphamide), CinquaRex® (indinavir), Merenac® (lovastatin), Zocor® (simvastatin), Ursodex® (cholesterol), or Revatio® (sildenafil).

Do not take REYATAZ with the following medicines as they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood, which may lead to increased HIV viral load and resistance to REYATAZ or other anti-HIV medicines: ritampin (also known as Rimactane®), Rifadin®, Rifamate®, or Rimactane®; St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum)-containing products, or Virunume® (niravipine). Serendent® (salmeterol) and Advair® (salmeterol with fluticasone) are not recommended with REYATAZ.

Do not take Viread® (tenofovir) if you are taking REYATAZ and Norvir® (ritonavir).

The above lists of medicines are not complete. Taking REYATAZ with some other medicines may require your therapy to be monitored more closely or may require a change in dose or dose schedule of REYATAZ or the other medicine. Discuss with your healthcare provider all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamin and herbal supplements, or other health preparations you are taking or plan to take.

Tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant, breast-feeding, planning to become pregnant or breast-feed, or if you have end-stage kidney disease managed with hemodialysis or severe liver dysfunction.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effects, symptoms, or conditions, including the following:

- Mild rash (redness and itching) without other symptoms sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ. Most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started, and usually goes away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment.

- Severe rash has occurred in a small number of patients taking REYATAZ. This type of rash is associated with other symptoms that could be serious and potentially cause death. If you develop a rash with any of the following symptoms, stop using REYATAZ and call your healthcare provider right away:
  - Shortness of breath
  - General Ill feeling or “flu-like” symptoms
  - Fever
  - Muscle or joint aches

- Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).

- A change in the way your heart beats may occur. You may feel dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.

- Diabetes and high blood sugar may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.

- If you have liver disease, including hepatitis B or C, it may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.

- Kidney stones have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ. Signs or symptoms of kidney stones include pain in your side, blood in your urine, and pain when you urinate.

- Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ.

- Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term effects are not known at this time.

- Gallbladder disorders (including gallstones and gallbladder inflammation) have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

You should take REYATAZ once daily with food (a meal or snack). Swallow the capsules whole; do not open the capsules. You should take REYATAZ and your other anti-HIV medicines exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.
Once-daily REYATAZ can help fight your HIV.

REYATAZ, a protease inhibitor (PI), in HIV combination therapy:

- Can help lower your viral load and raise your T-cell (CD4+ cell) count
- Has a low chance of diarrhea (shown in clinical trials)
  - REYATAZ in combination therapy had a 1%-3% rate of moderate-to-severe diarrhea in adults
- Is taken once a day with a snack or meal

REYATAZ is one of several treatment options your doctor may consider.

Do not take REYATAZ if you are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.

Ask your healthcare team about REYATAZ www.REYATAZ.com

REYATAZ does not cure HIV and has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others.
About all the medicines you take with REYATAZ?”

If you have diabetes.

pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and those that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other.

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by

infections.

At present there is no cure for

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

REYATAZ does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC) infections. It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking REYATAZ.

REYATAZ does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

Who should not take REYATAZ?

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

• are taking certain medicines. (See “Important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?” Some medicines can cause severe side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if REYATAZ is right for you. If you use REYATAZ while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.

• If you are breastfeeding. You should not breast-feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Also, it is not known if REYATAZ can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

• If you have liver problems or are infected with the hepatitis B or C virus. See “What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?”

• If you have diabetes. See “What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?”

• If you have hemophilia. See “What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?”

• About all the medicines you take including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your healthcare provider. For more information, see “What information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?” and “Who should not take REYATAZ?” Some medicines can cause serious side effects if taken with REYATAZ.
REYATAZ® (atazanavir sulfate)

- a change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
- If you have liver disease including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- kidney stones have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ. If you develop signs or symptoms of kidney stones (pain in your side, blood in your urine, pain when you urinate) tell your healthcare provider promptly.
- some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.
- changes in body fat. These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet, and muscle pain.

Gallbladder disorders (which may include gallstones and gallbladder inflammation) have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?

Do not take REYATAZ if you take the following medicines (not all brands may be listed; tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take). REYATAZ may cause serious, life-threatening side effects or death when used with these medicines.

- Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHEDRINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- GRAM® (gentamicin, used for Tourette’s disorder).
- PROPLISUP® (cispride, used for certain stomach problems).
- Trazodolam, also known as HALDOL® (used for insomnia).
- Micamapam, also known as VERSED® (used for sedation), when taken by mouth.

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because of possible serious side effects:

- CAMPFOS® (furosemide, used for cancer).
- CRIVIXAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIVIXAN sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin). There is an increased risk of liver problems when used with REYATAZ. If you use these medicines with REYATAZ, your healthcare provider will tell you if it is okay.
- MCV® (methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHEDRINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
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REYATAZ may affect the safety and effectiveness of hormonal contraceptives such as birth control pills or the contraceptive patch. Hormonal contraceptives do not prevent the spread of HIV to others.

Remember:
1. Know all the medicines you take.
2. Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.
3. Do not start a new medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.

How should I store REYATAZ?

Store REYATAZ Capsules at room temperature, 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C). Do not store this medicine in a damp place such as a bathroom medicine cabinet or near the kitchen sink.

Keep your medicine in a tightly closed container.

Keep all medicines out of the reach of children and pets at all times. Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Dispose of unused medicines through community take-back disposal programs when available or place REYATAZ in an unrecognizable, closed container in the household trash.

General information about REYATAZ

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use REYATAZ for another condition. Do not give REYATAZ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. Keep REYATAZ and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.

This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. REYATAZ is sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-321-1335.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?

Active Ingredient: atazanavir sulfate

Inactive Ingredients: Crotospoviolide, lactose monohydrate (milk sugar), magnesium stearate, gelatin, FD&C Blue #2, and titanium dioxide.

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The advocacy had an opportunity to ask questions to the panelists, who also included Dr. Lisa Henry-Reid and Dr. Margo Bell, both with Project PrePare. Many seemed concerned with how long the drug had to be taken and whether or not the risks outweighed the benefits. Pick- erill pointed out that lopside is not meant to be taken throughout someone's entire life, but during specific times, such as periods of sexual activity. He also recognized that the detractors of being on HIV medication were much lower than the benefits.

"Even with all of this great data," said Hosek, "condoms are still more effective in preventing HIV transmission."

More about Project PrePare is at http://www.projectpreparechicago.com.
Salvation Army’s views may partially explain donation decrease

BY JOSEPH ERENBRAUT

While the Salvation Army’s stance on homosexual behavior may not be a new point of contention for many LGBT activists, recent reports of a drastic drop-off in donations to the group’s iconic Red Kettle Campaign in the Chicago area have elicited speculation that the group’s anti-gay reputation may be putting a dent into its fundraising haul this holiday season.

According to a Dec. 13 Associated Press article, Chicagoland contributions to the Salvation Army’s practically ubiquitous bell-and-kettle campaign, responsible for roughly 70 percent of the organization’s funding, are down 13 percent over last year’s numbers while demand for the group’s services have shot up exponentially. In the story, Army spokeswoman Dee McKinsey blamed bad weather and the stunted economy for the campaign only netting $4.1 million, compared to $4.6 million during the same time period last year.

But some LGBT activists suggest the lower numbers are due to Chicaogos becoming increasingly aware of the army’s opposition to same-sex relationships and history of lobbying against pro-gay legislation and carrying out questionable hiring practices.

According to the Salvation Army’s website, the group “does not consider same-sex orientation blameworthy in itself” and opposes “de-meaning or mistreating” anyone. Nonetheless, the group advises gays and lesbians to “embrace celibacy as a way of life” because “Scripture forbids sexual intimacy between members of the same sex.”

In 2004, the army’s New York chapter threatened to close the city’s soup kitchens and end its services to the homeless there if the local government passed legislation forcing it to offer health benefits to partners of their gay employees. In 2001, the group ceased offering domestic-partner benefits to all its California employees since some benefits were being received by same-sex couples. That same year, the group unsuccessfully attempted to pressure Bush administration staff into ending LGBT non-discrimination laws for faith-based groups.

While the organization’s policy on LGBT issues also states that its services are available to all who qualify, regardless of sexual orientation, and that their fellowship is open to “all who qualify, regardless of sexual orientation,” according to the Salvation Army’s website, “sincere seekers of faith in Christ,” presumably including queer people of faith, Rainbow Social Movement executive director Joe Murray described the Army’s “use of Biblical text to justify not hiring openly gay employees or recognizing LGBT relationships as “obscene.”

“Whether they’re conscious of it or not, this is blanket discrimination against gay families,” Murray told Windy City Times. “It’s plain and simple discrimination … People in our community and our allies need to be aware that there are religious groups out there promoting discrimination and doing it in the name of good works.”

“That is hypocritical,” Murray added, noting that many organizations within the LGBT community, such as the Howard Brown Health Center, are also in dire need of support at this time and represent a far more LGBT-friendly recipient of donations.

Andy Thayer, co-founder of the Gay Liberation Network, described the army’s policy as sending “a mixed message, at best.” He said the group’s practices are representative of a larger problem of several faith-based agencies in the Chicago area who are contracted by the city to provide social services while, at the same time, violating the city’s LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination employment law.

He said he would like to see a city law that would eliminate faith-based exemptions for groups like the army and Catholic Charities under contract to prove certain city services. Meanwhile, he hoped the city’s queer community will continue to “be the Salvation Army’s bigotry out of the closet.”

“We need to call them out and make them pay a price for [this],” these groups like to run stealth campaigns, having their cake and eating it too,” Thayer said. “They want to practice their bigotry, but at the same time, they’ll project a public image of just being another warm fuzzy charity that people should give to … We need to label them as the bigots that they are.”

At press time, the Salvation Army’s Chicago office area did not return Windy City Times calls for comment for this story.

Howard Brown to mark 50-day appeal

Howard Brown Health Center is nearing the finish line in its unprecedented LifeLine Appeal to raise $500,000 in 50 days. At nearly 90 percent to goal, the LGBTQA community’s health center has just $50,000 left to raise by Thursday, Dec. 23.

To help close the $50,000 gap and ensure Howard Brown’s future success, an existing donor has made a pledge to match, dollar for dollar, the first business or person to donate $25,000 between now and Dec. 25. The anonymous donor has already provided previous challenge grants, totaling $150,000 to date.

The community, patients and clients of Howard Brown Health Center have been invited to celebrate Dec. 23, 3-4:30 p.m., at the primary clinic located at 4025 N. Sheri-

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The community, patients and clients of Howard Brown Health Center have been invited to celebrate Dec. 23, 3-4:30 p.m., at the primary clinic located at 4025 N. Sheridan. To donate to Howard Brown’s Lifeline appeal, visit http://www.HowardBrown.org or call 773-388-1600.
could not name names.

Asked how she felt about events, she said, “As angry as I may be, one of the things I’m experiencing is a lot of sadness because when I look at the Rainbow Community in Illinois we’re already marginalized group, we already have elements outside of our community that we have to deal with and to me it’s really sad to have this to deal with internally. It’s a lot of distress and it takes away energy that could be put into other things. One of the things that I had talked to Rick about was that now Equality Illinois wanted to go at the forefront of ensuring that the civil unions bill was being carried out equally and appropriately throughout the state because it requires the direct action of the county clerk and not every county is Cook County. So here you have some things to be done, some things to be cared for and yet the organization is having its energies sucked up on this sort of thing.”

