LGBT leaders meet Braun

BY TRACY BAIM

Chicago mayoral candidate Carol Moseley Braun met with about two dozen LGBT activists and leaders Jan. 19 at Ald. Tom Tunney’s Ann Sather restaurant on Belmont. Tunney was at the restaurant and greeted Braun, but did not attend the informal gathering.

State Rep. Greg Harris also attended the breakfast, as he has done with other mayoral candidates, but the event was not an endorsement session

The individuals at the breakfast included those from a range of non-profit groups. The questions ranged from specific LGBT issues, to healthcare and AIDS, bullying in schools, immigration, crime, city budget issues and more.

Groups represented included Amigas Latinas, Affinity, Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus, Windy City Black Pride, Howard Brown health center, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Lambda Legal, the LGBT Committee of the Chicago Teacher’s Union, LGBT Change, The Civil Rights Agenda, and The CORE Center.

Lowell Jaffe from The Civil Rights Agenda introduced Braun at the break-

Turn to page 10

JOEY MOGUL ON THE DEATH PENALTY

PAGE 14

CMSA WOMEN’S SOCIAL

PAGE 30

NYC AIDS campaign raises alarms

REFLECTIONS BY SEAN STRUB

The New York City Department of Health’s “It’s Never Just HIV” advertising campaign (www.youtube.com), targeted to encourage HIV negative gay and bisexual men to use condoms, has prompted a conversation that is profoundly important and speaks directly to the heart of the problems with HIV prevention.

The ad features dolorful, frightened or ashamed young men who are so attractive they look like characters TV’s Lost, set against a soundtrack appropriate for a horror film. The ad’s message is that HIV doesn’t exist in isolation; it also brings other serious health problems.

X-rays of badly broken bones, an MRI of an atrophied brain and, most shocking, a close-up photograph of a man’s cancer-encrusted anus graphically make the point. The voiceover sounds like a poor man’s Don Lafontaine (he’s the legendary “voice of God” who often starts movie trailers with “In a world ...”), evoking an apocalyptic end-of-the-world feeling.

GMHC (formerly known as the Gay Men’s Health Crisis) and GLAAD (the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) share the concern of many people with HIV, prevention experts and activists and rightly issued a press release calling for the ad to be pulled, asserting it is sensationalistic and stigmatizing.

Turn to page 8
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DAILY BREAKING NEWS

**ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS**

Scottish Play Scott 15
Theater reviews 20
Daily Parton talks with WCT 22
Elton John’s benefit concert 22
Judy Gold on family, comedy 23
Knots: Detroit, Jaguar 24
Book review: Cinderella... 25
Knight: Bluffing, Barney’s Version 27
Billy Masters 29

**OUTLINES**

Real estate; classifieds 26
Calendar Q 28
Sports: Gay Games, CMSA social 30

**REVIEW**

WindyCityMediaGroup.com

**DAILY BREAKING NEWS**

1. Clinton backs Rahm, who’s in trouble
2. Osterman’s 48th Ward bid
3. Sean Strub on NYC AIDS campaign
4. HUD’s new pro-LGBT rules

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**DILLA MELA**

NYC AIDS campaign
Supreme Court rejects D.C. foes of marriage equality

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear the appeal of a group of clergy in Washington, D.C., who want to put the city’s new marriage-equality law on the ballot.

The denial of review appears to end the line now for opponents of equal-marriage rights in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., enacted its marriage-equality law last March, but not before a group of clergy tried to stop the law from going into effect by requesting an emergency order from the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court refused that request, in Jackson v. D.C., but the group came back with this second effort aimed at undoing the marriage equality law.

What the group sought, in Jackson v. D.C. II, was a ruling from the high court saying the D.C. government could not bar an initiative regarding whether to repeal the marriage equality law.

The question before the Supreme Court, however, was not about marriage on the surface. On the surface, the question was whether the city’s law governing initiatives can bar voters from considering an initiative that violates the city’s human rights act.

Important to the case was the fact that Washington, D.C., is not a state but a unique district, controlled by Congress to serve as the nation’s center of government. But in recognition of the needs of citizens who reside in the District of Columbia and who raise and school children there and require routine services such as fire and police protection, Congress, in 1973, provided for the formation of a D.C. Council to govern its citizens under a “Home Rule Act,” or D.C. Charter.

Congress also approved an amendment to the charter, in 1978, that incorporated the D.C. Council’s laws spelling out how it would govern its own elections, including initiatives. The following year, the D.C. Council then approved the legislation necessary to implement that charter amendment. And there lies the rub.

The implementing law—the Initiative Procedures Act—stipulated that the elections board “shall refuse to accept [a proposed initiative] if the Board finds that it . . . authorizes, or would have the effect of authorizing, discrimination” prohibited under the city human rights law. The D.C. Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation so, when the group of clergy sought a ballot measure to overturn its marriage equality law, the city’s Board of Elections refused to accept the measure, and the city’s highest court, the D.C. Court of Appeals, upheld that decision.

The Alliance Defense Fund, representing Harry Jackson, Walter Fauntroy and the other petitioners, argued that this limitation violates the Charter itself, which provides for initiatives. And, after the D.C. Court of Appeals, its last resort was an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. When the fund initially sought U.S. Supreme Court intervention, it filed a request for an emergency order to Chief Justice John Roberts, who handles emergency requests from the District of Columbia. Roberts denied that request last March and the marriage equality law went into effect March 3, 2010.

But in denying the emergency request, Roberts said he thought the clergy coalition’s challenge to the restriction on initiatives had “some force.”

The clergy group took Justice Roberts’ note to heart and, with the help of the Alliance Defense Fund, a right-wing legal group, filed this new challenge. The new challenge argued that the decisions by the D.C. Courts “approved a Council-imposed limitation on the people’s Charter-based initiative power.”

The D.C. Court of Appeals, in upholding the D.C. Council’s right to include a limitation on the city’s initiative process, “allowed the Council to usurp a congressional grant of power,” argued the fund. And, said the group, it “bestows unapproved and extensive authority upon the Council to further erode the people’s initiative power, or otherwise alter Congress’s division of legislative power within the District of Columbia.”

“Congress is the source of all legislative power over the District,” argued Alliance in its petition to the Supreme Court in October.

But Congress, dominated in both houses by Democrats, did not use its authority in December 2009 to disapprove of the D.C. Council’s passage of the marriage equality law. Nor did it disapprove of the D.C. Council’s establishment of a restriction on ballot measures, in 1979. Alliance argued that “Congress’s failure to reject or overturn” the restriction on D.C. initiatives “does not amount to implicit congressional approval of that measure.”

But attorneys for the D.C. government, in their brief opposing acceptance of Alliance’s case by the Supreme Court, said the D.C. Council had authority to enact this restriction as part of the Charter amendment approved by both Congress and the voters of D.C. And they noted Congress had authority to disapprove of the Initiative Procedures Act but did not do so.

Further, the D.C. attorneys argued that the restriction on initiatives is a narrow one and that conflict before the high court was “of exclusively local concern” involving “no important questions of Federal law.”

In order to hear an appeal at the U.S. Supreme Court, four justices must agree to take the case up for review and, generally speaking, the case must present a question concerning federal law. However, as in the case of California’s Proposition 8, state laws can end up in federal court when they are challenged as violating some federal constitutional provision.

Nan Hunter, a gay legal scholar who blogs at hunterforjustice.com, said that, if the Supreme Court had agreed to hear the Jackson case and overturned the D.C. Court of Appeals decision, the result would have been like “an East Coast rerun of Prop 8.”

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State of the Union
President Obama delivered his State of the Union address after Windy City Times went to press. See http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com for details.

Daniel Hernandez, Jr., the gay intern who aided Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., until medical staffers arrived after she was shot earlier this month, was slated to attend the address as a guest of Michelle Obama, according to ABC News.

Chief Justice John Roberts.
HUD announces proposed new LGBT-based anti-bias rule

BY DANA RUDOLPH
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced proposed new regulations Jan. 26 intended to bar discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Twenty states plus the District of Columbia have housing protections specific to sexual orientation, and 13 states plus the District have protections specific to gender identity. Approximately 150 cities, towns and counties have LGBT protections as well, according to HUD.

No national study has quantified how many LGBT people have faced housing discrimination, although several smaller studies and examples have indicated pervasive discrimination, especially against transgender people and LGBT seniors.

HUD is now preparing a national study to fill this gap. The agency collected input for the study last year via a national listening tour and online submissions. A HUD spokesperson said the target date for reporting findings is late 2012.

HUD may additionally include LGBT discrimination in its decennial study of housing discrimination, which has, in the past, looked at racial- and ethnic-based discrimination.

There is also a move in Congress to prohibit discrimination against LGBT people in all housing, not just HUD programs. At the end of the last session of Congress, Reps. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y.; John Conyers, D-Mich.; and Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., introduced the Housing Opportunities and Openness to All Act, which would amend the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or marital status in the sale, rental, financing, or brokerage of housing.

The bill would also expand the Fair Housing Act’s definition of “familial status” to include “anyone standing in loco parentis” to a minor—thus providing protection to same-sex couples and other families where one parent may not be legally recognized.

Individuals seeking redress under the Fair Housing Act may bring a lawsuit in federal district court or file an administrative complaint with HUD.

Ilan Kayatsky, a spokesperson for Nadler, said Nadler hopes to reintroduce the bill in this session of Congress “within the next couple of months.”

Nadler praised HUD’s proposed new rule in a statement, saying that he “[welcomes] the Administration’s more inclusive and expansive view of what defines an American ‘family.’”

With Republican control of the House this session, however, Nadler lost his chairmanship of the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. The new chair for the renamed Subcommittee on the Constitution is Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz. Trent received a 0 percent score from the Human Rights Campaign for each of the past two Congresses, indicating he never voted in favor of legislation to further LGBT equality.

The proposed HUD rule must go through a 60-day period of public comment, Jan. 24 to March 25. The date of publication for the final rule will depend upon the volume of comments received, but is expected by the end of 2011, said a department spokesperson.

Comments may be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at regulations.gov, or by mail to the Regulations Division, Office of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, SW, Room 10276, Washington, D.C., 20410-0500.

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D J HARRY T
MUSICIAN STEPHEN LEONARD

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A closer look at the civil-union law  

BY CHARLIE DEWEY

The recent passage of the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection & Civil Unions Act is a victory for LGBT residents in Illinois. It was a hard-fought battle for many who have been fighting for recognition of their relationships. The program offers protections for non-biological parents.

One of the most anticipated areas of protection is the hope it will help to ease same-sex couples health emergencies. Although President Obama signed an executive order which allows an individual the right to designate a person as his or her next of kin, in cases of emergency the individual might be unable to make the designation for his or her partner to act in that capacity.

With the new law, Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov explained, “If they are in a civil union in Illinois, by virtue of their being in a civil union, person B would have all the rights with person A in the hospital that any married couple would have.”

The civil-union statute will also help protect the family of a spouse who dies without a will. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Senior Staff Attorney Camilla Taylor said, “If you are a civil union partner and you don’t write a will and one of the members of the couple dies the other one will inherit automatically under rules that make clear that the surviving partner is the equivalent of a spouse. There are all sorts of other protections that go along with that for a surviving partner. There are protections for the homestead. There are protections against having to re-pay debts that are incurred for medical costs and nursing home costs under certain circumstances. Now a surviving partner would benefit from all of those protections.”

Taylor pointed out that one of the most important benefits she sees under the new law are protections for same-sex couples’ children. “The fact that a child is legally presumed a child of both parents from birth means that children no longer are vulnerable. ... So from both the non-biological parent of the child has the authority to make medical decisions, to take the child home from the hospital, to enroll the child in a daycare program, to do all of those things that parents need to do on a daily basis in order to keep their children secure. That is a crucial right.”

Still, despite all of the benefits and protections that residents of Illinois are gaining, it is important for couples intending to become civilly united to keep in mind that at the federal level nothing has changed. They will still need to work with their lawyers and financial advisors to ensure that beyond the borders of the state their families are protected.

“Civil unions are so monumental for same-sex couples in Illinois,” said Cherkasov. “In one regard it’s because the lawmakers have intended for this to provide all the protections and benefits that the state provides to married couples. But on the other hand, the crucial distinction is this is a state concept, not a federal concept. Even though the state of Illinois will recognize same-sex couples in a civil union the federal government will continue to deny recognition.”

Couples with a civil union in Illinois face a variety of circumstances beyond the state. In some states where civil unions or same-sex marriages have been granted the couple may find that their civil union is respected. Yet, in other states that have not written that expressly in their law they may find their relationship is unrecognized or the rights granted differ in some ways. There are also many states that deny legal recognition entirely for same-sex couples where the relationship will not be respected.

