Comfort men

Out entrepreneurs Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams will bring their very popular home-furnishings chain to Chicago, opening a store in Lincoln Park this summer. Photo by Dave Ouano

Larry Kramer’s ‘Angry’ Heart

In this week’s AIDS @ 30 series, Tracy Baim interviews Larry Kramer. His play The Normal Heart is on Broadway for the first time, and he speaks about his years of activism, his continued anger in the fight against AIDS, and much more. Pictured: The Normal Heart cast members Ellen Barkin (Dr. Emma Brookner), Joe Mantello (Ned Weeks), and John Benjamin Hickey (Felix Turner). Photo by: Joan Marcus

Thousands of leathermen and women will be in Chicago this weekend for the International Mr. Leather, Leather Market and related events. See inside for details on a new book about IML’s founder—Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow. Photo of Renslow in the 1950s, from the cover of the book. Courtesy Leather Archives & Museum
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this week in WINDY CITY TIMES

ENTERTAINMENT/EVENTS

Summer theater round-up 19

Leatherman spread 20

Steven Tyler interview 26

Knight: Topp Twins 27

Lesbian winner of ‘Amazing Race’ 28

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams 29

Autos: New York’s show 30

Celebrations: McRath’s new job 35

Billy Masters 37

Outlines

Real estate; classifieds 34

Calendar Q 36

Sports: Out figures, Bulls’ Noah 38

PHOTO FINISH

See photos from Diane Alexander’s gay-pride exhibit at Center on Halsted.

‘ACES’ IN THE HOLE

Don’t forget to read WCT’s review of the theatrical production Aces.

DAILY BREAKING NEWS

PLUS

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‘ACES’ IN THE HOLE

Don’t forget to read WCT’s review of the theatrical production Aces.
Gallup shows big increase in support of marriage equality

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

A survey by the respected Gallup poll organization reports a stunning jump in support for legal recognition of the marriages of same-sex couples and “the first time” in its own tracking history on the issue that a majority of Americans “believe same-sex marriage should be recognized by the law as valid.”

The poll was conducted May 5-8 of 1,018 adults nationwide and its findings were released May 20. Of those polled, 53 percent said they think marriages between same-sex couples “should” be recognized by the law, with the same rights as “traditional marriages;” 45 percent said they “should not.” 2 percent had no opinion. The margin of error is plus or minus four points.

The trend toward marriage equality is undeniable—and irreversible,” said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese, in a statement released May 20. “Marriage for committed, loving couples continues to be an important value

Gallup noted there was an increase in support among Democratic and Independent voters polled, but not among Republicans or older Americans. It said “fewer than 4 in 10 Republicans and older Americans” support recognizing marriages of same-sex couples.

Gallup has tracked the evolution since 1996, when only 27 percent of Americans supported legal recognition for the marriages of same-sex couples. By 2004, when Massachusetts became the first state to enable same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses, 42 percent supported legal recognition for the marriages of same-sex couples. Gallup said that 2004 level “stayed at roughly that level through last year.” Gallup also made a change, in 2006, in how it worded the question. From 1996 until 2007, it asked, “Do you think marriages between homosexuals should or should not be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages?” Beginning in 2007, it asked “Do you think marriages between same-sex couples should or should not be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages?”

But the change in wording did not seem to make a significant difference in results at that time.

Gallup noted that, in the past year, Congress passed a bill to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” something its polls indicated Americans had supported since 2005. But there have been many other changes that could explain the uptick, too. In August of 2010, a federal judge in San Francisco, in probably what is the most widely publicized gay-related cases in history, ruled California’s ban on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional. Just one month earlier, a federal judge in Boston had—in two cases—struck down a section of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). And marriage equality laws took effect in Washington, D.C., and New Hampshire, bringing to five the number of states with marriage equality laws. Then, in February of this year, the Obama administration announced that it could no longer defend DOMA as passing constitutional muster at all levels in all courts.

Tennessee’s anti-gay run

Tennessee made a name for itself last week in the LGBT world—and not in a good way, as far as the community is concerned.

Responding to a Nashville ordinance banning LGBT discrimination in Nashville, the Tennessee legislature has passed a measure that bans all cities and counties from enacting non-discrimination ordinances, according to Advocate.com. The bill prohibits localities from adopting all anti-discrimination laws, including those based on race, religion, sex and age.

On May 23, Republican Gov. Bill Haslam signed the measure, known as SB 632/HB 600. “Limiting the rights and protections cities and counties can provide their own citizens is fundamentally unjust,” said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Joe Solmonese in a statement. “We call on Governor Haslam to veto SB 632/HB 600 and preserve the right of cities and counties to protect their residents from discrimination.”

Several major Tennessee-based corporations—such as Alcoa, FedEx and AT&T—have joined HRC in opposing the bill. However, AT&T is also on the outs with at least one organization, as Garden State Equality has voted to withdraw its honors of three national corporations—AT&T, KPMG and Pfizer—that serve on the board of directors of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which lobbied for the bill.

The Legacy Project—the nation’s only organization committed to creating memorials to honor LGBT historic figures, beginning with the dedication of “The Legacy Walk” in Chicago—also issued a press statement criticizing the measure. “The recent passage of SB 632 by the Tennessee State Senate, banning any academic discussion of gay people in their schools, is a reckless act that sends a chill down the spine of every reasonable, free-thinking, fair-minded American,” the statement reads, in part. “And those who are tax-paying parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) children are doubly outraged.”

“The sense of isolation this imposes on our children is immeasurable, and SB 632 makes a difficult situation worse by closing off the only possible avenue for GLBT kids—for all children—to learn about the many ways GLBT people have helped to shape the world we share.”

In addition, the Tennessee Senate has approved, by a 20-10 vote, a measure that bans public school teachers and students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade from discussing homosexuality—although talking about heterosexuality is fine, according to AllGov.com. State Sen. Stacey Campfield sponsored SB 49, known to some as the “don’t say gay” bill.

Opponents contend that the bill is unfair to same-sex households and may lead to more bullying.
Baldwin may run for U.S. Senate

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin’s office is, thus far, silent on whether the openly gay legislator might make a bid for the U.S. Senate. However, buzz about that possibility is not—particularly within the LGBT community—because, if successful, Baldwin would become the first openly gay person to serve in the U.S. Senate.

An aide to Baldwin did not respond to this reporter’s inquiry.

However, the state Democratic chair told reporters in a phone call with state media outlets that Baldwin is “very seriously considering running,” according to the Milwaukee Journal. The Journal added, “A close advisor to Baldwin echoed that sentiment.”

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, which supports openly gay candidates, indicated on its website that “sources close” to Baldwin said she is “very likely” to run.

“This would obviously be a top priority for us,” said Victory Fund president Chuck Wolfe, according to the website. “This would be a remarkable milestone for LGBT Americans. Congresswoman Baldwin is one of the most admired public officials I know. She would have the strong support of those who want to see our economy work for all Americans, and who believe that all voices deserve a place at the table.”