On the night of Dec. 17, Jeremy Gottschalk, president of the board of directors of Equality Illinois, sent out a joint statement signed by 17 of the 23 directors. The six who did not sign were Rocco Claps, Vernita Gray, Catherine Silsara, Tonya Wilkes Moore, Stephen S. Herseth and Art Johnston. The message, titled “Regarding the termination of Rick Garcia from Equality Illinois,” simply stated: “We, as Directors of the Board of Equality Illinois, terminate this decision. This is about what’s best for Equality Illinois, and we are focusing on moving forward and strengthening our organization.” The general impression so far has been that the decision to fire Garcia was arbitrary and quickly made.

Dalia Fridi is vice president of the board directors, and she clarified matters while addressing some specific issues. According to her, the decision was the end result of a long process that had begun a year ago, and that the board’s personnel committee had matters with Garcia: “We discussed it with Rick and then again in summer set him down and went through his review and what we expect from him and what he needs to do to reach those goals. The request came from the board and the CEO.”

Asked what the issues raised with Garcia were, she said those were personnel matters she was not free to discuss. In the summer, according to her, Garcia was given a period of 90 days to show changes: “We gave him a letter and he signed that, he agreed upon our staking our goals and our expectations of his work. The decision [to fire him] came out based on what we discussed, ... we stated that this is what we the board and Bernard expect from him as a political director and we discussed [all] of the personnel matters that we had concerns about, and we did mention that this is a work that we would like to see changes by the end of the year.”

When November/December of this year came about, Fridi said, they did not revisit the matter because they were concentrating on the civil unions bill. She emphasized that, “we respect, Rick, [we don’t] deny anything that he’s done. But like I said, this was clearly, straightforwardly a personnel matter, nothing to do with his work for Equality Illinois or the civil unions bill. Or the other bills that he worked hard on helping pass. But yes, we wanted to wait, we didn’t want to disturb the whole civil unions bill.”

With regard to the timing, many in the community have expressed concern that Garcia was effectively used for his skills in helping to bring the civil-unions bill about, with other agencies and individuals, and then let go when the organization felt it could no longer do without him. Responding to that concern, Fridi emphasized that she was speaking for herself, but “I don’t agree with those assumptions.” She added, “We appreciate everything he’s done and this is clearly a personnel matter and nothing that reflects on his skills.” Asked whether four members had not signed, she said, “I can’t speak for the board members. Some have had a relationship with Rick for over 20 years, but again this is just me assuming that. So again, if you look at the 17 on the press release, we’re all behind the decision.”

Jeremy Gottschalk also spoke to Windy City Times and added some more details. He would not discuss the reasons for the ouster and said, ”[Rick Garcia’s] been involved within this process all the way along … He certainly knows. Everything was made very clear to him from the beginning and he’s been involved in the process the entire time.”

Asked about the four board members who had not signed, Gottschalk said, “One more board member, Tonya Wilkes Moore, should be added to that list. And then there were four board members that now have expressed concerns. I did not ask them to sign that letter. They did not refuse to sign that letter. I did not ask because they now have expressed. I wouldn’t say disagreement, but they … I assumed they would not be comfortable signing it so I didn’t ask. Every single board member, every single board member knew of this entire process and knew of all possible outcomes. You know, I’m a little perplexed now that a few board members are second-guessing it but that’s their right. That’s absolutely their right. But that’s why I did not ask them to sign that. They did not say no. They were not asked.”

What about the timing of the decision? Gottschalk responded, “He precipitated this. He precipitated the timing and this had nothing to do with the civil unions bill or with anything else. This is purely following the process we laid out for him.” Did that mean there was a whole process laid out and this was simply the inevitable result of that long process? Gottschalk responded, “Well, it was one of the possible results.”

Asked about the future of the organization, he said, “the organization is stronger than ever. And there has been an overwhelming amount of support and this will not derail our work.”

Bernard Cherkasov was emphatic that the work of Equality Illinois would carry on. Like the others, he would not describe “personnel matters,” but did say, “there were no surprises for anyone here.” Asked to elaborate, he added, “members of the board have known that we’ve been trying to avoid this situation, we’ve been working on these issues for a long time. It’s unfortunate that this is where we ended up.”

Asked about the political director, Cherkasov responded, “There is no good time for a personnel decision like this.” Asked if they were looking for a new political director or had anyone in mind, he said, “We don’t have anyone in mind. But in due time we’re going to start the process to beef up our policy team. We do have and we’ve had for a long time lobbyists, both Republican and Democratic, who have been doing our advocacy work for some time.”

Citing the work ahead for the organization, Cherkasov said, “We’ve been doing a lot of aggressive outreach work, and now we’re going to focus on stronger transgender equality work, to make sure we follow up closely the implementation of civil unions, make sure the will of the legislature is implemented as civil unions are rolled out and so that we can continue to do outreach to communities of color and communities of faith and that is going to require a lot of effort, a lot of work.”

Asked for a statement about Rick Garcia, he said, “Rick has been one of the most passionate advocates for equality. The immediate aftermath of a separation is always a difficult period. Whichever his next journey takes him, I wish him every success. I think my intention is for this process to be the utmost professional and we can make it work, make sure it’s absolutelyamicable. The politics of personal destruction has been not helpful to anyone in the organization, to anyone in our movement. But I think as passions cool down, I hope people come to realize that this is not about individuals, it’s about a cause. And we have to keep working towards full equality … and not focus on destructive personalities.”

Equality Illinois and Rick Garcia part ways; El on civil-union plans by Andrew Davis

In a move that will likely send shock waves through the local LGBT community, pro-LGBTQ organization Equality Illinois is no longer employing Rick Garcia as its director of public policy.

Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov confirmed the news during a conversation with Windy City Times. He said that during a Dec. 17 conference call with “key stakeholders to outline an agenda for Equality Illinois with our priorities for 2011. We announced that we have to strengthen our team for all the challenges that come ahead, including protecting civil unions and empowering our community about civil unions. And we all announced that Rick Garcia is no longer employed with Equality Illinois.”

Cherkasov added that “we will begin a new search process right after the holidays to hire someone who will help us get to our next milestone.” When asked about the qualities he would want in Garcia’s successor, Cherkasov said he would like “somebody who is skilled, experienced and professional—somebody who would develop strong relationships with all the key stakeholders of our community, not only with our elected officials, but with our partner organizations as well as communities of color, the transgender community, women…every segment of our community.”

Garcia’s contribution to the advancement of gay rights in Illinois is undeniable. He was a key figure in both the amendment of the state’s human-rights act that includes sexual orientation and gender identity as well as the civil-unions bill that recently passed through the Illinois General Assembly.

From left: Metropolitan Water Reclamation Commissioner Debra Shore, Rick Garcia and Equality Illinois Board Chair Jeremy Gottschalk at a fundraiser in 2007. Photo by Andrew Davis

Bernard Cherkasov. Photo courtesy of Danny Maurice

When asked to describe Garcia, Cherkasov said that he is “a passionate advocate. He did a lot for our movement. He is outspoken and unafraid and he, in his heart of hearts, really believed in full equality for the LGBT community. Wherever his next journey takes him, I wish him every success.”

Regarding civil unions, Cherkasov added that Equality Illinois is holding 12 community forums “in every corner of the state” over the 120 days after the bill passed the state Senate Dec. 1. There was one Dec. 16 at Center on Halsted.

He said that Equality Illinois is unveiling an “aggressive” campaign that “will educate and empower our community about civil unions. We are also focusing on … [ensuring] that the legislation intended to provide equal treatment for same-sex couples in Illinois. We’re going to closely scrutinize and follow the implementation of civil unions, and make sure the legislators’ intent is carried out.”

“We are also going to work with our allies in the communities of faith and color to make sure people understand what relationship recognition means and doesn’t mean.”

Rick Garcia at the 2006 Chicago Pride Parade. Photo by Chuck Kramer

There are rumors swirling that Garcia was not a paid employee of Equality Illinois. Both Fridi and Cherkasov have emphatically denied that, pointing to the organization’s financial documents. WCT will continue to cover that and other aspects of the matter in the coming weeks.

Rocco Claps, Vernita Gray, Katherine Siccora, and Art Johnston as well as other board members were contacted for this story but WCT did not receive responses at the time of this going to print. Given the rush of the weekend, we expect to hear more in the coming days and will continue to update this story.
Rick Garcia speaks out about firing

BY YASMIN NAIR

Windy City Times spoke to Rick Garcia, the ousted political director of Equality Illinois, late Friday night, Dec. 17. What follows are excerpts from that interview.

Garcia said that Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov told him, “I am going to be very gracious and amicable,” and Garcia said he looked at him and said, “Do you think for one minute that I’m going to be gracious and amicable?”

Yasmin Nair: So, to start then, our story is that you have been released from EI and could you tell us what happened, why, when?

Garcia: I went into the office for a meeting at 5 o’clock last night [Dec. 16]. I went into Bernard’s office. There was one of our board members that nobody would know, hello, and I sat down and Bernard just looked at me and said, “Your services are no longer needed and I am terminating you now.” Now, the state of Illinois is an at-will state and anybody can be fired at any time, so he just fired my ass at about 5 o’clock last night. Um, about 45 minutes before I was supposed to be over at [Center on Halsted] to give a talk.

So he fired me 10 days after we passed a civil unions bill that the state now have. He fires me. Who has passed more civil rights legislation in this country than that little nasty—I can’t even think of the term—that he would even think of? And then he sits across from me and says, “I’m terminating you because we don’t need you up here anymore.” And that’s what he said to me. We’re terminating you.

Nair: And did he give any reasons?

Garcia: Absolutely not. He told me that at some point in the future we could have an exit … an exit interview and “we will go over the problems were.” OK, OK, fine. fine?

Nair: And what was your response to him?

Garcia: “Fuck you.” [Laughs]. I mean, I have to be really real, you know. I sat there across from him, less than 10 days from passing a civil unions bill in Illinois. Passed a statewide gay rights bill in the state of Illinois, in 2005, giving state employees domestic-partner benefits, allowing lesbians to have in vitro fertilization covered by their insurers. And he was in the guise, it’s really rude, OK—and this bitch is going to dismiss me. I don’t think so. I do not think so. I challenge—he here’s the thing, here’s the thing. I challenge him to come up with anybody who has a record. I’ve always had a record. I can stand on my record. Who, who, who, who has my record?

I mean when he first came to work for us, he kept on saying, [does a mocking imitation], “Oh, my God, Rick, I would really love to be you, I would really love to stand up there and talk like you.” But you know what, Yasmin, you know what else I don’t? I don’t bring up that history. It’s about getting the job done.

And you know it’s and you know I was removed from the office by police.

Nair: Yes, I know.

Garcia: I’m glad you know that. I did that on purpose.

Nair: How do you do it by purpose? What do you mean by that?

Garcia: Well, I went to the office. I walked in. He looked shocked that I was there. He did not think that I was going to come in. And then he said, Well, we all have to leave to go to the Christmas party, I said, “Well, have fun.” “Well, we can’t leave you here, in an unlocked office.”

He says, to the founder, of that mother-fucking office, “We can’t leave you in here with an unlocked door.” I said, “Well, call the police.” And he did, and four police officers came, and of course they all know me from the neighborhood. You know, it’s all really nasty and it doesn’t have to be nasty. And he’s making it nasty. And that’s the thing.

Nair: Basically, you said, call the police; the police came in. Did you have any conversation with the police at all?

Garcia: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. They came in. I said, “I think I’m ready for you.” They said, “OK. Next time you want to get anything out of here, call him and talk it out.” It was very amicable, very nice. But you know, four police officers were there for him to throw me out—and the rest of the staff is at their Christmas party, which he doesn’t want me to go to.

Nair: So no one touched you or anything like that—they were just escorting you out?

Garcia: Oh, no, absolutely, no, no, no. No, and who else—yes you said there was another board member?