Taylor noted, “An Illinois civil union would be unlikely to be treated as a marriage in California. It would more likely be treated as an equivalent to a domestic partnership. By contrast, I think either Vermont or New Hampshire converted civil unions automatically to marriages. So an Illinois civil union would likely be treated as a marriage there. It’s less clear elsewhere. A state like Iowa, that doesn’t have civil union law, which allows same-sex couples to marry, it’s unclear what status same-sex couples would have there.”

Taylor added, “So this means couples with civil unions still need to visit a lawyer and draw up all the legal documents to protect themselves that they would need even if they had no legal relationship to each other whatever so. They need to create wills, powers of attorney, perform adoptions of their children.

“Even though a child born to a couple with a civil union here in Illinois is legally presumed a child of both civil union partners under Illinois law. This couple still needs to pay the thousands of dollars it costs to perform an adoption of their own child, because they may travel outside of Illinois and their civil union may not be respected and so the parent-child relationship that resulted from their civil union may not be respected. By contrast, an adoption would still be respected in all other states. It’s a court order.”

For same-sex couples outside of Illinois who have a civil union, domestic partnership or are married, they will be considered civilly united in Illinois “This is what we have learned from other states that had not clearly defined this,” said State Rep. Greg Harris. There is a section of the law that says marriages, domestic partnerships, civil unions and other substantially similar legally recognized relationships form other jurisdictions will be recognized as a civil union in Illinois.”

As long as the Defense of Marriage Act remains and many states continue to deny same-sex couples any type of legal recognition, couples taking advantage of civil unions must continue to protect their families by drawing up all the legal documents they would need without the law.

“I think the current federal situation is not sustainable,” said Cherkasov. We have same-sex couples who in some jurisdictions like California were allowed to get married but their peers, couples living across the street form them, are not allowed to get married, and when people travel just a few miles across state boundaries, suddenly they go from being in a married a relationship to being strangers in the eyes of the law.

“That unequal treatment of American citizens is not sustainable. The constitution specifically provided for equal protections for all Americans. I think the federal government is now going to have to reconcile with how different Americans living just a few houses or miles from each other are treated differently.”

Harris agrees that the federal government is going to need to address this issue: “I think from a public policy perspective, as we move down the road to full equality, all these problems of going from state to state, all these problems with state law conflicting with federal law are just going to drive the argument that we need to resolve this issue on a national basis and grant marriage equality for everyone.”

In the meantime, civil-union couples can take comfort in the many local and state benefits and protections that are now available to their families under Illinois law.

Civil-union bill-signing slated for Jan. 31

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn will sign the historic civil-unions bill Monday, Jan. 31, at 4 p.m. at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington.

The event will take place at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, at 4 p.m. The state House passed the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act Nov. 30, 2010, with the Illinois Senate following suit the next day.

Boystown gets Wi-Fi

Chicago’s Boystown area has added to its uniqueness now that it boasts free Wi-Fi service, according to ChicagoPride.com.

The Northwestern Business Alliance made the service possible.

The free Wi-Fi spans from Belmont to Grace, and Broadway between Grace and Irving Park. The alliance will officially announce the service at an event. (Details have not yet been speciﬁed.)

Boystown is the city’s first neighborhood with free Wi-Fi. Chicago plans to launch similar zones throughout the city.

Joseph J. Maggio

Joseph J. Maggio passed away suddenly at his home on Jan. 17; he was 58.

Maggio was the best friend and life partner of Jim Kelly. He was the love of Kelly’s life for 31 years. Maggio was also the devoted son to the late Tina, nee Riotto and the late Bartolo Maggio; brother of Maria (David) Guzik; and uncle to Matthew.

He was a graduate of St. Patrick High School, and received his bachelor’s degree from Loyola University and his master’s degree from Northeastern University.

Maggio began his long career as a teacher at Notre Dame High School for Girls in 1977. For the last 20 years, Joe taught Math at St. Ignatius College Prep and was honored to serve as coach of the school’s math team.

The funeral took place Jan. 21, beginning from Cumberland Chapel and proceeding to Holy Family Church for Mass. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, Feb. 12 at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 N. Ridge Ave. from 2 to 4 p.m. At 4 p.m., the celebration will move to Jackhammer, 6406 N. Clark St. in Chicago. Donations can be made to the Alzheimer’s Association, 225 N. Michigan, 17th floor, Chicago, Ill., 60601-7633.

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NYC from cover

UK-based journalist Gus Cairns, who has HIV, commented on Michael Peterlis’ blog, “I hate this ad because it’s sadistic and bullying. ... It’s horrifying by gay men and gay sex in general, using images of bodily corruption and disease to ram home that thing—that despite 50 years of gay lib—we still feel about ourselves: look at the suicide, depression and drug use statistics. The message it gives—not factually, but with all the visceral power of that five-frame shot of a ruined ass—is that if you’re out on the scene, death and decay are staking you and serves you right if they get you.”

Others have questioned its presentation of facts. The horrible conditions noted are typically found only in some older people with HIV, or those who are not diagnosed until later stages of the disease; anal cancer is caused by an entirely different virus, osteoporosis is likely as much a function of anti-retroviral treatment as it is HIV itself, etc.

The lion of AIDS activism, Larry Kramer, loves the ad, has congratulated the health department and called for even more frightening ads to be produced. Kramer has written: “... these NYC department of public service announcements are in fact not strong enough! How about trying this one on for size (pun intended): LE-THAL WEAPON men, what you carry between your legs is a potential lethal weapon! it can murder people. Before you stick it anywhere PUT A CONDOM ON IT! I bet you’ll get better results with this one.” Kramer believes in fear as a strategy to change people’s behavior; he cites it as key to the success of ACT UP and other community-mobilizing efforts. There are many who share this view, as is clear by reading comments posted online in response to coverage of the controversy.

Many of those comments express concern that gay men are complacent, unaware of how awful HIV can be and, at least in Kramer’s case, too concerned with their own pleasure to worry about protecting their partners. The debate over these ads has largely been amongst people who have devoted much of their lives to combating the epidemic, which makes me hesitant to write in terms of the different “sides” of the issue. Everyone is on the side of finding the best ways to reduce HIV transmission, but we have differing thoughts on whether this particular campaign will help reach that goal. I think this advertising campaign is terrible, mostly because it may contribute to further spread of the virus. The only good it has accomplished is that it has provided a brief moment when a few more people are thinking about and paying attention to HIV-prevention issues. That is an opportunity that I hope we will not waste.

Supporters of these ads claim HIV prevention has been a failure and they are angry that the epidemic has disappeared from the media and that the people who are not already educated about protecting themselves will get your message loud and clear: that they are never going to fear it enough again.

Joy with Gus. Young gay men who have the comfort of knowing they can access treatment if they get ill will never fear HIV the way my generation feared it. That turning fear to manageable media manipulation is tricky and the research indicates it can just as easily compound the problem. Another poster on Peterlis’ site noted: “Here’s the problem fear-based tactics face. They are countered each and every time you meet someone with HIV who’s leading a normal, happy and productive life and not wallowing in a pit of despair and disease and clothed in sackcloth bemoaning his former, evil ways.

In the modern gay community, that happens all the freaking time. Which is to say that people are trying to scare will write you off as a lying hysteric. And your safe sex message gets tarnished with the same brush. As a result, all of the people who don’t know people living with HIV (basically, most of the population) actually will get your message loud and clear: that people with HIV are scary, disease-ridden lepers who must be shunned off of society.”

This is what the health department ads accomplish. They certainly will instill fear, but they do so at the expense of further stigmatization of people who already have HIV. And we can and should tell people with HIV that a diagnosis is not the end of their lives, that they still pursue their dreams and seek everything anyone else can extract from life without sending a message to young people that HIV is no big deal.

We need to convey both of these messages, at the same time, and not let one negate or diminish the other. That requires a more nuanced messaging, one that doesn’t assume the intended audience can be manipulated by over-the-top fright messages, doesn’t speak down to them and doesn’t assume they are presently not caring whether or not they get HIV.

The messaging must also be fact-based. That means including the difficult truths about what untreated HIV can do to one as well as about what is and is not known about the side effects of long-term anti-retroviral therapy. It also means talking honestly and practically about the consequences.

At times I want to shake and scream, Larry Kramer-style, to young gay and bisexual men: “You don’t want to get this virus! It screws up your life, creates a never-ending series of health battles, makes it vastly more difficult to have intimate relationships, decimates your self-esteem and stigmatizes you beyond what anyone who is HIV negative can ever understand!”

At the same time, I proselytize to those who do have HIV: “You may have HIV, but you can still lead a happy, productive and vital life, you can fall in love, pursue a career and find purpose, and with careful attention, stay mostly healthy, even while managing the tremendous burden of a life-long viral infection.”

We can and should tell young people that HIV is very bad and they don’t want to get it, but we can do that without condemning or stigmatizing people who already have HIV. And we can and should tell people with HIV that a diagnosis is not the end of their lives, that they still pursue their dreams and seek everything anyone else can extract from life without sending a message to young people that HIV is no big deal.

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men believe it is intended for “scene-oriented, promiscuous gay men.” These reactions lead to rationalizing or defending one’s present behaviors, rather than a change in behavior.

Loss- vs. gain-framed messaging

The Yale study makes an enormously important distinction between “loss framed,” focused on what one has to lose (getting sick and being miserable) vs. what they call “gain framed,” focused on what one has to gain (being healthy, and happy). “...[Participants] expressed greater intentions to engage in the preventive behaviors when the information was gained framed than when it was loss framed; loss framed messages were more effective at encouraging the detection behaviors.”

The health department ad is clearly “loss framed,” which is not the strategy proven most effective for actually changing sexual behaviors amongst the targeted audience.

Further more, “threat appeals” that lack ways to avoid the negative consequences depicted in the message produce a “boomerang effect, in that the participants were less likely to adopt the recommended behavior.”

Use a condom every time?

The only part of the health department ad that suggests a way to avoid the negative consequences is the generic and, at this point, largely useless “Use a condom every time” message repeated at the end of the ad. The ad does not provide the information young gay men need and want to help them avoid contracting HIV.

I call “use a condom every time” message largely useless because at this point in the epidemic repeating this to young gay men is as helpful as hectoring teenage girls to “don’t get pregnant.” Young gay men know they don’t want to get HIV and they know condoms are effective as hectoring teenage girls to “don’t get pregnant.”

What enables gay men to protect themselves and young women to avoid unwanted pregnancies is not hectoring them with a catch-phrase, but providing empowering information, practical strategies and solutions that they can integrate into the reality of their sex lives and cultural milieus.

For the NYC health department to base a campaign on the slogan “Use a Condom Every Time” is likely to be as effective as Nancy Reagan’s “Just Say No to Drugs” campaign.

All sexual behaviors are not of comparable risk. We know that receptive anal intercourse accounts for the vast majority of new infections amongst gay men and is exponentially riskier than other sexual activities.

Sharing the truth about the relative risks of different kinds of behavior will do more to help young gay men avoid acquisition of HIV than will hectoring them over the head with “Use a Condom Every Time.” Focusing our prevention efforts on these riskiest activities, rather than generic messages that have become part of the background noise to our lives, will result in greater success.

We also need to stop saying that using a condom every time is the only way to avoid acquiring HIV. Most gay men have already permanently rejected the “use a condom every time” message. At the peak of the crisis, many were willing to forego skin-to-skin contact for a period of time. But over the long haul, many gay men (and perhaps most younger gay men), have identified situations where the risk of transmission is so low or non-existent that sex without condoms becomes, for them, an acceptable risk.

If they feel certain someone is of the same sero-status, if they are engaging in oral sex, or as the active partner in anal sex, or if they are certain an HIV-positive partner is on treatment and has an undetectable viral load, or in other circumstances, they may skip the use of condoms.

We need to recognize that different individuals will tolerate different levels of risk. Some of those people will make decisions most of us might find foolish, but our task is to give gay men the education and tools to make their risk assessment processes as informed as possible. Those who will accept no risk can choose abstinence. Everything else involves some level of risk and where the line is drawn is ultimately a personal decision.

The role of treatment in HIV prevention

We also have failed in recognizing the role treatment plays in reducing risk. A person with HIV on treatment who has been undetectable for six months or more is unlikely to transmit the virus. It is not impossible, but the chance of transmission is dramatically reduced, for many that chance is reduced to the extent they are comfortable having unprotected sex with a person who is undetectable.

Our community’s failure to have an honest discussion about this has resulted in people making judgments that are often poorly informed. We need to recognize the reality of how treatment does reduce transmission risk, even while also communicating that it does not eliminate such risk.

Condoms sometimes fail—the most responsible...
ELECTIONS 2011

Osterman vies for 48th Ward seat

BY ROSS FORMAN

Harry Osterman, 43, is the state representative for the 43rd District in Illinois House of Representatives now running for alderman in the 48th ward. His opponents include Philip R. Bernstein and Jose E. Arteaga.