There is no shortage of potential candidates for the seat being vacated by retiring Senator Herb Kohl, the incumbent Democrat from Wisconsin. Kohl made an announcement May 13 that he would not seek re-election in 2012—an announcement that had not been expected.

Newspapers in Wisconsin immediately began identifying a list of potential candidates—a very long list—that included Baldwin. Others mentioned, on the Democratic side, include former U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, who lost his re-election bid only last year to newcomer Republican Ron Johnson.

Most prominent in the GOP category is Rep. Paul Ryan, who has been much in the news for his proposals, as chair of the House Budget Committee, to make enormous cuts in spending. Ryan said he would make his decision in the next few days. A former aide to Feingold said Feingold would probably decide within the next month.

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin holds its annual convention in Milwaukee beginning June 3, so some candidates may hold off on their decisions until they have a chance to test the waters with state party leaders.

The 2010 Senate race in Wisconsin was a very close one, with Republican Johnson winning with 51.9 percent of the vote, over incumbent Feingold’s 47 percent. Political maps of party leanings show a state with several pockets of Democrat and Republican voters, but more than half the state leans toward no particular party.

The Milwaukee Journal quoted one of the state’s Democratic strategists as saying a key to determining who will emerge as a viable candidate is who can show the ability to raise between $2 million to $4 million just for the primary.

Baldwin needed only $1.2 million last year to win re-election to her seventh term. She has represented the district that includes Madison, with a focus on health issues.

Baldwin, who turned 49 in February, graduated from Smith College in Northampton, Mass., and earned a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. She was elected Dane County Supervisor for four terms, then served three terms in the State House of Representatives, before running for Congress. With her election in 1998, she became the first woman from Wisconsin to serve in the U.S. House and the first non-incumbent openly gay person to win a seat to Congress.

As one of four openly gay people in the U.S. House, Baldwin has been a leader on numerous bills of interest to LGBT people and a prominent voice for ensuring that legislation covers all sexual minorities.

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Minn. sends marriage-ban amendment to voters

BY REX WOCKNER

After five and a half hours of debate, Minnesota’s House of Representatives voted 70-62 on May 21 to send voters a referendum to amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Gay couples already are prohibited from marrying, but supporters of the constitutional amendment said it would be stronger than the current statutory ban.

The vote came around 11:30 p.m. Protesters outside the chambers could be heard chanting “Just vote no” as legislators pushed the buttons.

Four Republicans voted against sending the amendment to the ballot and two Democrats voted in favor of the move. Sixty-eight yes votes were needed to advance the amendment.

“We basically lost by three votes,” said Dale Carpenter, an openly gay professor at the University of Minnesota Law School. “The atmosphere outside was moving, powerful. Hundreds on our side, almost none on theirs. … A movement was born here tonight.”

Gay people will fight the amendment via a new coalition called Minnesotans United for All Families.

“Our campaign is hitting the ground running and we plan on using every resource available to defeat this anti-family constitutional amendment,” said spokesmen Donald McFarland.

The proposal had passed the Senate 38-27 on May 11. It will appear on the November 2012 ballot.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, 29 states ban same-sex marriage via their constitutions and 18 of them also ban civil unions. Five states and Washington, D.C., let same-sex couples marry.

—Assistance: Bill Kelley
The rise of LGBT markets

NEWS ANALYSIS BY CHERIL N. CLARKE

Members of the LGBT community and allies gathered in New York City recently for a syncretic day of education, networking and discussion on how to successfully market to gays and lesbians.

An energetic group of advertising, marketing and PR professionals came together at the Kimp-ton Hotel for the fourth annual Gay and Lesbian Marketing Conference. Hosted by Community Marketing Inc. (CMI) and Pink Banana Media, the one-day event kicked off with a whirlwind of data presentations and case studies from John Lake, director of corporate development for the Human Rights Campaign, and David Paisley, senior research director for CMI. “It’s expensive to try and be all things to all people. Focus and find your niche,” the presenters imparted. “There is no ‘all in one gay market.’”

For the past four years, CMI has published an annual community survey that has grown to have more than 45,000 respondents, making it the largest of its kind. According to Thomas Roth, president of CMI, organizations cannot continue to “market to gay men and lesbians in the same manner.” As he paced the dimly-lit stage exuding an aura of assuredness and candor, Roth peppered the attentive audience with comprehensive information, such as:

- 74 percent of CMI’s survey respondents prefer the term(s) “Gay and Lesbian/Lesbian and Gay”;
- 19 percent of CMI’s survey respondents favor the title(s) “Queer” or “Alternative”;
- Current advertisements are lacking representation of ethnic minorities, the 55 and older age group, as well as single gays and lesbians; and
- Corporations such as Wells Fargo and Kaiser Permanente have used up-to-date and believable images of our community in their past campaigns, while the majority of advertisers are still using stock photography that is not authentic to the community.

Roth was joined by Darren Spedale, founder of StartOut, and Richard Oceguera, who heads the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce New York. The trio segued into the importance of joining professional organizations and network-

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They acknowledged the new website www.dot429.com ("the LinkedIn" for the gay and lesbian community) in addition to the Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and StartOut.

The morning sessions had attendees live-tweeting nuggets of information to their followers. After a comedic luncheon sponsored by The Advocate, the afternoon opened with a spirited presentation by Jerime Black, LGBTQ sales and marketing manager of Barefoot Wine. Black delved into some of the creative strategies that Barefoot Wine has used to make their logo and name a “lovemark” for LGBT consumers, providing an example of when the company set up a giant, inflatable wedding cake on which San Francisco pride goers could climb atop as bride and bride or groom and groom and slide down to have their photograph taken. The cake was positioned directly in front of City Hall and the event was shortly after the California gay-marriage debacle. Using fun, but timely and photo-worthy marketing, Black made clear that a company can be supportive as well as savvy.

Lesbians and gay/lesbian families: Emerging markets

Curve magazine’s editor-in-chief, Merryn Johns, and Jessica Rothschild, senior entertainment editor for Autostraddle.com, were exciting additions (as women presenters were absent from the first half of the conference). CMI still has a bit of work to do in attracting women and ethnic minorities—something it is trying to change.

When it comes to marketing to lesbians, it is unfortunate that the common belief is they are not a viable and profitable segment, or worse, reluctant to spend. Although untrue, lesbians are still shrouded in stereotypes, which hinder the perception of advertisers. “Think of lesbians as women first,” and “think beyond stereotypes,” Johns encouraged while showing a lengthy slide show of how different lesbians look.

Lesbian media has been hit harder than any other during the recent recession. Johns and Rothschild covered lesbian statistics, gave tips on how to reach lesbians through the blogs ads, print media and offline at events such as women’s music festivals. Their presence was warmly received and they were eagerly sought as some attendees had never heard of Curve magazine, the nation’s bestelling lesbian periodical.

In all, the conference was a success and is bound to grow as it continues to provide valuable and thought-provoking information. It is a suggested event for all businesses to attend, whether GLBT oriented or not. This is clearly an emerging market full of opportunity for those who have the prudence to pay attention to it. For more information on CMI and the LGBT Marketing conference visit: http://www.communitymarketinginc.com.