Garcia: Kyle [Spanish]. He’s somebody that, truth be told, I think I’ve seen him maybe once or twice in my entire life. I mean, this is not somebody who is doing anything for the community. He has the opportunity to be on the EI board.

Nair: And do you think any of this had to do with the issue around Howard Brown Health Center that we had talked about? [Garcia spoke frankly about the controversies at HBHC.]

Garcia: Well, I will tell you this. I do know that Jamal [Edwards, the new head of HBHC] and Paul Fairchild [former HBHC development director] complained to Bernard about me. And that’s where much of this began.

Nair: Did he [Bernard] ever talk to you personally?

Garcia: No. no, you know what? I don’t care what this crazy megalomaniac CEO or whatever he’s called, I don’t care what he’s doing, I don’t care what he’s going to do. I don’t care what he does. And even if the police have to come to my office every morning to take me out of there, that’s gonna be fine, ‘cause I know, Yasmin, I think you know this: I’m not there for the cops, I am not there for the politicians, I am there for the people who need us, and that’s why I’m there. That’s why I will continue to be there.

Nair: So you’ve had problems with Bernard in the past then, since he came on?

Garcia: Well, I never trusted him. You know why? For instance, let’s talk about the current situation. Bernard tells me [mimics], “I have talked to the board and all of the board agrees. I am here just giving you what the board is saying about your termination.” And then I talked to four board members and you know what they all say to me? “What the hell is he talking about?”

Nair: So you think it was not really passed through the board either?

Garcia: No, no, it’s him. It’s him and a couple of other people. Here’s the bottom line. I know that there are board members who would never want to fire me. Cathy Sikora, Dan Dever, Art Johnston, I know a couple of others. There are four that I know. And then Bernard has the audacity to stand there and say [mimicking], “the board agrees with me.” You know what? All of the board doesn’t agree with him.

Nair: Have you spoken to Cathy or Dan or Art Johnston?

Garcia: I have spoken to Cathy and I have talked to Art. OK, and so nothing was brought up about the Howard Brown issue—no reasons were given at all.

Nair: At my meeting, all they said [was]: “This is not working out, You are terminated, and there was no reason for being terminated. But as I always say, “I ain’t going nowhere.” And even if the police have to come to my office every morning to take me out of there, that’s gonna be fine, ‘cause I know, Yasmin, I think you know this: I’m not there for the cops, I am not there for the politicians, I am there for the people who need us, and that’s why I’m there. That’s why I will continue to be there.

Nair: So do you plan to go back to the office on Monday or … what action will you take from now on?

Garcia: On Monday?? On Monday?? Honey. I’m going up there tomorrow. They may have changed the locks, but you know what, I have work to do. We have work to do. You know what, all this … let’s cut through all this, OK? We have serious work to do. And I’ll go up there and do it. You know what? I don’t care what this crazy megalomaniac CEO or whatever he’s called, I don’t care about the idiot president of our board because that chap is such an idiot … I don’t care what they think. Because I know that people need help and people need protection now.

Nair: So you’ll keep going back to do your work even if it means that every day the police will come to escort you out?

Garcia: Yes. And then I’ll do my work in my car. [laughs] I’m always going back to do my work. That is what God made me to do.

Nair: And so you have no plans to go into any other organization or anything like that?

Garcia: No, no, no, no, no. And I should always talk about this, I think, be referred to as the founder of EI. They don’t want me to be referred to as anything else, but they can’t take ‘I am the founder of the organization’, they can’t take that away from me.

See me: Charles T. Rhodes, Agent

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Dec. 22, 2010

Windy City Times

Diane Torr

Sex, Drag & Male Roles: Investigating Gender as Performance

Sunday, Jan. 9

4:30 p.m.

Rhonda Schiff

Every Imaginable Shade of Gray

5233 N. Clark

Windy City Times
The Garcia fallout

Rick Garcia is among the most controversial figures in Chicago’s gay community. While he has alienated and angered many people during his decades of activism, he has also been one of the most visible and passionate people working on LGBT rights in Illinois. He is one of the most known “faces” and spokespersons for our movement, and he has been credited with being among the most effective activists in the state.

His work spans from the 1980s when he lobbed a world with the sadistic boyfriend he was a world with the father who would strip-off therapy, is that when I was suffering in my life. Write to me at Kobi Burks, P.O. Box 5315 N. Clark st. #192, Chicago, IL 60640 USA

Meeting Kobi, part two

Hi—Kobi here. If you read “Meeting Kobi” in the Nov. 10, edition of Windy City Times then you know that I’m writing to you from Chester Mental Health Center, the only maximum security hospital in Illinois, and that I am here because of my violent past. I can remember standing there in my family home in the horrific aftermath of the “incident.” That’s what the “professionals” call the murders. I plainly remember the deafening ringing in my ears, the only noise following the murders. I plainly remember the deafening ringing in my ears, the only noise following the murders.

I really hope to hear from you as I pray that this fall for the Cook County Board of Commissioners. Regarding the passage of the civil-unions bill, I am very happy about this historic landmark victory for our community, but I have a small problem with the way the measure is written. The bill allows civil unions for unmarried heterosexual couples as well as same-sex couples. I find this insulting. Many state and European civil-unions laws are written like this, but not all of them. There is no reason for the Illinois law to be written for both gay and straight couples. The law effectively grants a new benefit to unmarried heterosexual couples. They get the benefits of marriage without the legal consequences or responsibilities. This effectively creates what one European couple called their “pre-marriage.” This is just a stepping stone until they get to their “real” marriage. That is sad as well as very insulting, because this is as close as we, the gay community, will get to “real” marriage.

I spoke with someone who helped write the law a couple of years ago. He said the law was written this way because elderly unmarried heterosexual couples in nursing homes need a law to protect their financial interests without having to get married. Why isn’t this issue resolved under a different venue?

Ends of the roads, the law, as written, should be tweaked a bit. Marriage, gay marriage, is based on love, not future estate planning. So many people forget this too often.

Wes Fowler

Chicago

Send letters and viewpoints to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Items may be edited for length or clarity.

Tracy Baim

VIEwpointS
Michael Feinstein’s ‘American’ dream
BY JERRY NUNN

Michael Feinstein, known for his singing and piano-playing, is bringing his Great American Songbook to the masses with a four-DVD collectors set of the PBS hit just in time for the holidays. Windy City Times discussed this collection with the artist himself and the producer, Amber Edwards.

Windy City Times: Hello! How did your DVD set come together, Michael?
MF: Michael Feinstein: Well, I had very little to do with it contrary, to popular belief. What I mean by that is Amber had carte blanche on how she assembled all the material, I told her the only way that it would work for me is for her to make all the decisions and choices. That was a wise decision on my part because I am delighted on how it has been received and put together.

WCT: How do you feel about the release of the DVD?
MF: It makes me particularly happy because of the experience of the bonus materials on the set. We wanted to make available material that was not generally accessible. This reflects both of our tastes in this particular music.

Amber Edwards: I will say that it breaks your heart to discard things that were so beautiful. I went on the road with Michael for the two years when we filmed it. There were wonderful performances and not room enough for it to all fit on a one-hour program. We have 13 extra Feinstein performances. It’s always good not letting something go into the dustbin as they say.

MF: Those are dirty words, Amber!
WCT: What is on the extra disc, Amber?

AE: There is a Rosemary Clooney performance from 1956. There is a wonderful version of Night & Day by Frank Sinatra also that was filmed when he was in Italy. There are many things that people may not have seen ever before.

WCT: Do you have a favorite part from working on this project?
MF: For me it was being able to interview Margaret Whiting. It was a real sense of history being able to preserve memories with a person who lived the history of American music. Since that time she has not been able to do interviews. I felt like we were able to capture her with dignity.

AE: I would echo that and say that being able to look at this material through Michael’s eyes and see him tie together the music and the history.

WCT: How do you feel gay artists have evolved over the years?
MF: There was a big divide back then between performers and songwriters that were gay. Most of the songwriters were in the closet. People knew that Cole Porter was gay but he never spoke of it and was married. There were many songwriters who were gay such as Herman Hupfeld who wrote “As Time Goes By.” Many people did not want to impact their careers. But then there were people at MGM like Conrad Salinger, who was film composer that was so outrageously flamboyant but he didn’t care what people thought because his job was secure and he was extraordinarily talented. For performers it was very much hidden.

AE: We have footage where men in the army played female parts in the shows but they never thought of it like drag. It was a different era and people looked at things depending on how they were comfortable.

WCT: Michael, at the beginning of your career could you have been out and made it as big as you did?
MF: I was out. I guess I didn’t talk about it but I was gay. There was no definitive proof that George Gershwin was gay. From my view, he might have been very sexually confused that he was not able to form any sort of lasting relationship. No one has ever come forward and said they had a relationship with him. Don’t you think they would?

WCT: Well, maybe. He could have been bisexual.
MF: Yes, he could have been bisexual or asexual. There is not a lot documentation about his relationships.

WCT: What was it like living next door to Rosemary Clooney?
MF: Rosemary Clooney was my favorite person in the world. When I first started working with Ira Gershwin I drove me nuts that she was next door and I didn’t get to meet her. I would hear her pull in the driveway sometimes singing along to the music on the radio. Once I was able to meet her, she invited me in the house and I never left. I became like her sixth kid. She was an earth mother and I adored her as I adore very few people. She was always my favorite singer and remains so. She always wanted to know the gossip and later performing so many shows with her was a great gift.

WCT: How amazing. When are you coming back to Chicago?
MF: Yes, and many people have claimed that he was gay. There was no definitive proof that George Gershwin was gay. From my view, he might have been very sexually confused that he was not able to form any sort of lasting relationship. No one has ever come forward and said they had a relationship with him. Don’t you think they would?

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WCT: How amazing. When are you coming back to Chicago?
MF: I don’t know.
AE: Not on this year’s tour, that I know of.
MF: I was asked to do Ravinia last year and thought I should take a break. I had been doing it every year and don’t like to be overexposed, well at least not onstage. [Chuckles] I will look into doing Ravinia again at some point.
WCT: So who should get this DVD for the holiday season?
MF: I can’t think of anyone that it wouldn’t be appropriate.

Stuff someone’s stocking with this collection by purchasing on his website at http://www.michaelfeinstein.com, or at http://www.pbs.org.

A ‘CHRISTMAS’ STORY

Is Irving Berlin’s White Christmas (above) like a gift—or like coal in one’s stocking? Read the review on page 19.
• **EPZICOM**, in combination with other antiretroviral agents, is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults.

• **EPZICOM** is one of 3 medicines containing abacavir. Before starting **EPZICOM**, your healthcare provider will review your medical history in order to avoid the use of abacavir if you have experienced an allergic reaction to abacavir in the past.

• In one study, more patients had a severe hypersensitivity reaction in the abacavir once-daily group than in the abacavir twice-daily group.

• **EPZICOM** should not be used as part of a triple-nucleoside regimen.

• **EPZICOM** does not cure HIV infection/AIDS or prevent passing HIV to others.

### Important Safety Information

**EPZICOM** contains abacavir, which is also contained in ZIAGEN® (abacavir sulfate) and TRIZIVIR® (abacavir sulfate, lamivudine, and zidovudine). Patients taking abacavir may have a serious allergic reaction (hypersensitivity reaction) that can cause death. Your risk of this allergic reaction is much higher if you have a gene variation called HLA-B*5701 than if you do not. Your healthcare provider can determine with a blood test if you have this gene variation. If you get a symptom from 2 or more of the following groups while taking **EPZICOM**, call your doctor right away to determine if you should stop taking this medicine.