“I have a strong track record as state representative on LGBT issues and I am dedicated to serving all the residents of the 48th Ward to make it a better, safer place for everyone,” Osterman said. “Additionally, I will continue working with LGBT leaders in the 48th Ward to ensure all issues affecting the LGBT community are being addressed.”

Windy City Times: What do you want to do for the 48th Ward and how do you plan to get things done?

Harry Osterman: As alderman, I will have three main priorities: improving public safety, improving education, and increasing economic development.

Public Safety: My top priority will be public safety. If elected, I will work with the police, community organizations and neighbors to develop a safety plan for each area of our ward and together the community will reduce violence and make the streets safer for all residents. As part of a large plan on public safety, I will push for increasing staffing levels in the detective bureaus, as repeat offenders and may be involved in the passage of an amendment to the State’s Human Rights Act, to prohibit discrimination based on an individual’s sexual orientation. My greatest legislative accomplishment was getting civil-unions legislation passed this year.

WCF: It was a ground-breaking year for the LGBT community in 2010, with [the repeal of] DADT and civil unions coming to Illinois. Your thoughts about that?

Osterman: Helping pass civil unions legislation this [past] November was my proudest legislative accomplishment to date. This legislation, as well as the repeal of DADT, will help Illinois lead the way in bridging the equality gap between gay and straight individuals. However, as great as these achievements are, we must also remember we cannot rest on these accomplishments and must continue to press for greater equality and hopefully seeing the Federal Defense of Marriage Act repealed.

WCF: The 2010 Gay Pride Parade also was ground-breaking, with the Stanley Cup riding in it and even Baseball Hall of Famer Ernie Banks riding on the Cubs’ float. Thoughts?

Osterman: My staff, many volunteers, and I have marched in the parade for several years. The parade is incredibly fun and a great way to celebrate Chicago’s active LGBT community. I am glad to see more groups and organizations join us every year.

WCF: You are going against an openly gay candidate in a race with a large LGBT voter turnout. Thoughts about that?

Osterman: I do not think this is an issue. See http://www.harryosterman.org.

BRAUN from cover

fast. He praised her long-standing record on gay issues, including 1990s U.S. Senate votes against “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (joined by just 11 colleagues) and the Defense of Marriage Act (joined by 13 colleagues) signed by President Clinton.

Braun also supported the passage of Chicago’s gay-rights ordinance, and other gay causes, during her decades-long career in local, state and federal office. Braun was the first U.S. senator to appoint an LGBT liaison for her constituency. She is in the city’s Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame.

Braun spoke about her support of LGBT issues, and then addressed her other priorities for the city.

“No single person has all the answers,” said Braun said in a statement after the event. “That’s why it’s vital to get into every community, every neighborhood, and listen to the people who are in the trenches. This morning’s breakfast was a success because there was an abundance of ideas and suggestions. I walked away with insights and policy initiatives that I wouldn’t get sitting behind a desk.”

While Braun does have a long record on LGBT rights, she does not enjoy unanimous support among LGBT leaders and activists. The top candidates for mayor are vying for the LGBT constituency and many are boasting of their support of a range of issues important to the LGBT community. This makes for a complicated choice, and many LGBT voters care about issues beyond LGBT rights.
Chicago link in same-sex marriage case
BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Due to this nation’s patchwork laws relating to same-sex marriage many couples are forced to contend with legal battles over inheritance of property and assets when one of them dies. This is just what Jennifer Tobits, who was married to Sarah Elyn Farley in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 2006, has had to do.

The couple lived in Chicago, where Farley was a partner at Cozen O’Connor. When Farley, who was 37, died of cancer last September, her parents, David and Joan, claimed the rights to their daughter’s profit-sharing account at the law firm. Tobits says that she is entitled to money since she was married to Farley and is her next of kin.

Cozen O’Connor has recently filed an interpleader action (Cozen O’Connor, P.C. v. Tobits et al.) in the United States District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the state where the law firm is headquartered. An interpleader action is a legal procedure that is used in court when two parties stake a claim for the property or money of a mutual third party. Robert Fiebach, who works at Cozen O’Connor’s headquarters in Philadelphia, told Windy City Times that they “view themselves as a stakeholder and want the court to decide who get the proceeds if the two parties, Tobits or Farley’s parents, can’t resolve it themselves.”

The issue involves not only the legality of Farley and Tobits’ marriage, but also the beneficiary form that Farley’s parents claim has been signed the form releasing their claim to the money. If it is determined that the form is invalid, then the dispute moves to the larger question of whether the court will recognize Farley and Tobits’ marriage and give Farley’s assets to Tobits and not Farley’s parents.

This case is still in the preliminary stages so the outcome will not be known for quite some time. Meanwhile, courts across the country will have to contend with these types of cases until same-sex marriage is legal across the United States. The question still remains: Is a legal same-sex marriage in Canada legal in the United States and what does that mean for the future of inheritance rights for same-sex couples?

Chicago House hosting ‘Champagne Wrapeature’

Chicago House & Social Service Agency is hosting “Champagne Wrapeature Snowball 2011: Clicquot in the Snow” Thursday, Jan. 27, at the Mid-America Club, 200 E. Randolph, 80th Floor, at 6 p.m. Veuve Clicquot, Belvedere Vodka and Grand Marnier will provide the bubbly treats and specialty cocktails. The suggested attire is “stylish snow bunny.”

Tickets are $75 in advance and $85 at the door. Phone 773-248-5200, ext. 303, or visit http://www.ChicagoHouse.org.

NOW PACs endorse Braun

The National Organization for Women Equality PAC and the Chicago NOW PAC have endorsed Carol Moseley Braun in the city’s mayoral race, according to a press release.

Braun made history when she became the first African-American woman to serve as assistant majority leader in the Illinois House; the first woman and African-American to hold executive office in Cook County Government; and the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

U.S. President Bill Clinton stopped by Chicago to back Rahm Emanuel in Emanuel’s bid to become the city’s next mayor. TheHill.com reported that Clinton said of Emanuel, “He will be fearlessly honest with you. He will take care of you.” However, Emanuel’s opponents criticized Clinton’s appearance, with Carol Moseley Braun saying, “For him to come on the day following Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday to insert himself in the middle of a mayoral race. [It] is a betrayal of the people who were most loyal to him. It’s a mistake.”

A state appellate court ruled Jan. 24 that Emanuel should not be on the Feb. 22 ballot because he does not meet the residency requirement, according to the Chicago Tribune. However, the state supreme court issued an order Jan. 25 keeping Emanuel on the ballot.

Photo by Kat Fitzgerald

Clinton backs Rahm

A coalition of community leaders and local pro-LGBT organizations, including Equality Illinois and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, has assessed the issue positions of the city’s mayoral candidates.

The questionnaires can be viewed at http://eqil.org/nextmayor.html. Among the issues covered are employee benefits, homelessness, transgender rights, HIV/AIDS and marriage equality. WCT will have details of a Feb. 9 LGBT-focused mayoral forum as they are disclosed.

No matter which way you go, you’re always headed in the right direction in Key West.

Key West

Close To Perfect · Far From Normal
fla-keys.com/gaykeywest · 866-904-0543

A WHOLE NEW KIND OF CRUISING.
Gay Indian prince talks family, love

BY KATE SOSIN

“Once upon a time, there was a gay prince who tried to do something for the community”—and so starts Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil’s story, in his own words.

It’s been five years since Gohil announced he is gay, and five years since his parents disowned him and his neighbors burned effigies of him in the streets. His parents are coming to accept his sexuality, he is a symbol of LGBTQ rights in India and his organization has grown to serve tens of thousands. For the first time in his life, Gohil’s focus has shifted to unmet challenges: how to reconcile the traditional duties of a future king of Rajpipla State while acting as a figurehead for India’s gay-rights movement, and how to find a companion that values him more than his money and fame.

Gohil is born destined to carry on the traditions of his country. (India’s royalty was de-recognized in 1970 but still hold influence and cultural importance.) He is expected fullfill gen-
eations of customs, advise Indian legislators and raise an heir to take his place when he can no longer rule. Gohil is also the only openly gay royal in India, and the founder of Lakshya Trust, an organization that does LGBTQ advocacy and outreach work as well as HIV/AIDS prevention.

When Gohil takes the throne, he will bear both the burden of advancing India’s views about sexual minorities as well as maintaining the hierarchies and traditions he has inherited. That’s not easy. Gohil told Windy City Times on a visit to Chicago to appear on The Oprah Winfrey Show.

“It’s has been very challenging for me to keep a balance between a gay lifestyle and a royal lifestyle,” he said.

The only son of Maharana Shri Raghubir Singhji Rajendrasinghh Sahib, Gohil grew up in a pink palace, catered to by an army of servants and maids. His relationship with his parents was distant and formal. When he was 14, they sponsored an orphan and brought him to the palace.

Gohil takes the throne, he will bear both the burden of advancing India’s views about sexual minorities as well as maintaining the hierarchies and traditions he has inherited. That’s not easy.

He was 16 before he first crossed the street. His past relationships have failed, he said, because “the guys were only interested in his money or fame.” In 2009, Gohil tried to find true love on reality TV, when he dressed as a commoner and dated on the British show Undercover Princes. Even in plain clothes, he didn’t meet the right guy.

For now, Gohil remains focused on his advocacy work. He is training young people to follow in his footsteps as an LGBTQ activist. “This is an endless struggle,” he said. “It cannot end with someone like me.”

Gohil will also need to find someone to follow in his footsteps as a prince. The prince needs an heir, and he will have to adopt a son in order to get one. This will be one of his many duties as king, and he said he is ready for the job.

“I am born as a prince, and I will always remain a prince, even if I am gay. That does not change my status,” he said. “Whatever I’m doing, I’m doing it with honesty and truthfulness.”

Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil. Photo by Hal Balm

I’ve been quite a failure in getting a soulmate for myself.”

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“I am born as a prince, and I will always remain a prince, even if I am gay. That does not change my status,” he said. “Whatever I’m doing, I’m doing it with honesty and truthfulness.”

Schulter has served the North Side ward for 35 years. He is now the 11th current alderman to step down before the Feb. 22 elections; others include Mary Ann Smith, Helen Shiller and Vi Daley.

Among Schulter’s now-former opponents is Tom O’Donnell, a longtime ally. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that O’Donnell “allegedly got the approval from Schulter to run for alderman in the event that the incumbent later decided to drop out of the race.”

The Post reported that Schulter seems to want a seat on the Cook County Board of Review, which handles property-tax assessments.

Catholic protest set for Feb. 13

To protest what it sees as the Catholic hierarchy’s role in attempting to defeat civil unions in Illinois for LGBT people, the Gay Liberation Network will hold this year’s Freedom to Marry Day rally will take place in front of Holy Name Cathedral, 735 N. State, at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 13.

For more information, e-mail LGBTliberation@aol.com.

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daveouano@me.com

Are You a Gay Prostate Cancer Survivor?

Seeking gay men to participate in a survey about prostate cancer treatment/outcomes as part of a research study. Men must reside in the U.S., be age 50+ and treated for prostate cancer 12 or more months ago. 100% confidential. Must be English speaking. Survey respondents will receive $20.

For more information, please contact Don at 617-638-5816.
George Larson may be the ultimate Dolly Parton fan in Chicago. He has a wealth of knowledge about her as well as being a “Dolly-ite” in her fan club. His home is adorned with framed posters, pictures and all of her albums. He has seen her nine times in concert and plans on going again when she tours this summer. He has followed her for more than 35 years and until Jan. 19, 2011 he had never met her.

He began his day showing us his collection of Dolly knick-knacks in his residence on the North Side. All day he worked downtown as a bartender at McCormick & Schmick’s, the seafood restaurant located at 1 E. Wacker, where he makes all the drinks from scratch.

After a quick change it was time to hit the red carpet for the musical 9 to 5. Ms. Parton arrived and he was able to wish her a happy birthday and she shook his hand. Hardly recovering from that moment, he attended the upstairs reception where he was able to talk more with his icon, tell her that he loved her and she promptly replied, “Well, I love you too.” A quick picture was snapped and the singer requested another, saying, “I wasn’t ready yet.” Hardly able to breathe, he said, “Goodbye, Dolly” and landed in his seat to enjoy the show. Afterwards, drinks were had at the local bar Big Chicks, 5024 N. Sheridan, to relax and unwind from his long day.

**the stats**

Name
George Larson

Age
46

Relationship status:
Single

Hometown
Chicago

Neighborhood
Rogers Park

Hobbies
Watching Dolly videos

Favorite food
Mediterranean (he’s vegetarian)

Favorite movie
Best Little Whorehouse in Texas
Saying ‘no’ to the death penalty

This past month, both houses of the Illinois General Assembly passed bill SB 3539, which would repeal the death penalty in Illinois. The bill is now awaiting Gov. Pat Quinn’s signature. If he signs the bill, Illinois will become the 18th state to repeal the death penalty in the United States and the third to do so in the past three years; it would also take its place alongside 95 countries that have abolished the death penalty.