Chicago activists mark IDAHO
BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Millennium Park was the setting for a demonstration sponsored by the Gay Liberation Network on May 17th to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHO, which began in 2005).

About 30 people marched with huge rainbow flags and signs highlighting examples of anti-LGBT actions in countries around the world as the workday was ending in the Loop. Marchers took turns with the portable microphone calling out chants while people were handed out to the passers-by on Michigan Avenue. The protest was met with no opposition and there was no visible police presence.

Andy Thayer, founder of the Gay Liberation Network (GLN), pointed out that in most countries this demonstration would not be allowed so it is important for those of us who can speak out about the injustices felt by LGBT people around the world. He also said “the LGBT movement in this country needs to be much more international than it is right now. We, in the United States, stand to learn a great deal from LGBT activists around the world, for example, gaining simple legal equality which was achieved in South Africa when they wrote their constitution following the Apartheid era which the United States is light years away from achieving.” He also said that we need to have basic solidarity with fellow LGBT people around the world.

Vicki Cervantes de La Voz de los de Abajo had this to say about the rally: “We are here to support the day against homophobia for many reasons including the situation in Honduras where we do a lot of work. There is lots of violence against the LGBT community and since the military coup of 2009 it’s become a horrible problem. It is a country with less than 8 million people and it is the second most violent country against the LGBT community in the hemisphere only after Brazil. Since the coup there has been 30 documented murders of LGBTI activists and many other people have just disappeared. This is why we are here.”

The GLN’s Bob Schwartz said, “LGBT people and their allies need to get out into the streets to be visible and rally for equal rights. Relying on politicians has been a disaster and I hope that people in Ottawa will be aggressive in their campaign to defeat the constitutional amendment up there. In other states like Maine and California we were just too nice and our enemies pulled out the stops and played the fear card and won. Both of those fights should have been won...We have to put a human face to this fight and be visible.”

At the end of the demonstration Thayer told the crowd about upcoming events that the Gay Liberation Network is planning. To find out more about these events check out their website http://www.gayliberation.net/ home.html.
May 25, 2011

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Oscar Wilde, who angered Chicagoans by calling the Water Tower a “castellated monstrosity,” was caricatured in this 1883 portrait.

In 1883, Oscar Wilde released the first of many masterpieces that transformed the city of Chicago. His critique of the Water Tower, a “castellated monstrosity,” was caricatured in this 1883 portrait by artist George Otte. Wilde’s satirical commentary on city life resonated with Chicagoans, who were just beginning to take pride in their growing metropolis. Wilde’s works, such as "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and "The Importance of Being Earnest," continue to captivate audiences around the world today.

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Chicago History Museum unveils LGBT exhibit

BY JOSEPH ERBENTRAUT

“It’s not every day I get to design a show with a disco ball, black bra and a motorcycle,” revealed Chicago History Museum (CHM) senior designer Dan Oliver as his latest creation—the museum’s “Out in Chicago” exhibition—was unveiled at a preview party May 20.

The exhibition, as previewed in the May 18 edition of Windy City Times, tells the story of Chicago’s LGBT community against the backdrop of the city’s development over the past century and a half.

Exhibition co-curators Jill Austin and Jennifer Brier developed Out in Chicago over the course of just over three years. Brier described watching the exhibit anew through the lens of those who came to see it as “amazing.”

Particularly poignant, she added, was the attendance of many of the LGBT Chicagoans who themselves play a critical role in the exhibit through videotaped interview segments that are a part of “In the Life,” one of its four main sections. Memorable interviews feature long-time community activists including Chuck Renslow and Kim Hunt, participants in the School of Oupulence and many others.

“Seeing it through their eyes made every fear I had about the exhibit, every thought that we hadn’t done well vanish,” Brier said.

The exhibition is rich with a wide swath of content carrying forth many of the ideas discussed through the Out at CHM series, an annual selection of programs held at the museum since 2004.

Besides “In the Life,” which addressed how LGBT Chicagoans made homes and formed a variety of relationships and families, the other sections touched on how queer people presented themselves to the outside world, created social spaces and over time became a vulnerable political force within the city.

While the exhibition offers no shortage of content, Brier acknowledged there are still many more stories to be told regarding the development of queer Chicago as we know it today. In the last section of the exhibition is a booth where visitors can record their own stories. Videos from the booth as well as a number of materials that did not make the cut for inclusion in the exhibition will be shared over its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/OutinChicago) in the coming months.

“We hope that we have done justice to the stories and that when we have not, people will do what LGBT Chicagoans have long known how to do: Tell us what we got wrong and record their stories so future generations of queer historians can learn about their lives, love and struggle,” Brier said.

“People should think about coming a couple of times because it’s a big exhibit and there’s a lot to learn and a lot to read,” she added.

Also on hand at the opening was one of the exhibition’s three honorary chairs, chef Art Smith, who formerly served as personal chef to Oprah Winfrey and co-founded Common Threads, a non-profit organization intended to educate children about other cultures through food and art.

Neither of the other honorary chairs—actor Jane Lynch and writer-activist Dan Savage—was able to attend, although Savage’s brother, Bill, spoke on his behalf.

Entertaining attendees at the event were DJ Charlie and FurrLique, who offered up a titilating three-song performance. The next day, numerous groups, including the Lakeside Pride Band, entertained the crowds. Members of the Dykes on Bikes drove en masse to the museum.

Several speakers addressed the opening night gala as well as a ribbon-cutting held earlier that day. Gary T. Johnson, CHM’s president, welcomed the exhibit as an important step for all of Chicago.

James L. Alexander, co-trustee of The Elizabeth Morse and Genius Charitable Trusts, was a force behind the Out at CHM series at its birth, and he has been a critical supporter of the efforts ever since. He, too, welcomed the opening as a historic day for Chicago. Others who spoke included Anita Medina Tyson, managing director of the JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., co-trustee of The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; Suzanne Connor, senior program officer for arts and culture for the Chicago Community Trust; John W. McGowan, senior vice president of CHM OUT in Chicago lead corporate sponsor Northern Trust; James T. Alexander (co-trustee of The Elizabeth Morse and Genius Charitable Trusts); Karen Sendziaz (partially hidden, president of Gerber/Hart Library); co-curator Jill Austin; Anita Medina Tyson (managing director, JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., co-trustee, The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust); co-curator Jennifer Brier; and Dan Oliver (designer of the exhibit). Photo by Hal Baim; more photos online at http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com


—Also contributing: Tracy Baim
EdgeAlliance talks mission, objectives

BY TERRENCE CHAPPELL

The Chicago Bar Association (CBA) on LGBT rights and issues welcomed special guest speakers Jim Flisi and Allen Hailey of EdgeAlliance for a presentation on the organization’s mission, new direction and initiatives.