1. Fever
2. Rash
3. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal (stomach area) pain
4. Generally ill feeling, extreme tiredness, or achiness
5. Shortness of breath, cough, or sore throat

Carefully read the Warning Card that your pharmacist gives you and carry it with you at all times.

If you stop **EPZICOM** because of an allergic reaction, NEVER take **EPZICOM** or any other abacavir-containing medicine (ZIAGEN, TRIZIVIR) again. If you take **EPZICOM** or any other abacavir-containing medicine again after you have had an allergic reaction, WITHIN HOURS you may get life-threatening symptoms that may include very low blood pressure or death.

If you stop **EPZICOM** for any other reason, even for a few days, and you are not allergic to **EPZICOM**, talk with your healthcare provider before taking it again. Taking **EPZICOM** again can cause a serious allergic or life-threatening reaction, even if you never had an allergic reaction to it before. If your healthcare provider tells you that you can take **EPZICOM** again, **start taking it when you are around medical help or people who can call a healthcare provider if you need one**.

A buildup of lactic acid in the blood and an enlarged liver, including fatal cases, have been reported.

Do not take **EPZICOM** if your liver does not function normally.

Some patients infected with both hepatitis B virus (HBV) and HIV have worsening of hepatitis after stopping lamivudine (a component of **EPZICOM**). Discuss any change in treatment with your healthcare provider. If you have both HBV and HIV and stop treatment with **EPZICOM**, you should be closely monitored by your healthcare provider for at least several months.

Worsening of liver disease (sometimes resulting in death) has occurred in patients infected with both HIV and hepatitis C virus who are taking anti-HIV medicines and are also being treated for hepatitis C with interferon with or without ribavirin. If you are taking **EPZICOM** as well as interferon with or without ribavirin and you experience side effects, be sure to tell your healthcare provider.

When you start taking HIV medicines, your immune system may get stronger and could begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body, such as pneumonia, herpes virus, or tuberculosis. If you have new symptoms after starting your HIV medicines, be sure to tell your healthcare provider.

Changes in body fat may occur in some patients taking antiretroviral therapy. These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also occur. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Some HIV medicines, including those containing abacavir (ZIAGEN, **EPZICOM**, and TRIZIVIR), may increase your risk of heart attack. If you have heart problems, smoke, or suffer from diseases that increase your risk of heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, tell your healthcare provider.

The most common side effects seen with the drugs in **EPZICOM** dosed once daily were allergic reaction, trouble sleeping, depression, headache, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, rash, fever, stomach pain, abnormal dreams, and anxiety. Most of the side effects do not cause people to stop taking **EPZICOM**.

By prescription only.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional important information about **EPZICOM**, including boxed warnings, on the adjacent pages.
“When I was first diagnosed with HIV, I didn’t know what each day would bring or how the virus would affect my body over time. But at some point, I realized I had to take control. So I worked on my body. My mind. And my attitude. Since then, I’ve dedicated my life to fighting HIV with everything in me.

My meds help a lot. About a year ago, my doctor told me about EPZICOM. In combination with other medications, it’s been shown to help keep HIV from making more copies of itself and infecting healthy cells. 68% of patients taking a regimen with EPZICOM had their viral load become undetectable in less than one year. Plus, patients saw a 93% increase in their T-cell counts.* So I started taking it as part of my combination therapy.

Turns out that was a good thing. My viral load is undetectable. And me? I just keep fighting on.”†

* Not an actual patient testimonial. Based on collection of real patient experiences. Individual results may vary.

† HEAT study of 688 patients defines undetectable as a viral load less than 50 copies/mL. Baseline median T-cell count for patients receiving EPZICOM was 214 cells/mm³ and at 48 weeks, patients saw a median increase of 201 cells/mm³ in their T-cell count.
How should I take EPZICOM?

- Take EPZICOM by mouth exactly as your doctor prescribes it. The usual dose is 1 tablet once a day. Do not skip doses.
- You can take EPZICOM with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of EPZICOM, take the missed dose right away. Then, take the next dose at the usual time.
- Do not let your EPZICOM run out.

Starting EPZICOM again can cause a serious allergic or life-threatening reaction, even if you never had an allergic reaction to it before. If you run out of EPZICOM even for a few days, you must ask your doctor if you can start EPZICOM again. If your doctor tells you that you can take EPZICOM again, start taking it when you are around medical help or people who can call a doctor if you need one.

- If you stop your anti-HIV drugs, even for a short time, the amount of virus in your blood may increase and the virus may become harder to treat.
- If you take too much EPZICOM, call your doctor or poison control center right away.

What should I avoid while taking EPZICOM?

- Do not take EPHR (lamivudine, 3TC), COMBIVIR (lamivudine and zidovudine), ZAGEN (abacavir sulfate), or TRIZIVIR (abacavir, lamivudine, and zidovudine) while taking EPZICOM. Some of these medicines are already in EPZICOM.
- Do not take abacavir as one of its ingredients (TRIZIVIR and ZIAGEN).
- Avoid doing things that can spread HIV infection, as EPZICOM does not stop you from passing the HIV infection to others.
- Do not share needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safe sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier method to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.
- Do not breastfeed. EPZICOM can be passed to babies in breast milk and could harm the baby. Also, mothers with HIV should not breastfeed because HIV can be passed to the baby in the breast milk.

What are the possible side effects of EPZICOM?

EPZICOM can cause the following serious side effects:

- Lactic acidosis reaction that can cause death. (See “What is the most important information I should know about EPZICOM” at the beginning of this Medication Guide.)
- Serious allergic reaction that can cause death. (See “What is the most important information I should know about EPZICOM” at the beginning of this Medication Guide.)

Changes in immune system. When you start taking HIV medicines, your immune system may get stronger and could begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body, such as pneumonia, herpes virus, or tuberculosis. If you have new symptoms after starting your HIV medicines, be sure to tell your doctor.

Changes in body fat. These changes have happened in patients taking antiretroviral medicines like EPZICOM. The changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the back, chest, and stomach area. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.

Some HIV medicines including EPZICOM may increase your risk of heart attack. If you have heart problems, smoke, or suffer from diseases that increase your risk of heart disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, tell your doctor.

The most common side effects with EPZICOM are trouble sleeping, depression, headache, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, rash, fever, stomach pain, abnormal dreams, and anxiety. Most of these side effects did not cause people to stop taking EPZICOM. This list of side effects is not complete. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store EPZICOM?

- Store EPZICOM at room temperature between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C).
- Keep EPZICOM and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information for safe and effective use of EPZICOM

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in Medication Guides. Do not use EPZICOM for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give EPZICOM to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. This medicine may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about EPZICOM. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for the information that is written for healthcare professionals or call 1-888-825-5249.

What are the ingredients in EPZICOM?

Active ingredients: abacavir sulfate and lamivudine

Inactive ingredients: Each film-coated EPZICOM Tablet contains the inactive ingredients magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, and sodium starch glycolate. The tablets are coated with a film (Eudragit® orange YS 1-1306-A) that is made of F68, yellow No. 6, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose 400, polyethylene 80, and titanium dioxide.

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This Medication Guide has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.
THEATER REVIEW

Irving Berlin’s White Christmas

Playwright: music & lyrics by Irving Berlin, book by David Ives & Paul Blake, based on the screenplay by Norman Panama, Melvin Frank & Norman Krasna
At: Broadway In Chicago at the Bank of America Shubert Theatre, 18 W. Monroe
Phone: 800-775-2000; $25-$98
Runs through: Jan. 2, 2011

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

With increasing numbers of revelers rejecting long-distance vacations this year to seek their celebration in the Loop, Broadway In Chicago has assembled a ideally balanced menu of choices: for the young and hip, there’s the edgy Wicked at the Cadillac Palace. For the less-talk-about fans, there’s our ex-GI heroes’ former commander. We also have a wisecracking matron, an adorable child, a laconic rube, a funny Manhattan director, feathered chorus girls and a gibb west-coast TV exec. All that’s missing is the big furry dog.

But if you wanted complicated narrative, there’s Christmas Carol at the Goodman. What fuels this kind of holiday sweet are wailing horns, nimble feet, big skirts and cozy ballads by Irving Berlin at his schmaltziest (that’s a compliment, folks)—like “I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm,” upbeat jazz-tempo tappers like “Let Yourself Go” and inspirational ditties like “Count Your Blessings.” Warblers are allowed a bit more stylistic stridency in 2010, but Ruth Williamson delivers a shyly het rendition of “Sisters.” And though everyone is invited to sing along with the title song, look for a few veterans to join in “The Old Man.”

Yes, it’s all as corny as the garlands on the tree, but so infectious is the nostalgic glow, nevertheless, that opening-night spectators cheered the falling of fake snow throughout the house at the finale—at least, until confronting the real thing upon leaving.

OPERAS REVIEW

The Pirates of Penzance

Libretto: W.S. Gilbert; Score: Arthur Sullivan; Arrangement: Kevin O’Donnell
At: The Hypocrites at Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division
Phone: 773-989-7352; $14-$28
Runs through: Jan. 30, 2011

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Oh, those cute and crazy Hypocrites creative types! While the weather is freezing cold outside, The Hypocrites are heating up Gilbert and Sullivan’s 1879 comic opetta as a zany environmental basement beach party at the Chopin Theatre.

Oh, and are they actually attempting to perform the show with just 10 actors who also double up as the rag-tag orchestra? Yup, and the results sure are a loopy romp from start to finish.

Director Sean Graney’s approach to Pirates of Penzance is to play up the silliness of the score by having his much-doubled up cast appear as a band of 1960s beatnik/beachcomber musicians who get the wacky notion in their heads that they’ll stage the classic operetta by themselves.

Gilbert and Sullivan traditionalists shouldn’t really get too annoyed at what Graney has wrought in Kevin O’Donnell’s new one-act arrangement of The Pirates of Penzance (compete with an odd orchestration that includes accordions, guitars and a saw). After all, the original opetta is pure spoofs of 19th-century melodramatic and operatic theatrical conventions (and since the work is firmly in the public domain, there’s no legal ground to complain).

Graney and his cast clearly revel in Gilbert’s dexterous word play, especially since you can see the antecedents of Monty Python-style British humor throughout (particularly when the Pirate King of Robert McLean and the Major General of Matt Kahler discuss what it’s like to be an orphan). Watching the cast of actor/musicians run riot (and shifting the audience around) through Tom Burch’s breezy zigzag set of wooden piers and plastic swimming pools is just one of the pleasures of this show.

The only thing really missing is a true emotional connection between the cast and their characters—as one-dimensional they may be. This is particularly true with the romantic couple of Frederic and Mabel. Zeke Sulkes doesn’t genuinely show how high the stakes are for Frederic, who through a contractual discrepancy (and from his unerring steadfastness to be “the slave of duty”) must turn down his love and become a thieving pirate again. Nor do we worry for the predicament of Christine Stullik’s impressive banjo-strumming and mock-operatic trilling turn as Mabel/Ruth (in a weird piece of staging business, Sullik and Mabel). Stullik plays both roles of lover and middle-aged maid-of-all-work.

But dramatic honesty isn’t something most people seek out of The Pirates of Penzance. It’s fun, fun, fun, and The Hypocrites are doling out all that and more. For a sunny and silly break from the harsh Chicago winter, you can’t do much better than spending two-and-a-half hours in the company of The Hypocrites’ Pirates of Penzance.

OPERAS REVIEW

Jewmongous

Jewmongous plays 7 and 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 25, at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 N. Lincoln, Skokie. Tickets are $20; call 847-677-7761 or visit http://www.skokietheater.com. Photo of Sean Altman in Jewmongous courtesy of KFAR Jewish Arts Center and the artist.