Quinn has not decided whether he will sign the legislation, and has indicated that he wants to hear from the people of Illinois before making his final decision. Here are the reasons you should make that call urging him to sign the bill.

In addition to repealing the death penalty, the bill would redirect its necessary funding toward services for murderers and for law enforcement. The funds currently spent on the death penalty are quite significant, particularly in light of the crushing budget crisis we are facing in Illinois. According to the Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (ICADP), more than $100 million in taxpayer money was spent on the death penalty in 2003 alone. It is well known that implementation of the death penalty is far more costly than imprisonment.

The passage of this legislation is the culmination of a mammoth effort led by the ICADP. It follows decades of litigation, investigative journalism and organizing that have uncovered mountains of evidence demonstrating that the death penalty is fatally flawed and beyond repair.

Since Illinois reinstated the death penalty in 1974, studies have been conducted and reforms have been enacted in an attempt to make the system more “just.” Despite numerous measures, we continue to witness the system fail, time and again. In Illinois alone, 20 innocent people have been sentenced to death. Moreover, profound racial disparities persist. A disproportionate number of African-American men have been sentenced to death. Of the 145 death row prisoners currently on Illinois’ death row, a third are Black, though African Americans represent only 15 percent of the general population of Illinois. In fact, more than 92 percent of death row prisoners against whom Cook County prosecutors sought a death sentence were people of color; 78 percent were Black, 14 percent were Latino and three in 138 were immigrants from the Middle East.

The first significant attempt to fix the system started in January 2000, shortly after Gov. George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions after Anthony Porter, who was convicted within 48 hours of being put to death, was found to be innocent. Ryan was struck by the fact that Illinois had executed only 12 death row inmates during the same period in which it exonerated 13. We, as a state, were getting it wrong more than half of the time.

Following his declaration of the moratorium, Ryan requested an independent Commission to investigate the Capital Punishment charged with reviewing the administration of the death penalty. In April 2002, the commission issued a report highly critical of the system, making 86 recommendations for reform, the vast majority of which the legislature failed to enact. Following a mass campaign for clemency for all individuals then on death row, in winter 2003, in January 2004, all existing death sentences, finding the system was “deeply flawed,” “arbitrary” and “haunted by the demon of error.” He pardoned four African-American men who had been tortured into giving false confessions by former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge. Burge was recently convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice for attempting to cover up his crimes of torture. Subsequently, between 2003 and 2009, an additional three men were exonerated off death row, bringing the total in Illinois to 20. Of those exonerated, 14 were Black and two were Latino.

After Ryan left office, the General Assembly finally decided to adopt many of the reforms recommended by Ryan’s capital commission and passed a widely heralded death penalty reform package signed into law in November 2003. Despite the enactment of these two reforms, two prosecutors have since sought the death sentence against two more innocent men. Were it not for DNA evidence, they too would have wound up on Illinois’ notorious death row.

In the past 10 years, we have had more than enough evidence to state the obvious: “fix the death penalty” must now come to the incontrovertible conclusion that it is too flawed to fix. It is time for Quinn to hear LGBT voices in support of the legislation to abolish the death penalty in Illinois.

Many in the LGBT community supported the 2002 clemency campaign. Among them, Queer and the Left (Q2L) launched a campaign calling LGBT folk to “Come Out Against the Death Penalty and In Support of Justice.” In the course of the campaign, Q2L highlighted the State’s deployment of homophobia, sexism and racism to secure Bernina Mata’s conviction and death sentence in 1999.

Mata, a Latina lesbian, was accused of killing a white heterosexual man she met in a bar. According to the prosecutors, Mata killed the man after he made an unwanted pass at her. In seeking her conviction and asking to impose a sentence of death, gender and race stereotypes, the prosecutor argued Mata was “a normal heterosexual woman” and that “a normal heterosexual woman would not be so offended by such conduct.”

Fortunately, thanks in part to LGBT support of the clemency campaign, Mata’s sentence was commuted to life in prison, as it was for all on death row. It is time once again for LGBT people to lend their voices and come out against the death penalty.

Please urge Quinn today and urge him to sign the death penalty repeal act:

Chicago office: 312-814-2211
Springfield office: 217-782-0244

To sign up as a partner at the Lawline’s Office, director of the Civil Rights Clinic at DePaul University and co-author of Queer (In): The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States, forthcoming from Beacon Press.

Mogul, along with co-authors Andrea Ritchie and Kay Whitlock, will discuss their book Sunday, Feb. 27, 4:30-6 p.m., at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark.

Letter

Remembering Renee

It was with bated breath that I sit here thinking of Renee. I try to breathe in some normal fashion, but it is not easy. How to regain some strength to write when all I feel is the loss of strength that Renee gave me, for all those years. She guided me through my legal, political and personal worlds.

We first met in 1974 at the National Lawyers Guild convention in Boulder, Colo. There was Renee putting together, with her usual political moxie, the first-ever gay caucus seminar at a law school’s convention. Only a few people attended, but she started the gay caucus—a cause we never looked back. Our bond was immediate. Although I lived in Denver and she in Chicago, by phone and fax, she filled a void in my life.

I was old enough to vote in the election, but not in the election. In 2000 I turned 18 in September—which means I was old enough to vote in the elections, but not old enough to vote during primary time in Michigan. I attended, but I wish it was legal for me to fill in for you.

 organic mint tea: The downside kid on the senator’s couch

The Chicago mayoral contest has been on my mind quite a bit lately.

Three hours away in Champaign, most of my neighbors couldn’t give two John Deere and a New Holland who Chicago picks to be their next neighbor, so I’m not exactly the first person most would think of as the likely suspect for a candidate interview. The U.S. Senate race, sure, that affects us down here. I’ve got a state-wide constituency for my column in Out & About Illinois Magazine, and a national constituency over at Bilerico.com, FeastofFun.com and my talk show, SameSexSunday.

The race is very significant for me, however. Since the Rev. James Meeks dropped out of the running, this contest has suddenly become a curious anomaly in America. For the first time in my memory all of the major candidates for the vacant mayor’s job in a major American city are supporters of marriage equality, have strong LGBT campaign platforms and have reached out to the LGBT community to prove their legitimacy as stauch LGBT allies.

Emanuel, Moseley Braun and Chico all support LGBT equality strongly in their campaigns. This is the choice I’ve dreamed of for over a decade of activism—there is no choice between anti-gay and pro-gay, they’re all pro-gay. Finally, I can focus on other issues!

Chicago, I’m jealous that you have the opportunity to pull a lever in this election. I know there are those of you who don’t plan to vote, and I wish it was legal for me to fill in for you. It would bring me so much joy to finally be able to make a choice in a contest where my primary concern isn’t “which one wants to take my rights away more.”

Being invited to interview Sen. Moseley Braun was a complete surprise for me. I live hours away from her Hyde Park neighborhood. I am a writer, but generally not for Chicago publications exclusively. It was a very big honor, and beyond my expectations. My mother would have been so proud, wondering why I was chosen. I just knew I had time to be glad.

The year 2004 was to be the first presidential year that I was old enough to vote in the primaries. In 2000 I turned 18 in September—which means I was old enough to vote in the election, but not old enough to vote during primary time in Michigan. I attended, but I wish I had time to be glad.

Turn to page 24
The Belarus Free Theatre—which could be persecuted in its homeland—is performing in Chicago. See more below.

COMEDY


AUTOS


PHOTO CREDITS

Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

SPORTS


SCOTTISH PLAY SCOTT

Chicago theater news

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Drama against a dictatorship

Artists from the Belarus Free Theatre, sure to be persecuted if they return to their homeland, have bought more time in America thanks to an invitation from the Goodman Theatre, Northwestern University and the League of Chicago Theatres.

“We found it imperative to extend this brave, bold theater company’s stay in the United States by offering them the opportunity to perform in Chicago,” said Goodman Artistic Director Robert Falls in a prepared statement. “These are artists struggling against an oppressive state, and their work is both essential and powerful.”

The Belarus Free Theatre came to New York in December 2010 for a sold-out engagement of Vladimir Shcherban’s play Being Harold Pinter. The play uses writings from the late Nobel Prize-winning playwright to criticize the oppressive former Soviet bloc state. The drama is performed in Russian and Belarusian with projected English subtitles.

But instead of returning home, the company will play at three different locations in Chicago and Evanston in January and February. Tickets are $20, and performances run one hour and 15 minutes.

Performances at the Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn, are at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 27, and 8 p.m. Jan. 28 and 29. Call 312-443-3800 or visit http://www.goodmantheatre.org.

The production then moves to Northwestern University’s Muesetter-Struble Theatre, 1949 Campus Drive, Evanston, between Feb. 4 and 6 with performances at 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Call 847-491-7282 or visit http://www.tic.northwestern.edu.

In Aurora has announced plans to produce a new four-musical season starting list fall utilizing professional performers, designers and directors at its 80-year-old 1,888-seat historic art deco theater.

To head up this effort, Broadway veteran Jim Corti (Ragtime, Dancin’) has been tapped to be the Paramount Theatre’s first-ever artistic director.

A multiple Jeff Award-winner as an actor/director/choreographer, Corti has plenty of professional credits around Chicago ranging from Drury Lane Oakbrook (Sugar, Cabaret, Curtains) to Victory Gardens Theater (The Lost Boys of Sudan).

What exactly is on the Paramount Theatre bill is to be revealed at 7 p.m. Friday, March 18, as part of a free “Big Reveal” party. But the Paramount is already trying to lure ticket buyers by offering an $89 four-show package to the first 10,000 subscribers.

Since the Paramount is within viewing distance of the Hollywood Casino, a few repertoire suggestions include: Guys and Dolls (the gambling angle), Big River (since it’s so close to the Fox River), Sunset Blvd., City of Angels or Singin’ in the Rain (the Hollywood glamour connection).

Previously the only musical theatre to play the Paramount were the odd community theater productions or touring non-Equity shows that typically played only one or two performances. The Paramount’s in-house productions are slated to run three-weeks, so much shorter than its closest competition with Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace and Fox Valley Repertory (formerly Noble Fool Theatricals) in St. Charles. The Paramount will also continue to host a variety of visiting performances with musicians, comedy troups and more.

Departure lounge

Chicago Opera Theater general director Brian Dickie recently announced his decision not to renew his contract which expires at the end of the 2012 season. Dickie plans to return to the United Kingdom to be closer to his three grown children, his many grandchildren and so his youngest daughter can continue on with her schooling.

Dickie’s artistic leadership helped push Chicago Opera Theater’s worldwide recognition during his tenure, which saw the company move from the Athenaeum Theatre to Millennium Park’s Harris Theater for Music and Dance, and more than 20 Chicago premieres ranging from Monteverdi’s 1607 opera Orfeo to John Adams’ 1987 “docu-opera” Nixon in China.

Dickie’s departure coincides with that of Lyric Opera of Chicago General Director William Mason, who is also stepping down at the end of the 2012 season. Though Dickie could conceivably switch over the Lyric since he has so many friends with the company, it’s more likely that Chicago opera fans will need to get used to two new leaders running the Windy City’s two main opera companies.

And though not quite a departure, The Hypocrites’ founder and artistic director, Sean Graney, will step down from his current position at the end of the season. Graney will still direct for the company, but in the capacity as Founding Director. The move allows Graney more freedom to direct for other companies, like the Court Theatre where he’s scored some success with productions of What the Butler Saw and The Comedy of Errors.

Hypocrites ensemble member Halena Kays will assume the company’s artistic directorship.

Broadway (off and on) bound

Three shows with Chicago debuts are headed to New York. Two have already come and gone, but one still has yet to be seen.

The Steppenwolf Theatre season opener Detroit by playwright Lisa D’Amour is slated to hit Broadway sometime next fall. No casting has been announced, but the Chicago production under Austin Pendleton’s direction featured Steppenwolf ensemble members Laurie Metcalf, Kate Arrington, Ian Barford, Kevin Anderson and Robert Breuler.

Also Gotham-bound is Laurence Mark Wythe’s musical Tomorrow Morning which played the Greenhouse Theater in 2008. The four-character chamber musical involving one couple facing marriage and another facing divorce is set to play off-Broadway at the York Theatre Company starting in March. A cast album is available featuring the Chicago cast.

And though it hasn’t even had its Chicago world premiere at American Theater Company, Dan LeFevre’s drama The Big Meal has already been announced as part of Playwright Horizon’s off-Broadway 2011-12 theater season. The Big Meal features eight actors presenting the life-changing moments from five generations of a modern family.

Please send theater news and other related tidbits to scottishplayscott@yahoo.com and Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com.
Using VIRAMUNE gets you some things you can’t get from a pill—information, education, and inspiration.

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VIRAMUNE used in combination HIV therapy helps to increase CD4+ cell counts (T-cells) and reduce HIV viral loads.

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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.

Indication and Important Safety Information

VIRAMUNE is indicated for use in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection.