Hailey, EdgeAlliance’s vice president of advancement, kicked off the discussion with a visual, historical tour of EdgeAlliance, formerly known as AIDSCare. He said that the organization was originally founded in 1992 as AIDSCare, a nonprofit whose mission was to provide housing and services for disenfranchised and marginalized men and women who were dying of AIDS.

In 2009, AIDSCare became EdgeAlliance and adopted a wider mission to decrease homelessness and offer support to those living with HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities and Veterans. Hailey believed that the name change was a step in the right direction to better reflect a more all-encompassing mission.

“We changed our name to EdgeAlliance in 2009 to better reflect an organization that is continuing to evolve to a position to respond to the housing and service needs of other vulnerable populations, in particular Veterans and seniors,” said Hailey.

Hailey went on to share with guests EdgeAlliance’s building and service expansions. In an $18-million capital campaign, the organization plans to build five buildings on the West Side known as the North Lawndale Campus. EdgeAlliance has already erected three of the five buildings including: The Phoenix, a 32-unit apartment building with studios for adults; Sawyer Gardens; and Garden View, a 34-unit building with mostly single parent, female-led households (with one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments). The Daniel R. Ruscitti Wellness Center and The Liberty are currently in the works to target and support veterans and seniors. The campus provides services for residents as well.

“We believe that housing and support services should be provided in combination to contribute to positive outcomes for our residents,” said Allen Hailey.

According to EdgeAlliance’s website, the campus offers residents permanent supportive housing and features the following services available to residents: property management and development, life progress services, finance development and social enterprises. In particular, the life progress services aims to develop residents into more socially and financially stable citizens. Residents can participate in support groups for sober living, health and wellness workshops that focus on proper food preparation and nutrition, tenant relations, as well as other life skills. Jim Flisi, founder, president and CEO of EdgeAlliance, said he trusts that the programs and services are great to not only continue to serve EdgeAlliance’s original demographic but also new ones under the organization’s revamped mission statement.

“We try to do our best in supplying the development of housing, the actual housing of people, the feeding of those people and the care of those people—and in doing that we really realized that we needed to expand our services to other populations,” said Flisi.

Flisi went on to share EdgeAlliance’s long-term goal to become an umbrella organization that other similar non-profits can reach out to for assistance and guidance. He added that he surveyed and found that most nonprofits from his survey and observation are excited to carry out their programs but tend to dislike administrative work and fundraising.

David Amen, the vice president of the LGBT committee for the CBA, was delighted to host Flisi and Hailey.

“I thought that it was extremely informative. I learned a lot of what EdgeAlliance does, and how I could participate in the future,” said Amen.

Hydrate cancels controversial show

BY KATE SOSIN

The gay Lake View nightspot Hydrate canceled a drag show it had booked for Friday, May 27, in response to outrage from many that the performer, a white gay man, sports blackface.

Charles Kripp had been billed to perform two shows at the Boystown club, but management canceled the act just hours after local organizers launched a Facebook campaign alleging that Kripp’s act is racist.

Videos on Kripp’s website, such as “Shirley Q. Liquor,” shows Kripp performing his blackface routine. In one mock commercial, Shirley Q. Liquor gives a sales pitch for “Ebonic Airways,” during which she draws on several racial stereotypes.

Shirin Rattigan, a program coordinator at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Women Leadership and Resource Center, was an organizer of the Facebook page against Kripp’s Hydrate performance. She said that she was “appalled” to find out that Kripp would be performing in blackface in Chicago.

“I was disgusted,” she said. “People were really upset.”

It’s not the first time that Kripp’s performances have come under fire. In February 2007, GLAAD came out against Kripp’s Shirley Q. Liquor portrayal, stating that the Kripp was perpetuating racial stereotypes. A 2005 letter to Windy City Times from one Evanston man said that Kripp “displays a hatred and contempt for Black people in general and Black women in particular bordering on the pathological.”

Hydrate owner Mark Liberson posted notice that he had cancelled the event just a few hours after the Facebook page against the event surfaced. “While the promotions team had good intentions, the advice they received regarding the diversity of this entertainer’s appeal was misguided,” the statement read. “I regret that this error in judgment was allowed to occur.”

Local organizers will hold a community meeting to address racism within the LGBTQ community May 27 in place of what had been an anticipated protest against Kripp’s performance.

“I think the larger question isn’t about Mark [Liberson] and Hydrate,” Rattigan said, adding that organizers were not looking to scapegoat Hydrate. “It’s about, ‘How could this have been booked in the first place?’

The community meeting will be held Friday, May 27, at 5:30 p.m. at Q4/Multi Kulti, 1000 N. Milwaukee, 4th floor. For more information, e-mail verbalveganlani@gmail.com.

Former employee sues Spin nightclub

BY ERIKA DEMAREST

A former Spin Nightclub employee has filed a lawsuit against the Boystown hotspot and its manager, Robert Hoffman. The suit, which was submitted to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in February, alleges repeated sexual harassment and unfair termination.

Monte Schulz, who worked as a security guard at Spin from March to September 2009, claims Hoffman frequently verbally harassed and sexually propositioned him. The lawsuit further alleges that when the harassment was brought to the attention of Spin’s owner David Gassman, Schulz was promptly fired. Spin did not have a sexual-harassment policy in place for the duration of Schulz’s employ.

“The law says that you can’t violate somebody’s rights. The fact that you don’t have a policy to not violate somebody’s rights doesn’t suddenly mean you can,” said lawyer, Aaron Maduff, who spoke on Schulz’s behalf.

“People are hired to do a job and, regardless of what that job is, they were not hired to be victims of sexual harassment.”

Hoffman did not respond to multiple interview requests. Gassman said he could not comment on an ongoing legal matter, but did issue the following statement: “For what it’s worth, anybody can file a lawsuit, and there are plenty of lawyers out there who will take them on contingency. They’ve got nothing else to do.”

This is not the first lawsuit for Spin and Hoffman. In early 2010, two women working as A&C Productions sued the nightclub over a contractual dispute; the pair claimed Hoffman treated them unfairly because they are lesbians. A “Boycott Spin” Facebook group that grew to 600 members documented unfair treatment of women and racial minorities.
Couples plan to make it official at TCRA ceremony

BY STEVEN CHAIRMAN

Tony Harper and James Abernathy have been in love for almost 11 years. They live together, work together, travel together—work to love together—and soon they will make history together. On June 3, they will be among the first LGBT couples across the state of Illinois to be civilly united in a community-wide public ceremony titled “Unite with Pride: A Community Celebration.”

For Harper and Abernathy, who both work for the City of Country Club Hills and run a personal assistant company for celebrities, the busy nature of their work schedules would have long delayed their plans to unite and celebrate with family and friends. They say the “Unite with Pride” event will allow them that opportunity while removing the stress of planning.

“We’ve been in love for eleven years and what better way to show that than something shared with all of the people that had a struggle in this battle for same-sex domestic partnership,” Harper said. “And not just do it by ourselves, but with our friends, colleagues and families.”

Harper and Abernathy will be one of an estimated 40 couples to come together at the at the Chicago History Museum’s Uihlein Plaza. The event is a fundraiser for its host group, the Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA), an equal rights advocacy organization that was part of the Springfield lobby that helped pass the civil union bill back in January.