Why should local Jews just settle for Chinese food and a movie on Christmas Day? Sean Altman (formerly of the vocal group Rockapella) presents two performances of Jewmongous, an “unkosher” comedy show that looks askance at the travails of the modern-day Jew. Jewmongous plays 7 and 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 25, at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 N. Lincoln, Skokie. Tickets are $20; call 847-677-7761 or visit http://www.skokietheater.com. Photo of Sean Altman in Jewmongous courtesy of KFAR Jewish Arts Center and the artist.

SPOTLIGHT

John Scherer (left) and Denis Lambert in Irving Berlin’s White Christmas. Photos by Tanner Photography.
THEATER REVIEW
Striking 12

Playwright: book, music and lyrics by Brenda Milburn, Valerie Vigoda and Rachel Sheinkin
At: Heartland Studio, 7016 N. Glenwood
Phone: 866-811-4111; $15
Runs through: Jan 8, 2011

BY JERRY NUNN

In the world of entertainment, Christmas is more like “the most predictable The Bolts Theatre Company brings their considerable talents up to the North Pole at the Heartland Studio on the north side of Chicago. Expectations were high as one of the writers won the Tony for penning The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee back in 2005. The ensemble brings a light touch to the material, breaking the fourth wall almost works against the production. With a little distance, the material could be featured in a concert setting and not the showcase style that it currently lives in.

The director, Lara Filip, states in the program that she felt “there was no direction to be found” at other shows and the songs the cast members try very hard to get the audience to like them. The performers are almost never step away from their instruments to feature their acting chops. The intimate setting adds to the production. With a little distance, the material could be featured in a concert setting and not the showcase style that it currently lives in.

The Bolts Theatre Company will present the Chicago premiere of In Darfur by Marie Tiedemann (directed by Timeline Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling) Jan. 22-March 20, 2011 (with previews Jan. 18-21) at Timeline Theatre, 615 W. Wellington.

In a camp for internally displaced persons in Darfur, three lives intertwine: an aid worker trying to save lives, a Darfur woman searching for safety and a journalist who believes that one front-page-story can help stop the madness. Together they tell a story inspired by real life.

The cast of In Darfur features Tyla Abercrumbie, Kelli Simpkins, Gregory Isaac, Eddie Joll JD, Mildred Marie Langford, Brian-Akien Newland and Ebony Wimbis. Tickets are $28 (Wed. through Friday) or $38 (Saturday and Sunday); preview tickets are $18. Call the box office at 773-281-8463 or visit http://www.technetetheatre.com.

Kiss’ opens Feb. 4

The Kiss Kiss Cabaret, a Chicago-based neo-vaudeville, burlesque cabaret, has announced its debut at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 24 W. Randolph, for a limited run of weekly performances.

The open run starts Friday, Feb. 4, 2011. The Kiss Kiss Cabaret Coquettes include members of Stolen Jinx, Jolie Roberson, Miss Kiss and Naughty Natanya.


By Ababanel, Barridge and Morgan
Windy City Times: Hi, Georg. I’ve seen you in our Windy City office before because you used to work for us.

Georgann Coleman: Yes, I did sales for a few weeks.

WCT: You now work as a speech language pathologist.

GC: For 12 years now.

WCT: What exactly is that?

GC: I work with a variety of communication disorders from speech to articulation disorders, kids making Rs, Ss and Ls, all the way up to autism and everything in between. It can even be vocal disorders.

WCT: How long have you been with your partner?

GC: Our wedding was five years ago this November. We have been together nine years.

WCT: You have a daughter, correct?

GC: Yes.

WCT: And she was in the movie Hannah Free?

GC: She was, and three months old in it. They needed two babies for the newborns. The director, Wendy Jo Carlton, is a friend of ours and asked, We did a day of shooting.

WCT: I watched the first episode of Worst Cooks. I can’t cook either. What led you to audition for it?

GC: I got a phone call out of the blue one day from a producer from the Food Network asking me if I knew my wife had nominated me for the worst cook in America? I said, “No.” They asked, “Aren’t you excited?” I said, “Not particularly.” We had seen a couple of episodes last season so I knew what they were talking about but I had no idea she did that.

WCT: Were you insulted?

GC: I was taken aback, then, yes, it caused about a week of fighting. There were five days of me not wanting to do this. [Partner] Teresa kept her side of it. I carried our daughter Quinn and around 18 months we had hit rock-bottom in our relationship. Theresa is a real-estate broker and wound up being a stay at home mom because of the market. There was a time when I had to be the breadwinner and we fought over domestic responsibilities. So I don’t do anything up to her par, especially the cooking! I don’t have a problem cooking for myself. I would make my own lunches but she doesn’t eat my food. She never has and she just won’t. At this point when they called me she said, “This is your opportunity to learn from the best.” I was not thrilled about it at first.

WCT: Well, I know I am a bad cook so it wouldn’t bother me at all if someone nominated me.

GC: Yeah, I hear you. Later on, when Chef Robert Irvine met me at the first audition he told me that I have an attitude. The thing was I wasn’t pissed I just couldn’t believe I was on this show. After Teresa and I discussed all of this in the house, she said, “Just forget it!” And I said, “Hell no, we are going; it’s on!” So that’s when we went.

WCT: Reverse psychology worked, then. You had to make a dish for the audition.

GC: I wanted to make something that was very familiar to me. I made it regularly before but I wasn’t pissed I just couldn’t believe I was on this show. After Teresa and I discussed all of this in the house, she said, “Just forget it!” And I said, “Hell no, we are going; it’s on!” So that’s when we went.

WCT: What was the dish again?

GC: It’s a turkey burger sautéed in a pan with vegetables. It’s a mixture of whatever vegetables are in the house, especially onions—they have to be a part of it. I like to caramelize it and make it a little burnt. Also, I like soy sauce or Bragg Amino Acids. Do you know what Bragg is from Whole Foods?

WCT: No, I told you that I am a bad cook.

GC: It is like a healthier soy sauce and has the same Asian thing going on. I just mix all that together and throw it into my Tupperware and go to work.

WCT: There ya go!

GC: That’s the one that Chef Anne Burrell says looks like pet food.

WCT: Oh yeah. I remember that now!

GC: I had never heard that in my life. I couldn’t believe it. I guess it was the way I crumbled the turkey.

WCT: The judges were very entertaining with the audition process.

GC: On the preview for the show the table breaks and the food falls everywhere. It’s so funny.

WCT: There were a couple of people from Illinois on the show, also.

GC: There were four of us from the Chicagoland area.

WCT: We always represent really well on reality-television shows.

GC: I know, right?

WCT: Do you feel like you have gotten to be a better cook from the experience?

GC: I do, in certain regards. I really feel like my fear and inhibition in the kitchen is gone. I try things now. The chefs told me that even if I mess up just go for it. I didn’t have that before. I was tentative to try anything. Now I have some skills.

WCT: That’s great.

GC: I would stick with the basics before and what I knew.

WCT: I think everyone does that and gets stuck in a rut of what we make and eat.

GC: I definitely have expanded that and my horizons. See who makes the best and Worst Cooks in America when the show debuts Jan 2. Browse over to http://www.foodnetwork.com for details.

Test Positive Aware Network is one of Chicago’s oldest agencies devoted exclusively to HIV-positive and at-risk individuals. More than 21,000 people a year receive HIV-AIDS services and support from TPAN. If you could help just one of them, won’t you? Here’s what the people who depend on TPAN say about us:

“I went to TPAN because a friend told me it was a safe space. I’m healthy today because I got tested there and went directly into care.”

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This holiday season, consider giving to TPAN. Go to www.tpan.com.
Rabbit Hole; True Grit; Somewhere; Fockers; Poseidon

Hollywood wants you to have a blue Christmas this year. Or so it would seem when one considers the quartet of movies opening this holiday weekend. Two of the movies—Rabbit Hole and Somewhere—are decidedly downbeat, True Grit is a western remake of the 1969 John Wayne classic as seen through the dyspeptic vantagefinder of the Coen Brothers while Little Fockers, the supposed “feel-good” comedy of the group, is just ... awful. (A fifth film, another comedy, Gulliver’s Travels starring Jack Black wasn’t screened in time for deadlines.) In other words: Bah humbug! But take heart—those first three titles are also award contenders, hence their weighty subject matters and each are definitely worth taking in—when the mood for serious fare ensues, that is.

Rabbit Hole is the first movie from gay director—writer—performer John Cameron Mitchell since his deliciously wonderful film experiment, the sexually adventurous Shortbus, four years ago. His return is overdue and, though the material doesn’t have a whiff of queer content, the film is beautifully written (adapted for the screen by the playwright David Lindsay-Abaire) and performed by its expert cast—Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart, Dianne Wiest, Tammy Blanchard, Sandra Oh and Miles Teller, a marvelous newcomers.

The story focuses on Kidman and Eckhart as a married couple in the midst of emotional free-fall eight months after the accidental death of their three-year-old son. Kidman is frozen in an inherent grief-stricken material and when tears finally come they are honestly earned. But his cautious approach to the heartbreak has the unfortunate side effect of distanc ing the audience from Kidman, the central character, until very nearly the end. You just have to hang in there, like Eckhart (who is remarkable in a tricky role), and wait for the clouds to part. I’m glad that Mitchell made Rabbit Hole but, selfishly, I want another queer-themed movie from him next.

I also want to see the Coen Brothers—the writers-directors of movies from just about every genre—give us an LGBT-themed film. They’ve tried just about everything but that it seems, so why not? Perhaps they’d find a remake of say, Boys in the Band, Victim or The Killing of Sister George a mite more creatively challenging than True Grit. Their central character is gorgeously shot, scored, the Coens’ direction is cooly observes Johnny and though we become attached to the heartbreak of malaise (aka the old ennui) that strikes the idle rich, apparently, when they have too much time, fame, and money on their hands.

An art film from a queer distributor? That usually means a movie has subtitles. The English-language queer art film died with Derek Jarman. Until now.

Strapped was written and directed by Joseph Graham. It was made in San Francisco but that doesn’t matter because it all takes place inside an apartment building, “the gayest building on the gayest street in town,” on a dark and stormy night. You’ll think of Sartre—if you ever think of Sartre—because there seems to be “no exit” from the building for the protagonist.

Ben Bonenfant stars as a hustler with no name/many names who enters the building with a trick, John (Arthur Mishin), a man nearing middle age with little sexual experience. Frying to leave, the hustler finds dead ends in all the hallways but runs into Leon (Carlo D’Amore), who greets him like an old friend, although the youth obviously has no idea who he is.

Leon is having a little coke-fueled party with three of his friends. The hustler doesn’t do drugs but does do one of the guests, Dirk (Raphael Barker) and flirts with another, Gary (Nick Fangione).

The hustler is good at his job—not only sexually versatile but able to introduce himself to each customer with a different name (Alex, Ed, Mike, Jeff) and a personality to go with it. Calling himself “an agent of desire” (a phrase attributed to Michel Foucault), he operates on a strictly cash basis and doesn’t take repeat customers. His tricks are “random. Anonymous. I like adventures.”

His adventures continue with a self-hating bisexual (Michael Klinger) who attacks him in the laundry room and a genteel older man (Paul Dano).
Shelby Lynne dishes up Southern hospitality and an intimate appeal on Merry Christmas. These seasonal songs make the listener feel welcomed to an up-close jam session. Even the new offering Ain't Nothin Like Christmas is destined to be a holiday favorite. Dave Koz's saxophone adds a wonderful effect to "Xmas," Fun covers of standards "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" find the gifted Grammy winner enjoying the season in a charming, childlike fashion.