VIRAMUNE does not cure HIV or AIDS, and has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

VIRAMUNE can cause severe liver disease and skin reactions that can cause death. These reactions occur most often during the first 18 weeks of treatment, but can occur later. Ask your healthcare provider about how to recognize symptoms of skin and liver problems.

Stop taking VIRAMUNE if you have any of these reactions. Do not restart VIRAMUNE if you experience any of these reactions. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you have any of these reactions.

VIRAMUNE is only for people diagnosed with HIV. If you have not been diagnosed as HIV positive, then do not take VIRAMUNE.

Any patient can experience liver problems with VIRAMUNE, but women and patients who have higher CD4 counts when they begin VIRAMUNE treatment have a greater risk. If you are a woman with CD4+ >250 cells/mm³; or a man with CD4+ >400 cells/mm³, you should not begin taking VIRAMUNE unless you and your doctor have decided that the benefit of doing so outweighs the risk. Women, including pregnant women, with CD4+ cell counts >250 cells/mm³ are at the greatest risk.

Do not take VIRAMUNE if you have severe liver problems.

The dose of VIRAMUNE for adults is one 200-mg tablet daily for the first 14 days, followed by one 200-mg tablet twice daily. VIRAMUNE is always taken with other anti-HIV medications. The 14-day lead-in period is important because it can help reduce your chances of getting a potentially serious skin rash. If you have a skin rash during the first 14 days, immediately contact your doctor and do not increase your VIRAMUNE dose to twice a day. The total duration of the once daily lead-in dosing period should not exceed 28 days, at which point an alternative regimen may need to be started.

Other side effects that patients have experienced include nausea, fatigue, fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and myalgia. Changes in body fat may occur in patients receiving antiretroviral therapy. Immune reconstitution syndrome has been reported in patients treated with combination ARV therapy.

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 Medication Guide for VIRAMUNE on the following pages.
Models used are for illustrative purposes only.
What is VIRAMUNE?

VIRAMUNE is a medicine used to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

VIRAMUNE is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a “non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor” (NRTI). VIRAMUNE works by lowering the amount of HIV in your blood (“viral load”). You must take VIRAMUNE with other anti-HIV medicines. When you take VIRAMUNE with other anti-HIV medicines, VIRAMUNE can lower your viral load and increase the number of CD4+ cells (“T cells”). CD4+ cells are a type of immune helper cell in the blood. VIRAMUNE may not have these effects in every person.

VIRAMUNE does not cure HIV or AIDS, and it is not known if it will help you live longer with HIV. People taking VIRAMUNE may still get infections common in people with HIV (opportunistic infections). It is very important that you stay under the care of your doctor.

Who should not take VIRAMUNE?

Tell your doctor if you have or have had liver problems. Your doctor may tell you not to take VIRAMUNE if you have certain liver problems.

VIRAMUNE is only for people diagnosed with HIV. If you have not been diagnosed as HIV positive, then do not take VIRAMUNE.

What should I tell my doctor before taking VIRAMUNE?

Before you take VIRAMUNE, tell your doctor if you:

• have or have had hepatitis (inflammation of your liver) or problems with your liver. See “What is the most important information I should know about VIRAMUNE?” and “Who should not take VIRAMUNE?”

• receive dialysis

• have skin problems, such as a rash

• are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if VIRAMUNE will harm your unborn baby.

Pregnancy Registry: There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of the registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your doctor about how you can take part in this registry.

• are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. VIRAMUNE can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby. It is also recommended that HIV-positive women should not breast-feed their babies. Do not breast-feed during treatment with VIRAMUNE. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. VIRAMUNE may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how VIRAMUNE works. Especially tell your doctor if you take:

• St. John’s Wort. You should not take products containing St. John’s Wort during treatment with VIRAMUNE because it can lower the amount of VIRAMUNE in your body.

• efavirenz (Sustiva®, Atripla®). You should not take efavirenz during treatment with VIRAMUNE. You may have an increased chance of side effects if this is taken together with VIRAMUNE.

• atazanavir (Reyataz®). You should not take atazanavir during treatment with VIRAMUNE.

• itraconazole (Sporanox®). You should not take itraconazole during treatment with VIRAMUNE.

• ketokonazole (Nizoral®). You should not take ketokonazole during treatment with VIRAMUNE.

• rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®). You should not take rifampin during treatment with VIRAMUNE.

• Birth control pills. Birth control pills taken by mouth (oral contraceptives) and other hormone types of birth control may not work to prevent pregnancy if you use them during VIRAMUNE treatment. Talk with your doctor about other types of birth control that you can use to prevent pregnancy during treatment with VIRAMUNE.

MEDICATION GUIDE

VIRAMUNE® (VIH-rah-mune) (nevirapine) Tablets

VIRAMUNE® (VIH-rah-mune) (nevirapine) Oral Suspension

Read this Medication Guide before you start taking VIRAMUNE and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about VIRAMUNE?

VIRAMUNE can cause serious side effects. These include severe liver and skin problems which can cause death. The risk of these problems is greatest during the first 18 weeks of treatment, but these problems can also happen at any time during treatment.

Severe liver problems: Anyone who takes VIRAMUNE may get severe liver problems. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to liver failure and the need for a liver transplant, or death. You may get a rash if you have liver problems. People with higher risk of these problems include women or anyone with higher CD4+ cell counts when they begin VIRAMUNE treatment. Women with CD4+ cell counts higher than 250 cells/mm3 at the start of treatment have the greatest risk for liver damage.

If you are a woman with CD4+ cell >250 cells/mm3 or a man with CD4+ cell >400 cells/mm3, you and your doctor will decide if VIRAMUNE is right for you.

People who have abnormal liver test results and people with hepatitis B or C have a greater chance of getting liver problems and further increases in liver test results during treatment.

If you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems, stop taking VIRAMUNE and call your doctor right away:

• fever

• “flu-like” symptoms or you do not feel well

• dark (tea-colored) urine

• tiredness

• light-colored bowel movements (stools)

• nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)

• pain or tenderness on your right side below your ribs

• loss of appetite

• yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes

Your doctor should see you and do blood tests often to check your liver function during the first 18 weeks of treatment with VIRAMUNE. You should continue to have your liver checked regularly during your treatment with VIRAMUNE. It is important for you to keep all of your doctor appointments.

Severe rash and skin reactions: Skin rash is the most common side effect of VIRAMUNE. Most rashes happen in the first 6 weeks of taking VIRAMUNE. Rashes and skin reactions may be severe, life-threatening, and in some people, may lead to death. If you get a rash with any of the following symptoms, stop using VIRAMUNE and call your doctor right away:

• “flu-like” symptoms or you do not feel well

• blisters

• fever

• mouth sores

• muscle or joint aches

• swelling of your face

• red or inflamed eyes, like “pink eye” (conjunctivitis)

• tiredness

• swollen glands (enlarged lymph nodes)

• liver problems (see symptoms of liver problems above)

If your doctor tells you to stop treatment with VIRAMUNE because you have had the serious liver or skin problems described above, you should never take VIRAMUNE again.

These are not all the side effects of VIRAMUNE. See the section “What are the possible side effects of VIRAMUNE?” for more information.
Also tell your doctor if you are taking the following drugs:

- clarithromycin (Biaxin®)
- fluconazole (Diflucan®)
- methadone
- rifabutin (Mycobutin®)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your doctor or pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take VIRAMUNE?

- Take VIRAMUNE exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- The dose of VIRAMUNE for children is based on their size and thus may not be the same as in adults.
- You may take VIRAMUNE with or without food.
- If you or your child takes VIRAMUNE suspension (liquid), shake it gently before use. Use an oral dosing syringe or dosing cup to measure the right dose. The oral dosing syringe and dosing cup are not provided with VIRAMUNE Suspension.
- After drinking the medicine, fill the dosing cup with water and drink it to make sure you get all the medicine. If the dose is less than 1 teaspoon (5 mL), use the syringe instead of the dosing cup.
- Do not change your dose unless your doctor tells you to.
- Your doctor should start you with one dose each day to lower your chance of getting a serious rash. It is important that you only take one dose of VIRAMUNE each day for the first 14 days.
- Call your doctor right away if you get a skin rash during the first 14 days of VIRAMUNE treatment and do not increase your dose to 2 times a day.
- You should never take your starting dose (200 mg one time each day) for longer than 28 days. If after 28 days you are still receiving this starting dose because you have a rash, you and your doctor should discuss replacing VIRAMUNE with another HIV medicine. Never increase your dose to 2 times a day if you have a rash.
- Do not miss a dose of VIRAMUNE, because this could make HIV harder to treat. If you miss a dose of VIRAMUNE, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose, just take the next dose at your regular time.
- If you stop taking VIRAMUNE for more than 7 days, ask your doctor how much to take before you start taking it again. You may need to start with one time each day dosing again.
- If you take too much VIRAMUNE, call your local poison control center or emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of VIRAMUNE?

VIRAMUNE may cause serious side effects.

- See “What is the most important information I should know about VIRAMUNE?”
- Other common side effects of VIRAMUNE include nausea, fatigue, fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and muscle pain.
- Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your doctor if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV medicine.
- Changes in body fat can happen in some people who take antiretroviral therapy. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from your legs, arms, and face can also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known at this time.

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of VIRAMUNE. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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 VIRAMUNE?

- Store VIRAMUNE at 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C).
- Throw away VIRAMUNE that is no longer needed or out-of-date.

Keep VIRAMUNE and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about VIRAMUNE

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use VIRAMUNE for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give VIRAMUNE to other people, even if they have the same condition you have. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about VIRAMUNE. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about VIRAMUNE that is written for health professionals.

For more information, call Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., at 1-800-542-6257, or (TTY) 1-800-459-9906.

What are the ingredients in VIRAMUNE?

Active Ingredient: nevirapine

Inactive ingredients:

Viramune Tablets: microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, colloidal silicon dioxide, and magnesium stearate

Viramune Oral Suspension: carborner 934P, methylparaben, propylparaben, sorbitol, sucrose, polysorbate 80, sodium hydroxide, and purified water

Distributed by:
Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Ridgefield, CT 06877 USA

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www.viramune.com
The Beauty Queen of Leenan

**THEATRE REVIEWS**

**The Beauty Queen of Leenan**

Playwright: Martin McDonagh

At: Shattered Globe Theatre at Athenaeum Theatre Studio 2, 2936 N. Southport
Phone: 800-982-2787; $25-$32

**By Scott C. Morgan**

Heroes longing to break free from their bleak surroundings are a common thread in two recently opened Chicago storefront theater productions: The American premiere of British playwright Simon Stephens’ drama *Port* by Griffin Theatre and, in Martin McDonagh’s modern (and upsettingly violent) Irish classic *The Beauty Queen of Leenan* staged by a resurrected Shattered Globe Theatre.

*Port* was previously staged Stephens’ Olivier Award-winning *On the Shore of the Wide World* a few years back, and the company’s back for another look at the lower working class end of British society with *Port* (short for the economically depressed English town Stockport).

Stephens focuses on the life of Rachel Keats (Caroline Neff), who starts the drama as a 12-year-old version that she and her troubled younger brother, Billy (Joe DeBettencourt), are about to be abandoned by their mother (Cyd Blackwell). Port then depicts select turning points in Rachel’s life as she becomes a young woman torn about trying to make the “right” decision while keenly aware that life’s deck has been stacked against her.

Director Jonathan Berry helms his very adept cast that intensely plays multiple roles and delivers believable North English accents (a great credit to dialect coach Elise Kauzlaric). Though Berry wisely utilizes the symbolic device of Rachel’s absent mother handing her props to foreshadow her not always wise decisions, playwright Stephens leaves out some vital scenes (particularly Rachel’s decision to marry the violently jealous Kevin of John Byrnes) which only makes Port a slightly unsatisfying slog despite the top-notch performances.

Though much bleaker plot-wise, Shattered Globe’s *Beauty Queen of Leenan* is a much more satisfying experience (It’s also great to welcome back this company that officially disbanded last year before key company members brought it back to life).

Director Steve Scott skillfully oversteps a strong quartet of actors who wrench out all the resentment and pettiness needed for McDonagh’s crackling Irish drama.

Eileen Nicolai and Linda Reiter are respective-ly and ferociously matched as daughter Maureen and mother Mag in a spiteful battle of wills. Re-iter is particularly malevolent as she deliberately spoils her daughter’s romantic chances, while Nicolai is terrifying as she methodically (and violently) snaps.

Kevin Viol perfectly captures the agitated im-patience of the hyper young man Ray. Joseph Wiers is quite good as the love interest Pato, though he a tad too baby faced to fully convince in the role.

In these bleak midwinter months, some might think it odd that both Griffin and Shattered Globe would offer up such gloomy works. But you can take some consolation that (hopefully) your life is going better than those poor souls striving for any shred of happiness onstage.