“We had about five people down (in Springfield) working full time during the period civil unions were coming together and this is just a very fitting and appropriate event to usher in a new era for gay and lesbian couples in Illinois,” Harper said. "And not just do it by ourselves, but with our friends, colleagues and families.”

Some couples registered for the event are cleverly looking forward to celebrating this new chapter in history. Chris Link and his partner, Stephen Grunh, had a formal partnership ceremony in Australia five years ago, but are looking forward to celebrating with more friends and family as well as those who feel equally passionate about their legal protections.

“We considered (that the event) was great reason to not only celebrate ourselves and our relationship, but also the new law that gives us the opportunity to do so,” Link said.

For Harper and Abernathy, the event constitutes one-a-kind opportunity.

“You’re only slotted so much time in your gay life to experience an occasion like this,” Harper said. “There are so many naysayers and non-believers who might try and revoke something like this. We want to take advantage of what we have now. Regardless of what a piece of paper may say or society says, we have been united since 2001.”

The ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m. to be followed a black-tie optional cocktail reception in the museum’s “Chicago Room.” Professional photographers will be on hand as will local caterers, bakeries, florists and entertainers. Taylor & Co., led by president Derrick Taylor, will plan and direct the event.

The Chicago History Museum has been working with the Chicago Police Department to provide ample security for the event.

“Unite with Pride” costs $50 for the community and $75 for couples wishing to be united. All fees go to the TCRA’s Families United Project, a social networking project that aims to educate and inform about civil unions. Guests and couples who register by the May 28 11:59 p.m. deadline will also be entered in a drawing to have brunch with U.S. Sen. Al Franken at a private event on June 12. To register or for more information, visit http://www.jointcra.org.

Meeting focuses on Boy Scouts and gays

BY TERRENCE CHAPPELL

Rev. Rudra Villius Dundzila of Second Unitarian Church spearheaded an exploratory meeting with supporters and other church members that addressed the Boy Scouts of America’s long-standing policy that marginalizes people based on sexuality and religious affiliation—but also offered a blueprint of plans of action, solutions and future steps.

According to a statement made by the Boy Scouts of America in 1993, the organization prohibits gay individuals as members or as leaders in the organization. Dundzila said he believes that the policy goes against the mission of The Boy Scouts of America to aid youths in their emotional, mental and physical development.

“Scouting is great for youth,” said Dundzila. “The Boy Scouts of America is supposed to be this organization that is open, warm, and affirming. There is nothing affirming about their discriminatory policy.”

The policy also targets individuals of different religious beliefs by prohibiting those to replace God with their religion’s title version. According to the organization’s websites, both specialize in working with young boys and girls 7-18 regarding community service and outdoor activities.

Second Unitarian Church member Nancy Ep-person remembers having a positive experience as a Girl Scout when she was younger—being taught by her Navy Seal father on a number of building projects, different knots, and other outdoor activities. “The Boy Scouts of America is already losing its members. So, kicking someone while they’re down seems vindictive but sharing another way seems progressive,” she said.

Another plan of action discussed was to write letters to The United Way, the organization that funds The Boy Scouts. The letters would express the outrage over the discrimi-natory policy, request transparency, and inquire if The United Way were even aware of the policy. Long term, Dundzila is planning on having a booth at Northalsted Market Days to pass out pamphlets of information regarding The Boy Scouts’ policy; how people can object to the policy; and other similar organizations people can become involved in independent of The Boy Scouts.

Meeting attendee Br. Michael C. Oboza re-membered his vivid experience with The Boy Scouts as a young boy when a teacher caught him kissing another male scout. “Unclean, unsanitary, and you can’t do that” were the words Oboza remembered when the teacher saw the boys kissing. Soon, Oboza was asked to leave the organization.

“After I got kicked out, I lost all faith in the church. The Boy Scouts of America has no oath on a sexual identity to it,” said Oboza.

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WINDY CITY TIMES
Longtime couple to be part of June 2 civil unions

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

On June 2, 30 couples, including Patrick Bova and James Darby, will take part in civil-union ceremonies in Wrigley Square at Millennium Park on the corner of Randolph and Michigan.

It was July 17, 1963 at 10:30 p.m., Darby said, when they met. It was outside Woodworth's Bookstore in Hyde Park and as Bova was looking in the window Darby drove up on his motorcycle. They clicked right away and began dating immediately.

Bova was attending the University of Chicago's Graduate School in Education and Library Science and Darby had already graduated from Roosevelt University and was just about to start teaching at Gage Park High School. After a whirlwind courtship of about two months they moved in together in September 1963 and have been together ever since.

Bova was born in 1938 and moved here from Erie, Pa., in 1960 to attend the University of Chicago after he finished his undergraduate studies at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. For the next 38 years, Bova worked for the National Opinion Research Center as their librarian and data archivist before retiring in 1998.

Darby, born in 1935, is a Chicago native having graduated from Englewood High School. He was drafted, joined the Navy and was a communications technician second class on the aircraft carrier the U.S.S. Midway for much of his tenure in the service. Graduating from Roosevelt University with the help of the G.I. Bill in 1963, he then received a master's degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology. He spent his 30-year career as a Chicago Public School high school teacher instructing students on a variety of subjects before retiring in 1992.

Bova and Darby became activists as they continued to work in their respective careers, primarily around LGBT veterans' issues. Darby founded the Chicago chapter of the American Veterans for Equal Rights (formerly GLVBA) in 1991. Over the years he has served on its national board in a variety of capacities and is the longtime president of the Chicago chapter. Darby has also been the secretary of the Mayor's Advisory Council on LGBT Veterans Affairs for the last 16 years. Bova has been at Darby's side every step of the way, doing this volunteer work.

They have also lobbied with the Equality Illinois contingent in Springfield on a variety of LGBT issues and marched in the Memorial Day and the Pride parades for many years.

Traveling to Washington D.C., they visited the Congressional Cemetery to participate in a ceremony honoring technical sergeant and Vietnam War veteran Leonard Matlovich, who came out as gay service member to fight the ban on gays, 1975 while still in the Air Force. Matlovich was the first highly publicized gay service member to fight the ban on gays, Darby's Navy uniform is currently on display at the Out in Chicago exhibit at the Chicago History Museum along with a picture of his arrest but, unfortunately, I've loaned it to the Chicago History Museum.

Bova said, “It’s quite gratifying that our state representative, Barbara Flynn Currie, handed Bova and Darby pens that Quinn used to sign the bill.

Darby said he was ecstatic when the civil-union bill was signed into law and “couldn’t believe that it finally happened.” “It was a great accomplishment towards full marriage equality,” Bova said, adding, “It’s a separate but equal situation but I’m very happy.”

When asked what they expect on the day of their civil-union ceremony Bova joked, “I’m looking forward to other people giving them toasts during the reception. Both said they will be exchanging rings in front of 10 friends, seven of whom are straight individuals.