On Tuesday, Feb. 1, Lynne will have a concert at Space, 1245 Chicago, Evanston. Mariah Carey is trying to return to her hey day with yuletide greetings on the lamely titled Openly gay vocalist Fred Schneider of The Superions, on Fanatic Records, according "Santa Baby." "Santa Baby" has been sung by some of the sultriest sirens like Eartha Kitt, Madonna and Kylie Minogue. British-born crooner Darren Stewart-Jones is adding a gay twist to this holiday number. Now residing in Canada, Stewart-Jones’s version of "Santa Baby" will become a viral hit and is available now on iTunes. Proceeds from sales of "Santa Baby" will benefit the Gay Bi Trans Youth Line in Canada.

Jane Krakowski’s resume ranges from her main Needs Time." Krakowski’s stellar The Laziest Girl Is You!" Instead of tapping the Puppini Sisters, has holiday classics like "Here Comes Santa Claus," "Let It Snow" and "Christmas Time Is Here" featuring the Puppini Sisters. The act’s third album, Christmas with the Puppini Sisters, has holiday classics like “'Here Comes Santa Claus,' “Let It Snow” and even a slowed down version of WHAM!'s "Last Christmas" as if they were straight out of a yuletide WWVI USO show. Just try not to swing-dance to “Step into Christmas.” This talented threesome can nail a sacred moment like “O Holy Night,” then tease you with a wink during “Santa Baby.”

"Santa Baby" has been sung by some of the sultriest sirens like Eartha Kitt, Madonna and Kylie Minogue. British-born crooner Darren Stewart-Jones is adding a gay twist to this holiday number. Proceeds from sales of "Santa Baby" will benefit The Laziest Girl In Town is a genuine live album, where the listener actually feels like a member of the audience. On Hooked!, Lucy Woodward offers a balance between cabaret, jazz and swing. Like the sensual Melody Gardot, this blonde starlet writes her own material and captures the essence of music from ’40s and ’50s.

The impressive album also includes remixes of Peggy Lee’s “Sens Souci” and “I Wanna Be Like You (The Monkey Song),” as well as the evergreen “Stardust,” “Purple Heart” closes with Woodward singing as if she is trying to seduce her listener with her final breath. Mending a broken heart had no much va-voom as heard on “Slow Recovery.” “Leave It to You” would fit perfectly as the love theme for a WWVI-era film. The sing-along worthy “ Babies” and “Ragdoll” are the set’s showstoppers. The rewarding and timeless Hooked! is out now on Verve.

Even though he’s “Gone Too Soon,” Michael Jackson has several projects surfacing. More than 40 of the late megastar’s groundbreaking music videos—short films, if you will—are out now in the comprehensive set Michael Jackson’s Vision. Included here are the career-defining moments like “Billie Jean,” “Thriller” and “Smooth Criminal,” plus the hard-to-find clips to “Come Together” and “One More Chance.” My favorites on Michael Jackson’s Vision are the David Fincher-directed “Who Is It?” and Herb Ritts’ “In the Closet.”

Demos and other unreleased tracks have been touched up to comprise the posthumous album Michael. The authenticity of the vocals provided on “Breaking News” has been questioned. Akon takes the driver’s seat and overshadows the late King of Pop on the album’s limp lead single, “Hold My Hand.” But the collaboration with Lenny Kravitz, “(I Can’t Make It) Another Day,” is electrifying.

A Jackson-themed Wii game is out now. Michael Jackson the Experience offers challenges for the players to duplicate the globe one’s trademark dance moves. In 2011, Cirque du Soleil will debut Michael Jackson the Immortal World Tour. As of now, no Chicago dates are listed. Tickets for dates in The United States and Canada are now on sale.

B-52s’ Schneider’s Christmas CD
Openly gay vocalist Fred Schneider of The B-52s released Destination...Christmas!, an album of 11 original holiday songs by his band, The Superions, on Fanatic Records, according to a press release. The CD will feature lyrics and vocals by Schneider, and he’ll be joined by Noah Brodie (keyboards and electronic drums) and Dan Marshall (programming). Tracks include “Santa’s Disco,” “Cactus Flower” and “Jingle Those Bells.” Schneider said, “It’s hard to say who our musical influences for this project were, because we don’t want to get sued.”

Ke$ha in Chicago Feb. 24
Pop superstar Ke$ha’s “Get Sleazy” tour will bring her to Chicago Feb. 24, 2011. She will perform at the House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn. Ke$ha, who just won the MTV EMA for Best New Act, is touring in support her newest CD, Cannibal (RCA Records / Kemosabe Entertainment). It will be made available for sale separately, as well as bundled with Animal in a special deluxe repackage called Animal + Cannibal.


Web phenom Chance touring with Cosgrove
In January 2011, Greyson Chance will embark on his first U.S. tour as direct support to Miranda Cosgrove. The 21-city tour will kick off Jan. 24 in Kansas City, Mo., with a Jan. 28 stop at the Rosemont Theatre. Chance’s famed cover of “Paparazzi” was recently named the third most popular YouTube video of 2010. The Ellen DeGeneres Show recently premiered a video clip of Chance’s most recent single, “Waiting Outside the Lines.” (DeGeneres also announced that she had signed the teen to her new label, elevenseven.) For more info, visit http://www.Greyson-Official.com.
NUNN ON ONE: MUSIC

Katharine McPhee on the holidays—and hair

BY JERRY NUNN

Katharine McPhee nearly won the fifth season of American Idol and has proved she is not just a runner-up, with huge record sales over the years. McPhee had lunch with me on One to get in the holiday spirit at Macy’s in the Walnut room.

Windy City Times: Hi, Katharine. How did you audition for American Idol?

Katharine McPhee: Oh, that was a long time ago—five years now. I was working as an actress in L.A. My friend suggested it and I went down to San Francisco and auditioned.

WCT: The rest is history now. You are still doing a lot of acting, correct?

KM: I am.

WCT: You have a Jane Fonda movie coming out, right?

KM: Yes, I have a cameo in that one and it’s called “Peace, Love, and Misunderstanding.” How did you know about that?

WCT: I have my sources...

KM: You are a good investigator. I just wrapped a movie called Shark Night: 1-3-D; I filmed it in Louisiana and got home to L.A. a week ago yesterday.

WCT: So it’s in 3-D!

KM: Yes, I know. It will be interesting to see myself in 3-D. I haven’t even seen a movie in 3-D; that’s how anti-3-D I have been.

WCT: Oh, you didn’t see Avatar?

KM: I didn’t see it. I was, like, “What’s this stupid 3-D crap?”

WCT: [Laughs] And now you are in one!

KM: Yes, now I am in one.

WCT: I wanted to tell you that I wrote a travel story down in Shreveport, La.

KM: You did?

WCT: Yes, I went during a festival.

KM: There are some good restaurants down there. It was a good place to shoot, to be honest.

WCT: It’s a homey little town.

KM: It has character.

WCT: How do you celebrate the holidays?

KM: Gosh; this year is particularly different because I don’t think I have ever been working this much during the holiday season. I usually spend it with family. I never have had extravagant trips or anything like that.

WCT: Where does your family live?

KM: My parents live in Los Angeles; that’s where I was born. My sister lives in New York. We are usually split up. My in-laws are in San Francisco, so I am usually up there.

WCT: Why did you decide to do a Christmas album?

KM: My label asked me to do one so that’s what inspired me. It was requested from them and I gladly accepted to do it. I started working on it in June of this summer.

WCT: That’s quick.

KM: Yes, exactly.

WCT: Did you get to choose what songs to include?

KM: Yeah, I picked all the songs. I started off with a list like you have there with my chicken scratch. I was listening to Christmas records to listen to the different songs. There are so many songs that I tried out, process of elimination. That was how I chose them from a list on a piece of paper.

WCT: You have a track, “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve,” on the album. I really like that song.

KM: Thank you. For New Year’s Eve I am usually pretty lame, unless I get specifically invited to an event or party. Maybe we will go out to dinner but I would love to be in Vegas or something. I am always looking for an excuse to be at a big party.

WCT: Totally. So no more blonde hair—are you keeping the brown?

KM: Yeah, it’s a lot easier, although I have a few tricks up my sleeve as far as hair color—well, not tricks, but I have ideas. I am always wanting to change my hair; it’s fun. I grew up with my mom and sister in the house and they were always about keeping your long brown hair but it gets kind of boring after a while. You have to change it up. I definitely want it to grow, it’s taking forever!

WCT: What are your plans for next year?

KM: I am supposed to do an ABC family movie that was supposed to shoot until Christmas but thankfully that got pushed back to spring. So that will give me a little more time through the holidays. I will probably start the writing process for the next record and hopefully more acting projects.

WCT: Great, have a wonderful holiday!!!

KM: Christmas Is The Time To Say I Love You is currently out now. Visit http://www.Katharinemcphee.com to purchase the CD.

BUSINESS

Bucky Adams: Getting things in ‘Gear’

BY ROSS FORMAN

Bucky Adams couldn’t find a casual, fun store in Andersonville, where he lives, that offered affordable clothes and gift items—so he opened one himself.

Adams, 52, is the founder and owner of Bucky Gear, 5644 N. Clark, which offers men’s and women’s clothing, accessories, and, as he points out, “other cool stuff.” Bucky Gear certainly takes after its owner, who admits he is a “t-shirt and jeans guy.” The store has Big Star and Miracle jeans, PalmerCash t-shirts, Hidden Truth shirts, Kiss the Girl and Next Level hoodies and sweat shirts, and more. Bucky Gear also offers bags from Manhattan Portage and Pan Am. And even Noon Copenhagen watches. Bucky Gear also offers hats, scarves, belts, jewelry “and lots of really fun and crazy gift items,” he said.

“We turned a blank space into a loft/warehouse-looking place,” Adams said. “We have exposed brick, warehouse windows, a Tike bar, old fans and school lockers. It’s in a one block square building previously shared by the gangster Bugsy Malone.”

“My favorite part of the ‘Gear’ is talking to people and hanging out with them. We seriously like music and a little dancing on occasion. Also, as a gay man, having hot guys try on clothes in my store is never a bad thing.”

“The downside is working 7 days-a-week. I really miss Sundays with the great music at church, the newspaper, hangovers and football. Bucky Gear opened Oct. 10, as Adams wanted the date (10-10-10) to always be a memorable one.”

“My goals include continuing the search for cool merchandise. It’s new and challenging for me, a work in progress,” Adams said. “I know for sure, you always have to take care of your employees and they will take care of you. Also, we have to have fun.”

“My last goal is to find ways to support the neighborhoods and organizations that make Chicago so special. I learned from my parents and my church, The Bodhi Center, to accept everyone, show respect and help where you can. Education Is Prevention (EIP) is our start. [EIP] is a new HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted infections’ non-profit [organization] with an all-volunteer staff, a few pamphlets and very, very little money. They go directly to schools to talk to kids about how to protect themselves. I’m so proud to be a small help to their awesome goals and accomplishments.”

“Bucky Gear is my dream. I encourage everyone to find their [goal] and go for it. On 10-10-10 I wrote, ‘If you imagine, believe and work hard, miracles happen: dreams really do come true.”

Adams has lived in Chicago for 16 years and is single, except for his 4-year-old rescue dog, Cody.
2011 Nissan Leaf. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

VEHICLE REVIEW
2011 Nissan Leaf
BY GAYWHEELS.COM

How far is your daily commute? Ten miles? Twenty? Maybe you drive 30 miles on a normal week- day: back and forth to work, out for lunch, run a few errands on the way home. It’s the typical drive for the typical American commuter. Actu- ally, if you look at the typical mileage driven by most people in this country, it works out to about 12,000 miles a year. Divide by 365 and you’ve got 33 miles a day. Even if you drive 15,000 miles a year, you’re still only going 41 miles per day. So why, you might ask, are we ob- sessing about mileage? Because driving range is the first thing people want to know about when you mention the new Nissan Leaf.