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**THEATRE REVIEW**

**Odradek**

Playwright: Brett Neveu

At: House Theatre of Chicago, 1543 W. Division
Tickets: 773-769-3832; http://www.thehousetheatre.com; $25 Runs through: March 5

**BY JONATHAN ABARABANEL**

Both the emotional journey and the storytell-ing seem incomplete in Odradek, an 80-minute new work that’s interesting rather than appealing.

The title, a vaguely Eastern-European word, comes from Franz Kafka who used it in a short story as the name of a blob-like woolly house monster.

For playwright Brett Neveu, Odradek becomes a creature composed of organic detritus living un-der the stairs of an Iowa house, apparently the Id Monster of Kyle, the self-destructive boy at the center of the work. The play is seen through Kyle’s eyes as he appears to journey towards suicide ... or does he journey away from it as winter melts into spring? The work offers little clarity, not even as to Kyle’s age, which could be 10-15. All we are given is that he’s undergoing a personal makeover, his parents are divorced and he lives with his caring but aloof father who be-gins an affair with Kyle’s new doctor.

We never understand the basis of Kyle’s severe distress. There’s far too little info about Kyle’s parents or their break-up several years earlier to pin it on that cliché.

Equally curious is that the creature is so be-nign. Odradek passively enables Kyle’s efforts to main himself but doesn’t suggest these actions or have much influence on Kyle’s behavior. The ties between boy and Id Monster need to be much more deeply developed if this work is to succeed.

Instead, you have only Neveu’s extremely pithy dialogue and the oddities of the household. For example, Kyle and his father never use affec-tionate familiarities. Kyle never says “Dad” or “Father” or “Pop” and the parent never says “Son” or “Pal” or any similar word. Oddly, Dad’s bedroom is downstairs but Kyle’s is upstairs al-though Kyle chooses to sleep on the steps them-selves, near Odradek’s lair. What’s the big deal about Upstairs? Neveu doesn’t explain, although the play’s penultimate action is Kyle slowly as-cending the gthic staircases. Less is more, but in Odradek it’s not quite enough.

Directed by master visualist Dexter Bullard, Odradek becomes a theatrical tone poem note-able for style and mood rather than story or character, especially with several large Guignol effects thrown in. The imposing dark walls and enormous stairway designed by Collette Pollard reflect Kyle’s exaggerated view (large because he’s still small!) and not his Dad’s view of what seems an ordinary house. Josh Schmidt contrib-utes an atmospheric score for solo string bass that is bowed, plucked, looped, and sampled to great effect (with electronic sampling) by Ruben Gonzalez. The performers are fine, too, especial-ly Joey Steakley as Kyle, looking 12 years old and performing with great physical precision.

Carolyn DeFoin is the Doctor and David Parikes Is Dad.

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**CRITICS’ PICKS**

**As You Like It**

Chicago Shakespeare The-ater, through March 6. What could be more romantic, after all, than cross-dressing lov-ers in regency garb gardening in a coun-trywide of immaculate forests and courtly shepherds? MSB.

**Carmilla**

Playwright: adapted by Aly Renee Amidei from the novel by J. Sheridan LeFanu

At: WildClaw Theatre at The Storefront, 66 L. Randolph Phone: 312-742-8497; $20 Runs through: Feb. 20

**BY MARY SHEN BARNDIGE**

Romanticism being rooted in the elevation of emotion over reason, it comes as no surprise that this trait should be most frequently em-bodied in females—feeling being, traditionally, a woman’s job, as thinking is a man’s. Writers following Poe’s dictum that “the most poetic subject is the death of a beautiful woman” willingly bestowed upon their “weaker vessels” the power to return from the dead. To our sen-sibilities, then, what is most noteworthy about J. Sheridan LeFanu’s prototypical vampire story is that the characters who propel its action are all female, the male personae being merely the “muscle,” literally. (Twenty-five years later, Bram Stoker would assert masculine dominance with a vampire story so similar in structure to LeFanu’s—with the exception of its more con-ventional, gender-role assignment—as to bor-der on plagiarism.)

More disturbing to modern audiences, how-ever, are the overt lesbian motifs reflected in our evil temptress’s propensity for seducing her victims before introducing them to her para-sitic addiction—a theme that would have been less readily apparent in the 19th century, when intense same-sex relationships were permitted both boys and gils, Aly Renee Amidei’s adap-tation, while remarkably faithful to its source material, hints at both pre- and post-Freud-ian interpretations—our narrator, Laura, is a lonely adolescent who welcomes the prospect of a worldly and sophisticated companion, but is nevertheless uneasy at Carmilla’s advances.

And when evidence of the vengeful revenant’s past crimes lead to her being hunted down and finally cornered by pursuers both mortal and spectral, it is her innocent diabolus who betrays her with a kiss.

But not before much blood has been spilled with the no-giggles conviction that is WildClaw Theater’s stock in trade. Before a word is ut-tered, Alan Donahue’s Fuseli-inspired scenic design, Mikhail Fiskel and Scott Tallard’s original score of pulsating Beethovenesque incidental music, Paul Foster and Danielle McKenzie’s shadowy lighting conjure just the right atmosphere of brooding menace in the Storefront’s cavernous stage, with Scott Cum-mins and David Christoianov’s violence design, and Charlie Athanas’ evocative special effects never exceeding the boundaries of their dra-matic universe. Under Cummins’ direction, as-sisted by Barbara Zahor’s dialect instruction, the mood thus established enables an interesting cast, led by the fire-and-ice tag-team of Mi-chaela Petro and Brittany Burch, to weave a web of conflicted desires enfolding the most skeptical rationalist.
THEATER REVIEW

Lakeboat

Playwright: David Mamet
At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn
Phone: 866-811-4111;$20-$22
Runs through: Feb. 26

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It hasn’t got the carefully shaped structure we associate with the latter-day David Mamet. Indeed, this early play is almost a documentary, as non-judgmental as a Fred Wiseman film, with only a single unanswered question—why is the ship’s cook AWOL?—to lend a modicum of suspense to the proceedings. But like the Great Lakes that these lonely men sail, secrets lie beneath the placid surface.

Mamet, himself, spent a summer during the mid-1960s as a steward on a cargo ship much like the freighter where his characters labor, grasping at any opportunity to alleviate the tedium. We encounter the topics common to men-in-groups the world over: florid sagas of memorable binges, bimbos and brawls—recounted with rhapsodic vulgarity in the dramatic detail that comes of frequent repetition, and perhaps enlarged once again for the new audience provided by the college-educated boy now manning the galley. But we also hear confessions of an intimacy only occurring among passing strangers sharing isolation, along with unexpected philosophical observations (upon learning that young Dale is majoring in English Literature, Joe warns him, “That’s a tough racket”), as the crew speculates on the fate of their missing comrade, each anticipating his own brand of bad news.

Well, when you’re as bored as even inland-seafarers have historically been, any mystery can beguile the time. What holds our attention is the vivid array of personalities conjured by the cast of this Steep Theatre production as they harmonize on Mamet’s symphony of tall tales, enigmatic exchanges, defiant declarations and provocative walk-through commentary (e.g. two men enter a room, one saying, “This boat is becoming a bureaucracy”, and exit before we can hear the reply). Though we may not recall their names, we soon recognize them, by as little as their offstage voices. We also come to appreciate director C.J. Cederquist’s clever choreography in facilitating scene changes on the narrow alley-style playing space without interrupting the flow of the action (bridged by Miles Polaski’s mock-swashbuckling incidental music).

“There’s justice out there, but no mercy” an old salty once said of the endless waterways. For the brief 80 minutes of our voyage from Duluth to Chicago aboard the T. Harrison, however, Mamet extends mercy to his brothers of the moment, and in doing so, allows us a glimpse of an all-but-invisible world lying at the economical foundations of life as we sheltered consumers know it.

SPOTLIGHT

Yoga figures prominently in the world-premiere lesbian drama Downward Facing by Chicago playwright Mishelle Renee Apalategui. See what sorts of difficulties arise when one woman tries to build the perfect yoga studio in a gentrified house and the squatter who sets up roadblocks in her way. Downward Facing plays from Jan. 27-Feb. 20 at 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and at 7 p.m. Sundays at Dream Theatre, 556 W. 18th. Tickets are $15-$18; call 773-552-8616 or visit http://www.dreamtheatrecompany.com. Emily Tate Frank and Natalie Breitmeyer in Dream Theatre’s Downward Facing; photo courtesy of the company

SEX WITH STRANGERS

By: LAURA EASON
Directed by: associate artist JESSICA THEBUS
Featuring: ensemble member SALLY MURPHY with STEPHEN LOUIS GRUSH

Ethan is a hot young writer whose online journals of “sexcapades” are the buzz of the blogosphere. Olivia is an attractive 30-something whose own writing career never took off. They hook up, sex turns into dating and dating into something more complicated. A break-out hit at Steppenwolf’s 2008 First Look Repertory, Sex with Strangers explores what happens when our online and offline identities intersect.

NOW PLAYING!

Buy online at steppenwolf.org or call 312-335-1650.
DP: Yes, I did Straight Talk here before and a movie here before this on concert tours and even filmed here with you tonight.

Dolly Parton: You bet. I am so happy to be singer briefly before the show started. City Times was able to talk to the Tennessee legendary Dolly Parton is one of the most successful country artists of all time. She has known the success that 9 to 5 would bring? We were all so happy and surprised by the overwhelming success of it.

DP: Twenty-five years later people came to me and asked if I would write the music for a Broadway musical. I said, “Well, I have never done it but you know me, I will try anything!” I did try it and it worked out really well. It was one of the great projects of my whole life. We did get to go to Broadway and now we are here out on the road.

WcT: What do you think of the musical’s cast?
DP: I wish the very best for all of the new folks involved in 9 to 5: The Musical. It’s fun to see the new cast playing the parts that Jane, Lily, Dabney and I played. We have gotten such a kick out of sitting together in the audience watching them.

DP: I love them all, too. I even brought one with me to meet you.
WcT: How did you become involved with the original movie 9 to 5 in the first place?
DP: Jane Fonda contacted me about 9 to 5. She told me the story and said that she and Lily Tomlin were going to do it. It felt like the perfect time to make my first movie.
WcT: Did you know it would be that big?
DP: You hope for the best outcome when you start any new project, but who would have known the success that 9 to 5 would bring? We were all so happy and surprised by the overwhelming success of it.

WcT: Did you know it would be that big?
DP: Yes, it is. In fact, this past year was its most.
WcT: How did the film wind up being a musical with you writing the lyrics and music?
DP: It is a true story from my childhood. It always makes me think of my mom and the world I grew up in so it is more touching than most.
WcT: Wold you have a chance to be here tonight, I left Atlanta, Ga., yesterday late. I am working there on a film with Queen Latifah, a gospel musical, so you can look forward to that. I love to do anything with music in it.

WcT: How did you become involved with Dollywood again?
DP: I was up there the other day. It is so beautiful. It is warm. It is cold, isn’t it?

WcT: Dollywood is still alive and kicking.
DP: Yes, it is. In fact, this past year was its 25th year and we end our 26th this spring. We have done really well with that.
WcT: Wollywood: You hope for the best outcome when you start any new project, but who would have known the success that 9 to 5 would bring? We were all so happy and surprised by the overwhelming success of it.

WcT: Twenty-five years later people came to me and asked if I would write the music for a Broadway musical. I said, “Well, I have never done it but you know me, I will try anything!” I did try it and it worked out really well. It was one of the great projects of my whole life. We did get to go to Broadway and now we are here out on the road.

WcT: What do you think of the musical’s cast?
DP: I wish the very best for all of the new folks involved in 9 to 5: The Musical. It’s fun to see the new cast playing the parts that Jane, Lily, Dabney and I played. We have gotten such a kick out of sitting together in the audience watching them.

DP: Oh, what fun this has been.
WcT: I heard “Coat of Many Colors” is your favorite song.
DP: It is a true story from my childhood. It always makes me thing of my mom and the world that I grew up in so it is more touching than most.
WcT: Wollywood is still alive and kicking.
DP: Yes, it is. In fact, this past year was its 25th year and we end our 26th this spring. We have done really well with that.
WcT: Your gay fans will always love you. I even brought one with me to meet you.
DP: I love them all, too.
Judy Gold on comedy, partner

BY JERRY NUNN

Comedienne Judy Gold is bringing her act to Center on Halsted this month. An Emmy Award winner and lesbian mother of two, Judy has a show that really packs a punch.

Windy City Times: Heyyyyy, Judy.
Judy Gold: Heyyyyy! How about only gay people can talk to each other like that.

WCT: I know.
JG: Straight people are just so boring. They would be like, “She’s sooo weird.”

WCT: I am thrilled that you are coming to the Center because it will be a different crowd than Zanies where I saw you last. You had those straight girls right in the front.
JG: I have to tell you that it is so hard working in comedy clubs. It is how I started and how I grew up but a whole different world. They will do anything to get people in the clubs including giving away free tickets. Once people don’t pay for something then they are the worst audience. Comedy is the only job where they try to fuck you up while you are doing your job.