Bova said, “It’s quite gratifying that our friends are very happy for us and want to be a part of the day.” Darby added, “I’ll love to wear my uniform [like others have suggested] but, unfortunately, I’ve loaned it to the Chicago History Museum.

The City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations’ Advisory Council on LGBT issues and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events—in partnership with the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture, Lambda Legal, Equality Illinois and the Alliance of Illinois Judges—are co-sponsoring the event.

Cook County Clerk David Orr, Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Timothy C. Evans and Cook County Circuit Court Judge Tom Chiola—who, in 1994, became the first openly gay candidate elected to the bench—and other members of the Alliance of Illinois Judges will be officiating the ceremonies.

Notables such as Quinn and Mayor Rahm Emanuel are slated to attend. If there is inclement weather the ceremonies will be moved to the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, where a private reception sponsored by Lambda Legal and Equality Illinois will follow for the couples and their guests. The ceremonies are open to the public and all who would like to attend are invited to witness this occasion.

James Darby (left) and Patrick Bova. Photo courtesy of Erik Roldan

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Dignity/Chicago marks 39 years

By Tully Satre

Dignity/Chicago presented the annual John Michie Award for community service to Alderman James Cappleman and his partner, Richard Thale, during an anniversary mass for the organization May 22 at the Broadway United Methodist Church.

Dignity/Chicago celebrated 39 years serving LGBT Catholics in Chicago since its founding in 1972. The Chicago chapter of the umbrella organization DignityUSA was the fourth of its kind in the country, giving LGBTQ-affirming Catholics a public venue to celebrate their spirituality. Dignity/Chicago’s annual anniversary mass and award ceremony recognizes, “individuals or organizations that show hospitality and service in our community,” said Chris Pett, Dignity/Chicago’s board president. “Richard and James certainly meet and exceed that criteria.”

The award was established to honor the memory of John Michie, a member of Dignity/Chicago who was known for his hospitality. It was created after Michie passed away in the 1980s. Awardees have included both individuals and organizations that have helped to make Chicago a more welcoming city for LGBT people.

Pett presented the award to the Cappleman, Chicago’s second openly gay city council member, and Thale. “Both have shown [not only] a long-term commitment as members of Dignity/Chicago,” said Pett, “but also a dedication to the larger Chicago community through their work to improve life for residents in the Uptown neighborhood.” Both Cappleman and Thale served on the Dignity/Chicago board in the 1990s and have been active in Uptown community organizing since the late 1990s.

Cappleman has been on the board of directors for the Uptown Chicago Community (UCC), a not-for-profit neighborhood organization that seeks to improve the quality of life for all Uptown residents. He just finished serving his second term as the board president. Cappleman has helped form block clubs, organize service projects, and create open access to necessary information for residents throughout the 46th Ward.

AIDS service providers tend to agree: When it comes to fighting HIV infection rates among transgender populations, one of the biggest obstacles may be connecting them with health services, period.

A Strait of statistics exist to prove it, but it is generally believed that lack of unemployment, high rates of discrimination, and a scarcity of gender-affirming healthcare providers mean that many transgender people live without access to necessary medical care.

This reality was subject of a May 19 conference, “TransActions: Increasing Access to Care,” organized by AIDS Foundation of Chicago. The day-long sessions, comprised mostly of healthcare providers and therapists, focused on obstacles facing transgender people accessing care and in protecting themselves against HIV/AIDS.

Keynote addresses were given by three renowned transgender figures: Joanne Herman who wrote Transgender Explained for Those Who Are Not, Amanda Simpson whose role advising President Obama has made her the first openly transgender appointee of a U.S. presidential administration, and Jamison Green, Ph.D., an international expert in Transgender Health from University of California.

All three speakers seemed to suggest that combating discrimination against transgender people was key to opening up access to healthcare.

“We change the world when we change our attitudes and change our behaviors,” Green said. “We change the world when we speak up.”

Green noted that transgender men especially are left out of research on HIV/AIDS and healthcare, despite the fact that many are having unprotected sex with other men. He worries that transgender men are not being reached at all in study or in healthcare because they have historically been categorized as a group not-at-risk.

Amanda Simpson focused on divisions within the LGBTQ community that often marginalize transgender people and said that elevated rates of HIV among transgender people were a “symptom of a greater illness in society.” Simpson said that symptom was bigotry, even from gay people.

“Every time we divide ourselves, we move further away from our goals,” Simpson said.

Simpson spoke only briefly President Obama and gay issues, noting that it was not her field of expertise and that she was not representing the administration at the conference. Still, she named Obama’s memorandum that same-sex couples be allowed hospital visitation as well as the fact that governmental anti-bullying site www.stopbullying.gov has an HIV link as advancements for the LGBT community.

The conference also showcased local advocacy efforts in transgender care. Presenters from Broadway Youth Center’s TWISTA (Trans Women Informing Sista Trans-women on
Brad Kaylor has turned his childhood passion into a part-time profession. We’re talking Legos, Lincoln Logs and Girder & Panel—especially Legos.

Kaylor has been toying around (no pun intended) since he was 5, when his grandparents gave him his first erector set. Now he’s building life-like, extremely detailed replica buildings out of Legos and other traditional childhood toys—some as high as nine feet tall and weighing 100 pounds or so.

He extrapolates paradigm schematics of material, light, shape and function in his various pieces. His primary focus is structural integrity, and he fuses art with imagination and brings a sense of modern-day relevance to his towers.

Kaylor’s works include swimming pools, dance clubs, motor-driven rotating restaurants and lights—all powered with green-energy, LED components.

“I don’t know, maybe this is my calling in life,” said Kaylor, who built a nine-foot-tall rendition of the Sears Tower—when it was named as such.

In fact, he’s built and sold his version of the Sears Tower 10 times.

He can build the Sears Tower in one day, if focused, he said. Kaylor said it costs him up to $1,000 to build the Sears Tower out of Girder & Panel parts, or up to $2,000 if made from Legos. He sells each for about three times his cost.

“It’s a lot of fun,” said Kaylor, who stores and does all his construction inside his third-story apartment. And, yes, the buildings certainly are conversation-starters, he said.

“They bring out the kid in everyone.”

Kaylor has several buildings now under construction inside his apartment, and also a replica village that is modeled after Roscoe Village, with its three-story flat homes.

Kaylor’s constructions have also, sadly, met ill-fated collapses. Once, a drunken friend accidentally damaged three buildings that he was ready to sell.

“The next day, I was pretty pissed, but he felt really bad about what happened,” Kaylor said.

To date, Kaylor has sold about 25 buildings—and estimates that, in his lifetime, he has spent $50,000 on the traditional childhood toys, including about 3,000 model cars.

“I love Legos. They are my peace,” Kaylor said. “I have no regrets. I really enjoy it and they definitely are good conversation pieces.”

In addition to building detailed replicas of established buildings, Kaylor also constructs his own buildings. Each is so detailed, right down to a policeman eating a donut in one.