Tell someone that you’ve recently driven the Leaf, count silently to three, and prepare for the following question: “so... how far will it go on a full charge?” “Oh, “bout 70 or 80 miles in normal driving,” you reply. “And where do you charge it up?” “In my garage, at night while I’m sleep- ing.” After which comes this question: “You mean you just plug it into the wall?” And you say, “Yes, you plug it into the wall. But that wall needs to have a special charger that’s installed by a certified electrician contracted to your lo- cal Nissan dealer.” At this point, the conversa- tion takes a predictable turn: “How much does that cost?” To which you respond: “depends on where you live, how old your house is and how much of a tax incentive your local government is offering—and in some states they cover most of the cost.” Of course the following question is inevitable: “how long does it take to charge it up?” And you tell them roughly eight hours with a proper 220V (3.3 kW) charger.

You’ll notice that we still haven’t said anything about the actual car. No one ever asks about the car. They want to know about the mileage range, the recharging and the cost. But in all honesty, when you realize just how good this car is, you’ll realize that range, recharging and cost will all fall into place. In fact, local governments, power companies, major employers, shopping centers and even parking garage owners are preparing to install charging stations all over the nation, some of which will be able to charge the Leaf in as little as 30 minutes. Just as importantly, the federal government is offering a $7,500 tax credit toward the $33,000 purchase price of a Leaf, and some states offer an additional $4,000 in incentives on top of that. Why? Because the electric car is finally ready for prime time. And nothing proves this like a drive in the Nissan Leaf.

To understand this vehicle, the first thing you have to do is forget everything you know about compact sedans. Yes, the Leaf is a compact, five-passenger hatchback. But, that’s where the similarity ends. To begin with, there are a few things missing. Like noise—because there just isn’t any to speak of. The Leaf turns on with all the sound and fury of a light switch. Next, you toggle the electric motor into drive and pull away with nothing more than a distant whirr from under the hood. No revving engine, no vi- brating steering column, no racket from under the hood, no bleating from the exhaust pipe. Whirrrrrrrrrrrrr. That’s about it.

There’s also no delay when it comes to accel- eration. The electric motor pulls the car across intersections like a stout V6, and the transmis- sion is utterly seamless because, well, there isn’t one. There’s also no radiator, no water pump, no timing belt, spark plugs or engine oil. And, because there’s also no engine, there’s no fuel tank nor fuel pump. Nope, there’s none of it. And none of the maintenance that goes along with it, either.

What you do have is the quietest, smoothest compact you could ever imagine. Of course, part of that smoothness comes from the fact that this car carries most of its weight down low in the chassis. Nissan put the 600-pound battery pack under the cabin floor for optimal weight distribution—in the same way Porsche, Ferrari and Lamborghini put the engine in the middle of the chassis on some models. This, in turn, means that Nissan can tune the suspension for a supple and relaxed ride, without compromis- ing handling. Granted, this is no sports sedan, but that low center of gravity allows for stability and ride quality that just doesn’t exist in other cars this size. Add to that a nice upright seating position, plenty of rear legroom, and a commodi- ous trunk, and you have the ultimate commuter tool. Blistering 0-60 acceleration? No. Corvette- cornering grip? No. But quiet, comfortable and cost-effective transportation? Bingo. That’s the ticket.

So what about that cost-effectiveness? If you take the 15,000 miles mentioned earlier and fac- tor in 25 mpg at $3.00 a gallon, you get a fuel cost of $1,800 a year, or 12 cents per mile. For the Leaf it works out to roughly three cents per mile based on electricity at 11 cents per kWh. It comes down to $400 for electricity vs. $1,800 for gasoline each year. And that doesn’t include the savings on oil changes and other mainte- nance, like brake jobs. Because the Leaf uses regenerative braking to help extend the battery range, it takes a load off the traditional brakes, and as any hybrid driver already knows, vehicles with regen braking rarely need brake pads. But there’s always the question of the battery. Per- sonal use still have this notion that the battery (in this case a 24 kWh lithium-ion unit) will have to be replaced periodically. And it will, just like the transmission, engine, water pump and timing belt need to be replaced in your cur- rent car. But in the case of the Leaf, the battery is covered by an 8-year, 100,000-mile warranty. So it’s not your problem. Nissan hasn’t said how much a new battery will cost, but we figure with some credit given for the old core, a replace- ment might run in the $4,000 to $5,000 range, but that’s just an educated guess. Eight years from now, electric cars might be common place and the cost of replacement parts may be far less expensive.

All you need to do is think about your driv- ing patterns. And even here the Leaf is one step ahead, because it comes standard with a navi- gation system that shows you how far you can drive on your current charge — and at which point you need to turn around if you’re going to plug in at home. It removes the guesswork, in the same way a gasoline car’s “distance-to-empty” feature lets you know when it’s time to buy gas. And although you can’t just pull into a gas station and “refuel” the Leaf, charg- ing stations in major metro regions are already starting to pop up, with roughly 12,000 Level 2 (220V/3.3kW) stations coming on-line by 2012. The Leaf’s data base of available charg- ing stations is constantly updated via satellite, so the car can even show you where the closest charging stations are located. Of course, none of

Auto news

—Going green: According to an article on GreenCelebrity.net, there are several reasons why a family might want to purchase an eco- friendly vehicle this holiday season. Among other things, “in part thanks to a down ... economy and a marketplace that overpro- duced even hybrid cars targeted for sale in the American marketplace, it’s never been easier to put a money-saving and eco-friendly fuel-efficient automobile on your Christmas shopping list.” See http://www.Gaywheels.com.

—A ticket to ride: The Chicago Tribune looked at various suburbs to see which ones handed out the most tickets. The winners are: Bull Valley (a “McHenry County hamlet of about 1,000 residents [with] no major highway, no schools, no downtown”) that handed out about 1,600 tickets last year; Park City (just west of Waukegan); Calvin Street; Mc- Cook County (where “[p]olice make half their stops for equipment violations”); and Ever- green Park.

—It’s an honor: The Chevrolet Volt, Hyun- dai Sonata and Nissan Leaf (see left) are finalis- ts for the 2011 North American Car of the Year awards, while the finalists for the 2011 North American Truck of the Year award are the Dodge Durango, Ford Explorer and Jeep Grand Cherokee, according to AutoObserver. The half-dozen finalists for the presti- gious awards were announced Dec. 16 at an Automotive Press Association luncheon spon- sored by organizers of the 2011 North Ameri- can International Auto Show. The winners will be announced at the first press conference of the Detroit auto show Jan. 10, 2011.

The awards are unique in the United States because they are awarded by automotive jour- nalists from the United States and Canada who represent magazines, television, radio, newspapers and web sites, as opposed to a single media outlet. See http://www.Gaywheels.com.

Dodge Durango.
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There'll be no shortage of parties on New Year's Eve, thanks to clubs and private events.

Photo from 2009 by Anthony Meade

FRIDAY, DEC. 31

FRIDAY, DEC. 24


Wait For Santa at the Call For Santa with Honey West at the Call with video hits from disco to today with holiday favorites thrown in. 5:45 Acarici cocktails and bombs and 1 Deluker shots, 4 p.m., The Call Chicago, 2547 W. Blyman Ave, http://www-callchicago.com

Frat House Thursday at Scarlet Join Scarlet as they host all frat guys and their fans. Scarlet ramps up the frat factor with 40-ounce beer specials. MTF bartenders, cracked-up music and hot ladies high jinks! 21+ with ID. 9 p.m., Scarlet, 3308 N. Halsted, http://www.scarletchicago.com

Christmas Day at The Call After the holiday dinner comes in and relax with video hits from disco to today. $5 Absolute cocktails and Jim Beam shots. 8 p.m., The Call Chicago, 2547 W. Blyman Ave, http://www-spintalents.com


Urban Village Church service LGBT-welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church 10:30am. Spartan Institute, 610 S. Michigan, http://www.newchicagochurch.com

Geja’s Cafe Champagne Festival Geja’s Cafe will celebrate the holiday season with its 31st Annual Champagne Festival featuring champagnes and sparkling wines from France and California. 1 p.m., 773-283-9101, Geja’s Cafe 340 W. Armitage, http://www.gejascafe.com

Urban Village Church Wicker Park Worship Services LGBT welcoming worship services at Urban Village Church are Eclectic and experimental, practical and intellectual, relevant and, hopefully, inspiring. 10:30 a.m., 1502 N. Hoyne (at Lawrence), http://www.newchicagochurch.com

Temptations’ Customer Appreciation Night Customer Appreciation Night with DJ Duane, Hosted by 5io with a performance at 8 p.m. Take your picture with Santa or Mrs. Claus for a $5 donation to Howard Brown. 1st 50 people will receive a 50% off pass towards New Year’s Eve cowl 4 p.m., Temptations’ Nightclub, 10235 W Grand Ave

FRIDAY, DEC. 27

Live Band Karaoke with Amy Armstrong Host Amy Armstrong urges you to put your place in the spotlight as you perform live with the band at Roscoe’s! There’s not a bad seat in the house! 10 p.m., Roscoe’s Tavern, 3356 N. Halsted, http://www.rossces.com

New Year’s Eve Cabaret and Comedy at Rehab. 9 p.m., Rehab Lounge, 3341 N. Halsted, http://www.chicagodramatists.org

FRIDAY, DEC. 30

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer in a Handbag Productions is proud to present David Carden’s parody of the classic children’s television special “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” now in its 18th year! Thursdays through Saturdays thru Jan. 1. The North Pole is in crisis. Nobody believes in Santa anymore! Elves have been laid off and the morose and morals are at an all time low. 7:30 p.m., 312-435-0130, Illuminati Night Club, 239S N. Clybourn, http://www.handbag-productions.com

NYE at Sidetrack Welcome 1/1/11 at this special NYE benefit for Equality IL PAC. $5 cover to get in and your tickets to line up to see 2011. Brunch at the Omelet Bar begins at 10 a.m., Chicago Pride. 4804 N Broadway, http://www.worldsgreatestbar.com

Take your place in the spotlight! There’s no shortage of parties on New Year’s Eve, thanks to clubs and private events.

Photo from 2009 by Anthony Meade

FRIDAY, DEC. 24

Christmas Day at The Call After the holiday dinner comes in and relax with video hits from disco to today. $5 Absolute cocktails and Jim Beam shots. 8 p.m., The Call Chicago, 2547 W Blyman Ave, http://www-spintalents.com

MONTROSE

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark, until Saturday, Jan. 1. Rudolph the Red-Hosed Reindeer is at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark, until Saturday, Jan. 1.

ROSECO'S TAVERN

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark, until Saturday, Jan. 1.

REHAB LOUNGE

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is at Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark, until Saturday, Jan. 1.
“My feeling about John [Travolta] has always been that we know and we don’t care. Look, I’m sorry that he’s been excruciating to deal with, and that’s all I can say. It only draws more attention to it when you make that kind of legal fuss. Just leave it be.”—Carrie Fisher defends her statement to The Advocate that “John don’t really care that John Travolta is gay.” I dunno about Carrie, but I cared a little—back when he was hot, that is.

Last week, I was on a plane watching Mariah Carey: Merry Christmas to You. I’m thrilled that pregnancy has not deterred Mariah from wearing those anatomy-revealing ensembles. It may have been an early Christmas miracle winningh Carey into any dress with a single-digit size—I suspect a number of elves (and perhaps the jaws of life) were needed to achieve this feat. I’m not sure how far along she is, but I believe when she hit the high note on “O Holy Night,” I saw the baby crowning! Days later, it was announced that she’s having twins. Maybe that’s what she was smuggling under the front of her dress.