WCT: We did it in Williamstown going? I bet.
JG: Can you believe that? Over a goddamn pair of sweatpants!

WCT: It is always a treat to talk to you and Center on Halsted is a great space to see you at.
JG: Pray for no snow because I am flying in that morning!


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CAMERON MACKINTOSH’S SPECTACULAR NEW PRODUCTION

The article examines such current shows as Glee, which features two out and proud high school students, portrayed by Chris Colfer and Darren Criss. Of his duet with Criss on “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” on a holiday-themed episode, Colfer said, “That was by far the gayest thing that has ever been on TV, period. Forget AbFab, forget Beautiful People and Will & Grace.”

EW also looks back at gay teen characters such as Rickie Vasquez in the ‘90s shows My So-Called Life. Wilson Cruz, who portrayed Vasquez, said, “The biggest part was the acknowledgment of our existence and our pain, which we hadn’t seen at all on television before that.”
The Hyundai Curb—just one vehicle at Detroit's show. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

**Hot in Detroit: The 2011 North American International Auto Show**

**BY CASEY WILLIAMS, GAYWHEELS.COM**

While it may not have been any warmer in Detroit than Cleveland, it was hot inside Cobo Hall where all of the latest concept and production models were on display at the 2011 North American International Auto Show. Given the economy, focus was given to production vehicles over flashy concepts, but there was still plenty of glitz.

The show started Jan. 10 with the announcement of the Chevy Volt and Ford Explorer as North American Car and Truck of the Year. The real action began Jan. 26, 2011.

**North American International Auto Show**

**Concepts**

Korean automakers had the most fun concepts. Hyundai showed the Curb, a small crossover that would compete with the Nissan Juke. Kia rolled out the K7V, a large people mover with next century interior and gullwing doors.

Honda debuted previews of the 2012 Civic that are edgier evolutions of the current designs, which should keep customers happy. Ford unveiled the Vertrek concept, a near-production version of the all-new Escape. Going large, GMC showed the All Terrain HD Concept, an off-road version that takes on the brand's heavy duty trucks. Much smaller, the Mini Countryman-based Paceman coupe has been given the green light.

Toyota's Prius hybrid is in a family way with the roomier 2012 Prius V wagon, but it also showed the Prius C concept that reduces weight with Aerion-style seats, small footprint, and minimal interior appointments. Over time, Family Prius will grow.

**Production**

All of the concepts are definitely cool, but automakers are clearly spending their efforts on production models that will substantially change their fortunes. The most significant launches were the 2012 VW Passat, Buick Verano, Chevy Sonic and Chrysler 300.

The larger Passat flaunts an Audi-inspired design that looks expensive and makes passengers feel like German Kaisers. To manufacture the new Passat, VW built a high-tech new plant in Chattanooga, TN. In every way, the Passat is more American without losing what makes it German.

Detroit Auto Show wrap-up (2011)—pics from the Volts another well-deserved award while Ford garnered praise for its re-designed Explorer crossover. Then, the real action began.

Audi A6 at Detroit's auto show. Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

**MINT TEA from page 14**

that caught my attention was Carol Moseley Braun—the first and (to date) only African American woman to hold a seat in the U.S. Senate.

I was in awe of her audacity and determination to change the conversation in this contest. The former ambassador’s bravery was subversive and incredible. I was very sad to see her drop out before the primary made it to Michigan, because I was certainly impressed.

Seven years later, I found myself listening to TomTom guide me to the Senator’s house. Life has an interesting way, sometimes.

I’ve long been awed at Moseley Braun’s ahead of the curve thinking on LGBT issues in 1993 she voted against the discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue” compromise bill, and in 1996 she gave a moving and eloquent floor speech urging her colleagues in the Senate to be on the right side of the “arc of history” and vote against the so-called “Defense of Marriage Act.” I asked her about both of these historic disappointments that she was present for, and specifically how she felt the day she learned DADT was repealed.

Her answer was moving, and you can hear it on my podcast SameSexSunday on iTunes.

She really got to the heart of our work with respect to our movement when she answered my question on the “when” of DOMA repeal:

“And as the LGBT community organizes and is organized as it speaks to these issues, not just where they live but as they speak to these issues with family, friends and religious institutions and in social settings as the climate of opinion moves in regards to this issues so will the politicians in regards to this issue.”

I agree with Carol. We must push forward in this movement not only to change the hearts and minds of lawmakers, but the hearts and minds of all Americans. Luckily, we have allies like the senator to help make that happen.

You can read the transcript of our entire conversation at Bilerico.com by going to my contributor page, located at http://www.bilerico.com/contributors/phil_reese/.

You can also listen to my questions about DOMA, DADT, why the Chicago race is important and what the Senator thinks about the current tone of political discourse in America by downloading or streaming the SameSexSunday podcast at http://samesex-sunday.podbean.com/.

**VEHICLE REVIEW 2011 Jaguar XJL Supercharged**

BY LAUREN MARIE, GAYWHEELS.COM

How can you resist this face? An icon of luxury and prestige, and one of your grandfather’s favorite subjects on which to reminisce, the masters at Jaguar design (led by Ian Callum) have stepped up to create a sexy, youthful sedan that appeals to all ages and all genders.

The sheet metal symmetry begins with a front end that makes a statement in itself, displaying a large but tasteful chrome mesh grille flanked by two very sexy cat-eye headlights. There is nothing old about this design, no shades of early XK or XJ DNA, just a fresh start that compels the soul and frightens the Germans. The designer completes his masterpiece with a sleek back end to create a stunning shape.

Slipping behind the wheel I am in awe. Of course, I expected nothing less than first class in this aviation inspired interior, but there is more here than gauges and buttons: this is art. Soft leather seats, a leather wrapped dashboard, chrome detailing, and plenty of wood Inlay give the new XJ a modern, yet classic feel. When traveling in the Jag, I almost feel disappointed for the less fortunate travelers who must endure a full gut wrenching feeling of nausea as they slowly evaporates as I take pleasure in the heating, cooling and massageing captain’s seats. As I wanted no other driving instruction save for the voice-activated navigation, I placed my six-foot plus husband in the back seat and turned up the radio. Radio is actually an understatement.

We haven’t even started driving yet and I already love the car. Love turns to lust, however, once the supercharged 5.0L V8 roars to life. With 470 horsepower on tap, I and my unsuspecting passenger are glued to our seats as the XJL sprints to 60 MPH in just under five seconds flat! Upgrade to the SuperSport with 470 horsepower and you really want to feel like the rocket man. In all, I’d have to say that Jaguar has hit a home run with their new XJ. The car is still new enough as to be unique and, for a super luxury car, that’s a very important attribute. After a week in the nicest parts of LA and San Diego, I came across at least ten 2011 Maserati Quattroporte and only one other 2011 XJ. I couldn’t feel up without receiving a compliment or a “wow, that’s the new Jag?” Wow, indeed.

In his poem, “Glass of the Past,” the poet David Trinidad, a gay man, invokes a hypnotic litany of names of lip glosses from his childhood, all in various shades of pink: “Pink Dawn, Aurora Pink, Misty Pink…Pink Peony…” Today, such a profound fealty to pink is supposed to indicate some greater truth about gender. Girls (and gay men) like pink and dolls; boys like blue and guns.

But as Peggy Orenstein reminds us, up until the early 20th century, pink was considered simply a paler version of the more “masculine” red and little boys were dressed in it. Orenstein herself remembers a 1926 photo of her infant father in a pink dress.

So we know that gender presentation is largely historically contingent. What worries Orenstein, the mother of an 8-year-old girl named Daisy, is that today’s media and entertainment industry has colluded to create an overtly feminized stereotype for young girls that is simultaneously hyper-sexualized and disempowering with its constant reminder that girls need to be more like boys and less color coding of babies. Who cared whether the mother of an 8-year-old girl named Daisy, historically contingent. What worries Orenstein, the entire book treated view of what Daisy’s life should look like.

The point of her book appears to be that girls are being driven into stereotypical roles. So why is a woman who eschews the role of wife and genuinely has no need for a partner (despite Orenstein’s political correctness, the entire book assumes that girls are born straight) considered incomplete?

Orenstein’s worrying is predicated entirely on the relationship of girls to boys/girls (a topic that consumes her) and to a very narrow conception of a happy nuclear family. Ultimately, her enormous anxiety seems to be less about what the girlie-girl culture might do to her daughter than to the fear that her daughter will not, in fact, be girl enough.

She concludes with a bland statement about how “wanting to see girls to see themselves from the inside out rather than outside in…will go a long way toward helping them find their true happily-ever-afters.” In a world where parenting feels like a constant battle against media manipulation, this simple message may be perfect for harried mothers. But surely wanting a better world for the young girls in our lives demands more imagination and daring than the fairy-tale endings that Orenstein can’t seem to let go.

Orenstein will discuss Cinderella Ate My Daughter Tuesday, Feb. 1, at 7 p.m. at Women & Children First, 5233 N. Clark.

CINDERELLA ATE MY DAUGHTER

by Peggy Orenstein

$25.99; HarperCollins; 244 pages

REVIEW BY YASMIN NAIR
Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for its annual 30 Under 30 Awards. Nominees should be 30 years old or under as of June 30, 2011 and should have made some substantial contributions to the LGBT community, whether in the fields of entertainment, politics, health, activism, academics, or other areas.

Individuals, organizations, co-workers, etc. can nominate a person by e-mailing Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com or faxing to Andrew Davis’ attention to 773-871-7609 or calling 773-213-4265.

The nomination should be 100 words or fewer, and should state what achievements or contributions the nominee has made. Nominators should include their own names and contact information as well as the contact information and the future. Serious astrology for serious seekers. Relationships. Career. Plan the es. Overcome difficulties and confusion. Astrology can help pull it all together. Relationships. Career. Plan the future. Serious astrology for serious seekers. Private personal consultations. www.astrologicaldetails.com www.chestnutcleaning.com

WINDY CITY TIMES 12th Annual THIRTY under 30 NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS Windy City Times is seeking to recognize 30 more outstanding LGBT individuals (and allies) for its annual 30 Under 30 Awards. Nominations should be submitted by Friday, April 22.

To consult with you or your legal team on your legal needs, please contact Diana L. Thorpe at 847.609.0034 or visit clearlakecottage.info.


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**Biutiful; Barney’s Version**

There are always performance-driven movies bubbling under the surface come awards time and both Biutiful, a showcase for Javier Bardem, and Barney’s Version, which features Paul Giamatti, fall into that category. Both rely heavily on the acting power of their leading men and, in a weaker year for memorable male performances, both gentlemen would easily find themselves in the acting winner circle. Although there’s little doubt that this is the year of Colin Firth, whose work in The King’s Speech has aced just about every acting award there is to ace (with the final big prize, the Oscar, just on the horizon), hopefully that won’t keep audiences from seeing Bardem and Giamatti add to their acting resumes. [Editor’s note: Bardem received an Oscar nod Jan. 26 for Biutiful].

Aside from witnessing two top-drawer thespians, interior actors both, give it their all, the movies themselves—happily distinct from one another—will also reward audiences looking for something off the beaten path.

First up is Biutiful, from Mexican writer-director Alejandro González Iñárritu, making his return to cinemas for the first time since 2006’s masterful, passionate global drama Babel. Iñárritu’s canvas is much smaller this time—he focuses exclusively on the world of Uxbal, a small-time criminal in Barcelona, involved in a series of vice activities (from drugs to importing illegal workers to construction sites). Unlike his ruthless business partners (who include a younger brother), Uxbal has a conscience and tries to bring a touch of dignity to his illegal dealings.

Meanwhile, the mother of Uxbal’s two children is struggling with various addictions and so he’s also shouldering the responsibility of raising his two kids alone. At the outset of the film we discover that Uxbal, who has a lot of dependents, is suffering from an incurable illness with only weeks to live and we follow him about as he tries to both his writing and Bardem’s intuitive acting process that finally frees the title of the film—Biutiful—from its inherent sense of irony. Gustavo Santaolalla (an Oscar winner for Broken Back Mountain) contributes another one of his simplistic yet bittersweet guitar-based scores that pervades the film and is another striking addition.

On the other end of the scale is Paul Giamatti’s title character in Barney’s Version, adapted by director Richard J. Lewis from the novel by Mordecai Richler (with a screenplay by Michael Konyves). Barney Panofsky is an extremely disaffected man whose bitterness and self-revulsion are palpable from the movie’s onset. The story is told in flashback as Barney, a Jewish television producer of a long-running soap opera in Montreal, looks back over his life. He begins with youthful abandon one summer in Rome with his two best friends—a course that unexpectedly leads to his disastrous first marriage.