Kaylor’s dream is for an architect to build a building based on one of his models. “That would be awesome,” he said.
The angry ‘Heart’ of Larry Kramer

INTERVIEW BY TRACY BAIM

The lifetime achievement award for “angriest queer” may not come with a fancy trophy or star-studded awards show, but for sheer longevity, there is no one who comes close to Larry Kramer and his sustained anger.

This anger has been a force for both good and bad. The good includes the founding of Gay Men’s Health Crisis in 1982 and ACT UP in 1987, as well as writing numerous fiction and non-fiction plays and books. The bad includes alienating many of his friends and colleagues. Kramer’s intensity is still very high. His play The Normal Heart is now in its Broadway debut and he is working on a several-thousand-page history of America through a gay lens.

Kramer started his career in a more mainstream environment. He was nominated for an Academy Award in 1969 for his Women in Love screenplay. However, by the 1970s the gay community became the main inspiration for most of his work. In 1973, he wrote a play called Sissies’ Scrapbook. In his 1978 book Faggots, he slammed a sexual lifestyle he found shallow and dangerous. Almost every man I was friendly with died. Eric was 28 years old, former college athlete, who became a 119-pound bag of bones covered in purple splotches in months. Many of us will always have memories like this that we can never escape.

In 1973, he wrote a play called Sissies’ Scrapbook. In his 1978 book Faggots, he slammed a sexual lifestyle he found shallow and dangerous. Almost every man I was friendly with died. Eric was 28 years old, former college athlete, who became a 119-pound bag of bones covered in purple splotches in months. Many of us will always have memories like this that we can never escape.

When AIDS first began to take hold in the United States, New York’s gay community faced some of the highest rates of infection, even before doctors knew what was infecting their patients. Kramer’s The Normal Heart deals with these terrifying early years, when people were dying within weeks of diagnosis, and no one knew how it was transmitted. The play uses fictional names for real-life heroes, with Ned Weeks as Kramer’s fictional stand-in.

The play, first produced at The Public Theatre in New York 1985, has not lost any of its significance, and it is as powerful as ever. Some of the actors in the new Broadway production were not even born when AIDS was striking down people in 1981, when The New York Times first mentioned that authorities were tracking strange diseases diagnosed in a few gay men. This new production, directed by Joel Grey and George C. Wolfe, is in a limited run at the Golden Theatre. It stars Ellen Barkin, Joe Mantello, Patrick Breen, Mark Harelik, John Benjamin Hickey, Luke Macfarlane, Lee Pace, Jim Parsons, Richard Topol and Wayne Alan Wilcoxon.

Kramer was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize for his 1992 play the Destiny of Me, a follow-up to The Normal Heart, and he has received two Obie Awards. His work includes 1988’s Just Say No, A Play about a Farce, highlighting the hypocrisy of the administrations of President Ronald Reagan and New York Mayor Ed Koch. In 1989 some of his essays were collected into the book Reports from the Holocaust: The Story of an AIDS Activist. His non-fiction work also included a book based on his 2004 essay, The Tragedy of Today’s Gays, delivered soon after George W. Bush was re-elected president. Kramer said the Bush victory was caused by the continued hatred of gay people.

In 2007, he wrote yet another important and powerful essay, “We Are Not Crumbs; We Must Not Accept Crumbs,” on the 20th anniversary of ACT UP. The essay was timed for the presidential primary, and Kramer was not happy with any of the candidates for president. He tried to inspire a new generation of activists to learn their history, and fight for their lives:

“One day AIDS came along. It happened fast. Almost every man I was friendly with died. Eric still talks about his first boyfriend, 180 pounds, 28 years old, former college athlete, who became a 119-pound bag of bones covered in purple splotches in months. Many of us will always have memories like this that we can never escape.

“The story was caused by the continued hatred of gay people. In 2007, he wrote yet another important and powerful essay, “We Are Not Crumbs; We Must Not Accept Crumbs,” on the 20th anniversary of ACT UP. The essay was timed for the presidential primary, and Kramer was not happy with any of the candidates for president. He tried to inspire a new generation of activists to learn their history, and fight for their lives:

“One day AIDS came along. It happened fast. Almost every man I was friendly with died. Eric still talks about his first boyfriend, 180 pounds, 28 years old, former college athlete, who became a 119-pound bag of bones covered in purple splotches in months. Many of us will always have memories like this that we can never escape.

“Out of this came ACT UP. We grew to have chapters and affinity groups and spin-offs and affiliations all over the world. Hundreds of men and women once met weekly in New York City alone. Every single treatment against HIV is
out there because of activists who forced these drugs out of the system, out of the labs, out of the pharmaceutical companies, out of the government, into the world. It is an achievement unlike any other in the history of the world. All gay men and women must let ourselves feel com- tally. I found The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer. As I have so often done, I found my way to the theater, looking for stories to tell the truth about our lives. As the theaters and NYC have so often been a harbinger, not surpris- ingly, I found The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer. With the exception of Brad Davis (a stand-in for actor Larry Kram- er), who was poised for fame on the basis of his performance in the 1978 film, Midnight Express, this was not a star-struck affair. In ad- dition, Conetta Tometi, in the role of the Dr. Emma Brookner, was a re- TRACY BAIM: It is difficult to interview you right after seeing the play. It is still so pow- erful. How many times have you seen this version? Larry Kramer: I didn’t go to the rehearsals, because [Director George C. Wolfe] wanted the actors alone, which is what I went to a couple of weeks of previews, and then basically when I come in to hand out the flyers, every once in awhile I like to come in the second act, to see Ellen Barkin [the Dr. Emma] moment, and say hello to the actors to let them know they’re still loved. TB: How about seeing it 25 years later? LK: It’s surreal, I don’t know how to describe it. I happened by chance to see it a few weeks after the first production, with Brad Davis. It was so innocent, and Brad seemed so innocent, com- pared to what we know now and what we went thru before. Brad and Joe [Mantello] both give marvelous performances, of its time, Joe is sort of almost patriarchal, from the Old Testament, and Brad was sort of like a much younger version of a person who hadn’t grown up somehow. [Da- vis starred in the film Midnight Express; he was diagnosed with AIDS in 1985, the same year he starred in The Normal Heart, but he kept the ill- ness a secret. He died in 1991 of an intentional drug overdose, because of the severe pain he was experiencing from AIDS complications.] TB: In writing The Normal Heart, you prob- ably thought then that more people would get as angry as you. LK: I still do. TB: Even back then it was only a few thousand people who acted up and fought back. LK: If I knew the answer to that … what’s your answer? TB: That it always only takes a few people to make a change. LK: When you consider how many of us there are, you think there would be more. To my dy- ing day I would like to find the answer to that. Turn to page 16

The Front of the Golden Theatre in NYC. Photo by Tracy Baim

Revisiting The Normal Heart
BY JOAN LIPKIN

The year was 1985. I had an asymmetrical haircut, Jefferson Starship was playing on the radio and no one I knew had died of AIDS. While I was living in St. Louis, where vis- ibility about the epidemic was minimal. To be sure, there were rumblings. Rumors about a few people being sick and the St. Louis public health department were beginning to quietly organize in response. However, these were faint stirrings. It was, after all, the Midwest. In New York City, it was a different story as many found their inner activist for the first time to orga- nize in the face of presidential and mayoral administrations and mainstream media that were all ignoring the burgeoning epidemic.