Like Mariah’s legs, celebrity couples are having a helluva time staying together. Ryan Reynolds and Scarlett Johansson—done. Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens—split. Michael C. Hall and Jennifer Carpenter—kaput. Anna Friel and David Thewlis—over. Dylan Walsh and Joanna Going—going, gone. Let’s recap. One of the guys is dating an ex. Two of them are clearly gay. Another is a little indiscriminate with his seed. And the other—eh, who cares. Correctly match the couple in column A with the cause in column B and win ... well, satisfaction.

After seeing The Social Network, many of you wrote me wanting to know about the hunky twins. By now it’s pretty well known that the twins were actually played by a single actor—Armie Hammer. You believe that? Armie has just been cast as Clyde Tolson, the protegé and romantic partner of J. Edgar Hoover in the upcoming flick J. Edgar. When asked how his wife feels about him playing Hoover, Armie said, “She’s just happy I’m not kissing another woman!”" And what does Armie think about his love interest being played by Leonardo DiCaprio? “Someplace, deep down inside it was something I always hoped for.” You and me both.

Didja hear about James Franco and male prostitutes? Back when Franco was preparing to play a hooker in Sonny, he wanted to watch some real male prostitutes at work for research ... ah, the things I’ve done in the name of research.” He claims to have followed the guy on the actual "call": “It went down. Everything went down, as you see in the movies and hear about. The eerie thing is, it was like a movie, but it wasn’t a movie—it was the real thing, happening in front of me.” If I had a nickel for every time I’ve said that...

What if I told you Bea Arthur had a secret she took to the grave? Documents have surfaced indicating that for 30 months, Arthur was a Women’s Reserve Marine who was a typist and drove trucks! I’m shocked—she was a woman? Anyway, at her personality appraisal, she was deemed to have excellent vocabulary, was argumentative, and over-aggressive (perhaps in a masculine kinda way...) but who am I to judge? The overall evaluation called her “a good worker—if she has one day away”? By the time of her honorable discharge (Long before DODT), she was a staff sergeant. The only real embarrassing part is that she was out of work for five weeks “after contracting a venereal disease.” What did I tell you? Even stars are at risk!

Picture it—Chris Rock serving Mariska Hargitay breakfast in bed ... in the nude! The Children’s Defense Fund held its annual benefit in NYC and auctioneer Ali Wentworth was unable to get a high bid for Rock’s package, so to speak. (I suppose her hubby George was too shy to bid on it himself.) With the blessing of Chris’ wife (who is on the board), Ali threw in that Chris would be nude, and up popped Mariska’s hand. I guess Chris Rock servicing you in the nude is worth $25 grand. At least at my house, the camera equipment is already set up.

This ties in perfectly with our “Ask Billy” question. Gary in Boston asks: “I just saw a video of Brendon from ‘Big Brother 12’ apologizing for having an online cyber-indiscretion. What the hell does that mean? And where are the photos? He’s frickin’ gorgeous!”

I love my fellow Australians—we know exactly the right context for frickin’! Brendon was on Big Brother this past summer. The sexy swim coach developed a relationship with another contestant, Rachel, which resulted in some risqué bulging underwear shots, which we’ll also post. Since then, he apparently continued seeing Rachel, but had some sort of a relationship with another chick named Molly. To prove her point, Molly posted the nude photos of Brendon, which Rachel apparently recognized. Brendon went public with his crying apology and claimed it was only a cyber-affair. Molly counters that they did have sex—“He denies it and I am not proud of it, but yes, only once. I don’t want to go into the details.” She may not, but I’m happy to share some details with you. Like every inch of his cock, from various angles. And all for you at BillyMasters.com.

Since it’s too late to make another gift suggestion, I’m going to give you the gift of laughter. I got quite a chuckle out of watching a troupe of four shirtless male acrobats in tight white pants performing in front of Pope Benedict and a mixed assortment of holy men. It’s rather amusing seeing these celibate fellows, flailing underneath their vestments, their minds wandering back to the rectory. It sure as hell beats the crazy lady tackling the pope last Christmas Eve. Or does it? Be of good cheer and check it out on BillyMasters.com.

When the Vatican is hiring male strippers for midnight mass, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. With Christmas upon us (to say nothing of Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and the winter solstice for our Druid readers), let me say happy holidays to you and yours—which is much more festive than the traditional Boston greeting: “Up yours.” Of course, http://www.BillyMasters.com never takes a holiday, so be sure to check it out for the latest breaking news. If you have a question, feel free to drop me a note at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Mariska orders for some breakfast sausage! Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.

Oh, holy night!

Paula Sinclaire and Jamie Leigh McGuire filled the 3160 crowd with holiday cheer on Fri., Dec. 17. Photos by Chuck Kramer

Windy City Times
Dec. 22, 2010

For the month of December, Nightspots is doing something a little different with the Gift Guide (December 8) and the year-end retrospective issue (December 22).

Never fear! Turn to this space each week in December for all your nightlife-y goodness. Also, “like” our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/nightspots) for even more pictures of all your favorite nightlife denizens.

**Billy Masters**

Project Runway’s Mondo Guerra was guest judge at Vogue For Tots 4 at Berlin on Thurs., Dec. 16. Photos by Jerry Nunn. See more from the event at facebook.com/nightspots.
Bart Abeel: Outgames chair on the 2013 event

Bart Abeel is planning to compete in a short-distance running event at the 2013 World Outgames in Antwerp, Belgium. Or maybe a swimming event.

After all, he participated in both sports at the 2007 EuroGames, also held in Antwerp, though he didn’t claim a medal in either.

“I plan to do something because I like sports,” said Abeel, 47. “But I probably won’t [participate] in a major, long-distance [running] event because I will be pretty busy.”

Abeel is, you see, the chairman of the board for World Outgames Antwerp, the local organizing committee for the third quadrennial sports and cultural extravaganza, scheduled for Aug. 3-11, 2013.

Antwerp was officially awarded the 2013 Outgames in December 2009.

The inaugural Outgames was held in Montreal in 2006, and then Copenhagen hosted the event in 2009.

“We were very happy, satisfied and a bit relieved,” to win the bid for the 2013 Outgames, Abeel said. “It took us a long time to get all of the necessary funding before we signed the official contract with GLISA [the local government, and local professional sports federations locally and across Europe to learn how to organize a big, major sports event.”

Belgium is the home to some of the top professional female tennis players, including Kim Clijsters, Justine Henin and Yanina Wickmayer.

“We are trying to include and incorporate as many well-known sports people, not necessarily just gay people, to make it an open event. We want to include as many people as possible, not just gays, though gay people first,” Abeel said.

Belgium boasts 172 different nationalities, Abeel said—and he wants to attract participants from as many of them as possible.

“Hopefully throughout all of the big cities in Belgium, not just Antwerp,” they will come to the Outgames, he said. “Starting in 2013, we want the general public in Antwerp to know that the World Outgames is happening in August, 2013, in Antwerp. We want to make it a major sports and cultural event in Antwerp.”

“Our ultimate mission is that, after 2013, we can say that something has changed,” regarding the perception of gays. “Not just in Antwerp, but beyond Belgium.”

Abeel said he has a direct connection with Clijsters, and will reach out to have her involved in the Outgames. “I think that would be an extremely strong statement,” he said.

Abeel confirmed the Outgames will be marketed extensively throughout the U.S., beginning in 2012 at LGBT sporting events and through tourism bureaus. And also through major LGBT media in the U.S.

Abeel said the 2010 Gay Games in Cologne, Germany, were very successful from the Outgames’ perspective. The Outgames was very visible in Cologne, even holding a Belgium Day in the Rainbow Village in Cologne.

Early bird registration for Antwerp is already at about 300.

“We watched and learned [in Cologne], things to do and things not to do,” Abeel said.

Abeel is, naturally, concerned about the worldwide economic crisis.

“It worries everyone,” he said. “It’s not making our job easy, but, this is such a prestigious event, I think we can convince big, important companies to support the event and participants to attend. I think we’ll be successful, based on the nature of the project.”

“What we really learned from Copenhagen was the planning and the budget; we know those are two very important elements.”

Abeel said the 2013 event definitely will include a human rights conference, as has been an Outgames staple.

Are you on track as a whole? “Yes, we are,” Abeel said.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
Michael Richardson
flags a championship

Michael Richardson started a new flag football team this season—the Jackhammer Hole Wreckers for the top-tiered A-Division of Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association (CMSA).

With various personalities, Richardson admitted he “was not sure how we would mesh together,” to win the bid for the 2013 Outgames.

Richardson’s 2010 LGBT sporting resume also included basketball, softball and volleyball. He played for the Jackhammer Bulldogs (C1 Division) in softball and the Hittmen (volleyball).

And for his efforts on the sporting fields of play, Richardson was named the 2010 Chicago LGBT Sports Athlete of the Year, from a poll of fellow athletes and officials.

“What made 2010 exciting and entertaining for me was the spirit in which my teams played. We played hard and never gave up, no matter how tough things got for us,” said Richardson, who admitted he “was not sure how we would mesh together.”

Richardson said his biggest LGBT sporting surprise is the friendships developed, which he truly cherishes. “When I was assaulted, the outpouring of support was overwhelming to say the least and it humbled me to see how much people cared about me and my well being,” he said.

More Michael Richardson:
—Favorite pro sport: “Any sport my home-town of Philadelphia plays.”
—Favorite pro team: “Any team from my hometown of Philadelphia.”

—Quote: “The friendships [through LGBT sports] have helped fill the void left by my families’ non-acceptance of me and my sexual identity. I know there are a lot of persons out there who are going through similar trials, and know the support is appreciated.”

WINDY CITY TIMES
Dec. 22, 2010
Are pets a part of the afterlife?

The loss of a pet can sometimes feel overwhelming. Many people find it comforting to know that our pets continue to be a part of our lives even in the afterlife. In fact, sometimes our deceased pets come to us as clearly as if they were still among us. This was certainly the case for Sebastian, my friend Cindy’s cat. The first time I met Sebastian was at one of Cindy’s monthly Eucharist games.

I was sitting in the living room noshing on some snacks when I noticed him sprawled out on the top of Cindy’s favorite chair. He was a large, fluffy, orange tabby who loved Cindy’s chair almost as much as she did. I was a bit taken aback, as I had always known Cindy as a dog person, not a cat person. I asked her if she used to have an orange tabby cat. She smiled and said, “Oh, I see you’ve met Sebastian. He’s always laying around the house somewhere.”

Sebastian was an extremely strong spirit as he had made his transition well over six years ago. I think one of the reasons Sebastian hangs out so much is because during his transition, Cindy asked him to come back to her and show his presence.

The truth is, we all have the capacity to communicate with our loved ones that have crossed over. Our job is two-fold: we simply ask them to show us a sign and then we wait with an open and attentive attitude for it to come.

It is often the small signs that go unnoticed. I once had a client ask me if her mother came to her in a specific way. I told her that her mother kept showing her a red cardinal, and she gave me the sense that he was often a red cardinal sitting in the tree outside her kitchen window.

The irony of this story is that cardinals were her mother’s favorite bird, so of course she would choose them as a way to communicate with her daughter. If we allow it, a little wishful thinking can turn into a deep connecting moment with a loved one.

The more open we remain, the easier it is to connect with them. They choose the way in which they make contact with us. We simply have to pay attention to the small things in life.

Delphina, a Chicago-based psychic medium, is a columnist for Windy City Times. See Spiritguiding.com or email questions to spiritguiding@gmail.com.
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