A second marriage to an even more unsuitable candidate ensues. This character, an amalgamation of every stereotype of a Jewish princess, is only referred to as “the second Mrs. P.” (and is played with relish by Minnie Driver). The bitterly funny wedding scene—a carbon copy of those in Lovers & Other Strangers and especially the original version of The Heartbreak Kid—is seen from Barney’s acerbic point of view and almost all the characters are met with his usual level of disgust. Exempted from that are Barney’s hand-some, hippie-ish, writer friend Boogie (Scott Speedman); his equally profane but emotionally loving father (Dustin Hoffman, who gives the role his all); a friendly bartender who keeps Barney’s glass filled and keeps him up on the hockey game score (one of his few passions); and, especially, a vision in blue named Miriam Grant (Rosamund Pike).

Eventually Miriam, through Barney’s doggedness, will become the third Mrs. Panofsky and for years (the film includes two children seen as young adults) the couple live a fairly happy life. At a certain point, however, life throws several more roadblocks in Barney’s path (including a possible murder charge and Alzheimer’s).

The movie is episodic; really only works in fits and starts; and is filled with stereotypes rather than characters (and fritters many of these away, which is part of the point but still...). We also never get much beyond the calm exterior of the long suffering, placid Miriam (who Pike gives a pretty yet monotone voice that is perfect for her job as a radio interviewer). But Giamatti, who has made a specialty of taking hard-to-love characters (beginning with American Splendor on through Sideways, etc.) and somehow made these miscreants loveable, has worked his magic again. His acting sleight of hand in Barney’s Version may be his toughest character reclamation job—and his most successful—since the truly troubled man he essayed in the little-seen but Memorable indie The Hawk Is Dying.

Both Bardem and Giamatti give it their moody, difficult best in these two offbeat films but is it sacrifice to suggest that it might be nice—for variation’s sake—to watch both actors try out characters that aren’t quite so enthralled with walking on the dark side of life?

Check out my archived reviews at http://www.windycitytimes.com or http://www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.
**REVOLUTIONARY FRIDAY, JAN. 28**

Emma's revolution (right) will take the stage at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge, Evanston.

**Photo by Molly Roberts**

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**BEING CIVIL**

President Day, Jan. 31

Gov. Pat Quinn (above) will sign the civil-union bill into law at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington.

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Emma’s revolution (right) will take the stage at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge, Evanston.

**Photo by Molly Roberts**

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Marissa Janet Winokur is all “talked” out. Helena Bonham Carter, who I haven’t seen in a good five years. (They were good for her.) I don’t know if it was the dazed look on her face when I approached, or the fact that her tulle didn’t allow me to get closer than six feet or her extending her arm like a traffic cop. Inexplicably, and without any provocation, I actually kissed her hand—as if she were the real Queen Mum! I may have even curtseyed! I don’t recall how she responded—but I believe it included Purell!

Marissa Jaret Winokur has left The Talk. Not that she was ever really on the show—I think she did five episodes since its debut. She’s philosophical about it: “As the show evolved, there really wasn’t room for my segments.”

This leads to a quick “Ask Billy” question from AJ in Memphis: “Who do you think will replace Regis Philbin?”

No one can replace Reeg. But someone will obviously try. Kelly is pushing for Mark Consuelos (which gives me a perfect opportunity to run those photos from his past as a male stripper). The first person to volunteer for the gig is Larry King: “I would sit in for him for a few weeks. I obviously try. Kelly is pushing for Mark Consuelos (which gives me a perfect opportunity to run those photos from his past as a male stripper). The first person to volunteer for the gig is Larry King: “I would sit in for him for a few weeks. I really wasn’t room for my segments.”

The two most obvious successors are unavailable. First is Anderson Cooper, who would have taken the job in a heartbeat—except he’s launching his own show in the fall. (He may wanna rethink that.) And Neil Patrick Harris would love it, but he’s stuck in L.A. for How I Met Your Mother. But that’s not stopping either guy from taking other gigs in musical theater. Cooper will be the pre-recorded narrator for the upcoming Daniel Radcliffe-led revival of “How To Succeed in Business...”—a role which was last assumed by Walter Cronkite in the 1995 production. And Harris will headline a concert production of Company with the New York Philharmonic this spring—and he’ll be joined by Patti LuPone, who will be playing Joanne.

When Regis can be replaced by someone giving lap dances, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. Before we dash, lemme remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com for all the dish that didn’t make the print edition. If you’ve got a question, e-mail me at Billy@Bil l yMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before Helena slaps me with a restraining order. Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
FGG responds to Gay Games IX questions

BY ROSS FORMAN

Despite a change of host organizing committees for Gay Games IX, set for the summer of 2014 in Cleveland, officials from the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) said they “have no concerns” that the quadrennial event will be exceptional.

“There is a great deal of work to be done between now and 2014, and the FGG and CSEC are prepared to work together to make this a success,” said Kurt Dahl, FGG co-president. Dahl also served as treasurer of Chicago’s Gay Games VII board of directors.

CSEC is the Cleveland Special Events Corporation, the new/current local organizing committee for the 2014 Games. The Cleveland Synergy Foundation won the bid to run the 2014 Games, but FGG revoked its license with the Synergy Foundation last summer—and then awarded the Games to CSEC.

“I am impressed with the passion and the drive of the people involved with [CSEC],” Dahl said. “They understand the fact that the Gay Games can and will change the world, especially in Northeast Ohio.”

So why sign with CSEC?

“CSEC fulfilled the requirements that were prescribed by the FGG and were willing and able to take over the license agreement. In addition, they have the full backing and support of the cities of Cleveland and Akron,” Dahl said. “FGG has always remained committed to Cleveland (and nearby) Akron, with the full support of the city governments.”

Dahl said the strength of the CSEC starts with the fact that the organization represents the entire Cleveland-Akron community, with support from the major LGBT organizations, and also includes people that were involved in the original bid process.

Plus, CSEC boasts city support, sports knowledge, a belief in the mission of the Gay Games, and support of the local LGBT community and the local business community.

Dahl said there was not a chance that the 2014 Games would be moved out of Cleveland after the split with the Synergy Foundation—“unless we were unable to find an appropriate non-profit organization with the full backing of the cities of Cleveland and Akron to take over the license agreement,” he said.

Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson is the chairman for the CSEC board of directors—a significant matter to FGG officials, which clearly shows “how far the Gay Games movement has come in the past 25 years and how city and state leaders understand the importance of hosting a Gay Games,” Dahl said.

CSEC also includes numerous, high-ranking officials and board members who are straight.

“The Gay Games’ core principles are participation, inclusion and personal best,” Dahl said. “Therefore, given that inclusion is a fundamental aspect of the underlying principles, having a mix of qualified people on the board, including straight people, adheres to the [FGG] principles. Again, it shows how far the Gay Games movement has come in the past 25 years. The people on the board understand the mission of the Gay Games and support this mission.”

When asked why the Cleveland Synergy Group was removed, Dahl replied: “No comment.” He also had “no comment” about what was the straw that sent FGG on a mission to oust the Synergy Foundation last summer—and then awarded the Games to CSEC.

“Gay Games IX is the first implementation of a new business model between the FGG and the host organization. CSEC is a strong partner and we look forward to working together with our new partner,” Dahl said.

And what about the rumors that the Synergy Foundation will hold its own Gay Games-like event in 2014 in Cleveland, much like the Outgames were in Montreal in 2006, opposite Chicago’s official Gay Games? Dahl was unable to comment.

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Dallas holds first LGBT sports party

Dallas, Texas’ Cedar Springs Merchant Association (CSMA) has announced the first LGBT sports-themed street party on the eve of the Super Bowl. The Cedar Springs Super Street Party pre Bijou and Steven Taushin—pics by Ross Forman sented by Bud Light will be held Saturday, Feb. 5, on Cedar Springs Road, between Reagan and Throckmorton streets. The street closes to traffic beginning at 5 p.m. and reopens at 3 a.m.

Michael Holtz, Compete Magazine’s “Gay Athlete of the Year” (who was profiled in the Jan. 19 issue of Windy City Times) will emcee the event, as well as host a meet-and-greet.

‘Hancock’ Feb. 27

“Hustle Up the Hancock,” sponsored by the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, will take place Sunday, Feb. 27. The full climb is sold out. However, CBS2 Half Climb (52 floors) and Lung Health Champion spots are still available. The total entry fee, due at the time of registration, is $110 for the half-climb and $110-$130 for the lung health spot. (The Lung Health Champion slot has a mandatory additional fundraising amount of $920.) See http://www.hustleupthehancock.org.

Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association. CMSA. ChicagoMSA. No matter what you call this organization, it is replete with firsts, and Jan. 22 was no exception. At 32, the Midwest’s oldest and largest LGBT sports group held its first annual women’s social. The party was the brainchild of Sam Hamilton (in the middle in the top photo), who released a calendar of women’s sports photos to benefit the Lesbian Community Care Project. (Part of the proceeds from the entry fee and a singles auction also benefited the project.)

Started in 1978 as a weekly 16-inch softball league for gay men and lesbians, CMSA has grown to coordinate nine unique sports, each hosting two or more individual leagues. Photos by Mel Ferrand
that they knew at the time they had just been potentially exposed, either because a condom broke or they did something in a weak moment that they quickly came to regret. But what is appalling—and the blame for this must rest with the public health and AIDS service establishment—is how few of them knew that there was something they could do shortly after the potential exposure to avoid seroconversion.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) has been a standard procedure for persons in a health-care setting who accidentally get stuck with a needle. They are put on a 28-day course of anti-retrovirals immediately (it must be within a couple of days to be effective) and in almost all circumstances that prevents them from becoming HIV positive. For several years, the Centers for Disease Control has recommended post-exposure prophylaxis in a non-occupational setting (read: sexual context) as well. So why don't gay men know to access PEP—and it is not easy—are the guys from a conscious or subconscious desire to disinhibit; typically $1,500 or more, which isn't a practical consideration for most young men who really need or will ultimately receive PEP from the ER as well as the enormous expense, it is easy to say “nuts to it” and just cross one’s fingers and hope for the best.

The Whitehall Walker Clinic, in Washington, D.C., has a “red carpet” program for people who think they might have been exposed to HIV. Upon presentation at the clinic, they are processed on an expedited basis. They promote this service throughout the community so people know that if a condom breaks or they do something they regret that they can go to Whitman-Walker and quickly and discreetly have their risk assessed and, if necessary, put on the 28-day preventive treatment without cost.

Education about the relative risks of various sexual activities, for those who are negative, and those who are positive on treatment or not on treatment, and promoting PEP are practical and useful strategies that will do much more to prevent new infections than a scare-mongering campaign that may ultimately drive new infections rather than avoid them.

HIV prevention is a process, not an advertisement or given campaign. We can alert people to the dangers of HIV without resorting to fear that risks losing the very audience we most need to reach.

Respecting the rectum

Our success in preventing HIV transmission has been hampered by an unwillingness to recognize and celebrate sex between men as something beautiful, admirable and morally equivalent to sex between men and women.

In 1983, very early in the epidemic, Joseph Sonnabend, M.D., famously and courageously said, “the rectum is a sexual organ and it deserves the respect a penis gets and a vagina gets.” Eric Rojes, Walt Odets and other pioneer thinkers about gay male health and sexuality have subsequently explored similar themes. I couldn’t help but think of this when I saw the close-up image of a man’s anus, covered in cancerous lesions, in the NYC health department ad. Anal cancers are preceded by genital warts, which are caused by strains of HPV, the human papilloma virus. Last year, 4,000 women in the U.S. died of cervical cancer; in virtually every case the cancer was caused by HPV. If the health department pursued a campaign to combat transmission of HPV, does anyone think they would, for a moment, consider using a close-up image of a horribly diseased vagina? The bodies and sexuality of gay and bisexual men are seen as dangerous and our sexuality as threatening. We are so little respected that it is acceptable to show an exceptionally intimate part of a gay man’s body, one visibly ridged with cancerous lesions, and put it on television as a tool to frighten us. We need to respect anal intercourse and recognize the important role it plays in the sexuality of many gay and bisexual men. In this context, “gain-framed” could communicate how protecting one’s self and one’s partner from HIV transmission can provide peace of mind, is socially responsible and enable the person to live a long, healthy and happier life, free of the tremendous burdens that come with an HIV diagnosis. In this context, risk reduction strategies have more meaning and will resonate more strongly with gay and bisexual men, resulting in the behavioral changes that will reduce HIV transmission. That’s HIV prevention messaging that may not please Larry Kramer and those who are hell-bent to use fear to bludgeon the psyches of young gay and bisexual men—and in the process, further stigmatize those of us with HIV—but it will change sexual behaviors and result in less HIV transmission.

Sean Strub is senior advisor to the Center for HIV Law & Policy’s Positive Justice Project, fighting HIV criminalization. He serves on the board of the North American network of the Global Network of People With HIV (GNP+) and is the founder of POZ magazine. This is from his blog on POZ.com.
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