As I have so often done, I found my way to the theater, looking for stories to tell the truth about our lives. As the theaters and NYC have so often been a harbinger, not surpris- ingly, I found The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer. With the exception of Brad Davis (a stand-in for actor Larry Kram- er), who was poised for fame on the basis of his performance in the 1978 film, Midnight Express, this was not a star-struck affair. In ad- dition, Conetta Tometi, in the role of the Dr. Emma Brookner, was a re- spected stage actress but no movie star. Instead, the pull was this shocking drama that had people buzzing and col- liding with fact and fiction. Did it really take 14 months for Mayor Ed Koch to agree to a meeting with the Gay Men’s Health Crisis and then only send a representative? Did The New York Times really refuse to provide any significant coverage about AIDS while running front-page ar- ticles on toxic shock syndrome.

JOAN LIPKIN. Photo by Rachel Brandt

Now, of course, it is hard to remember a time when AIDS was not part of our landscape. Now, the facts are stunningly real. Since 1981, when Kramer began his clarion cry, more than 35 million people have died and an estimated 75 million women, men and children have been infected with HIV/AIDS worldwide.

In October 2011, The Normal Heart was resurrected for an acclaimed one-night staged reading on Broadway in which it raised $150,000 for charity. I suspect producer Daryl Roth was floating the idea for a Broadway run. Now, a scant six months later—a virtual nanosecond in theater time—the show has opened on Broadway and playwright Larry Kramer is having his Broadway debut at the age of 75. I also suspect that Kramer, a leading figure in the fight against AIDS who also co-founded the Gay Men’s Health Crisis and ACT UP, is not less excited about the cachet of Broadway than about the ability to continue to get the story out. He has been seen handing out flyers outside the theater about the seriousness of the AIDS crisis.

Unlike the original production 26 years ago in which buy- ing a t-shirt (did they even have them?) would be consid- ered a snazzy form of marketing, this production has the advantage of forces and sturm und drang. Kramer was an early proponent of same-sex marriage and the performing and production team have joined forces with Evan Wolfson and Freedom to Marry to raise money, awareness and orga- nize. Additionally, with the profits will go to support the Actors Fund, amFAR, Friends in Deed and the Human Rights Campaign. Every Tuesday night following the play, there is a free post-show conversation at the theater with notables from the HIV/AIDS, LGBT and allied communities. Tickets are also available and available at virtually every price point.

That is my kind of marketing, one that acknowledges and supports the communities from which a work is borne. I was thrilled to learn that this historic play would be remounted and interested to see the way today’s multi-media platforms could involve new audiences and stimulate new conversa- tions.

And I was also nervous to see it—anxiously about whether it would hold up as a vibrant piece of theater. I also won- dered how it would feel to revisit some of my own history, in a sense, to bring the ghosts of late friends and colleagues with me. Was critically objective possibility? Did I even want to be an object of their anger? No. All of that fell away with a burst of persuasion that precedes the opening scene. The stripped down set by David Rockwell allows the action to focus sharply on the tightly written narrative with funny or funny scenes that frequently erupt in histrionic monologues like arias. In revisiting the play so many years later, I discovered new colors and textures that had passed me by in the rush of that heightened emotional time. I had forgotten how terrifying it was when people had no idea how HIV was transmitted and how their fear af- fected both friendships and intimacy. I hadn’t remembered the utter exhaustion of the early activists as they worked to organize, raise money and call attention to the crisis. Also, while LGBT people still don’t have full protections under the law in most of the country, the workplace discrimination was more pervasive back then, promoting closeting and yet more tensions between colleagues and friends.

The Normal Heart is one heck of a history lesson. We know that some of the characters we meet in the course of the play will contract HIV/AIDS or lose partners and friends. So the drama is not in discovering the narrative but rather in knowingly seeing it unfold with the insight of time and distance. Nevertheless, it packs a wallop, especially as the real-life names of the dead projected onto the brick walls of the theater mount, until they are filling the whole space.

In today’s Broadway, it is unusual to put up a chestnut with so left behind. In this case, a bevy of stars: Joe Montello of Angels in America fame, John Benjamin Hickey from The Big C on Showtime, Luke Macfarland from Brothers & Sisters and, of course, Ellen Barkin, a genuine movie star. However, it is also an excellent ensemble and some of the strongest work comes from younger actors like Jim Parsons, an up- and-coming who has attracted a lot of attention for his work in the TV comedy The Big Bang Theory. Co-directed by George C. Wolfe—who directed Angels in America on Broadway—and Joel Grey, this production finds humor when it can and it is welcome relief. Because under- standably, there is yelling. A lot of yelling. Also, the need to verbally and physically project in a Broadway house some- times threatens the nuances that characterize the best of any theater.

However, ultimately, it doesn’t matter. It is riveting dra- ma. I, for one, am Turner for fans of both theater and those who would seek to understand our history. I sat shell shocked at the conclusion of the play along with most of the audience, drawn into the story, wondering about the passage of time and deeply saddened, frustrated and yes, angered at the ho- mophobia that allowed a possibly containable virus to spin out of control.

Joan Lipkin is the artistic director of That Uppity The- atre Company and most recently directed The Big Fat, LGBT Show or How to Be Straight in St. Louis which is touring to both schools and corporations and Happily Ever After for the Fresh Fruit Festival in New York City. Her work with LGBT youth is also featured in the new anthology, Out & Al- lied.
Has there ever been an acknowledgement that you for your controversial 1978 book Faggots.

TB: What about the gay men who vilified women from ACT UP, and some from GMHC. Of the movements. Some of my best friends were.

LK: From your mouth to his ear. He's a man of mystery in my life. He paid me a lot of money. We have the same goals. He wants Glee as his attempt to deal with gays in school, which is a magnificent attempt, and mine is to get everybody to learn our history, so we're not that far away in our goals. But we're both difficult men and we haven't had enough time to get to know each other.

TB: Some of the issues in The Normal Heart, like gays getting married, are now coming true.

LK: Are they? I don't think the marriage that is happening is the marriage I want to see happening. These marriages are useless; they're just straight-marriage ceremonies. They aren't the benefits straight people get when they get married—that's what we're entitled to. I happen to personally think that: number one, it's taking forever; number two, it's taking much longer than it should; and number three, I don't think we should have gone state by state because we'll all be dead before we get all the states. I don't begrudge anybody getting married, and people tell me it makes you feel wonderfully... you girls married?

TB: We don't believe in it.

LK: There you go. I don't mean to call you "girls"... My partner doesn't want to get married either. But I do have friends that are quite moved by the whole experience. And it changed their lives. Elton John and David Furnish are married, but in a country where they get something for being married.

TB: You are pushing for us to learn our history. Do you think our lack of a sense of history is part of the reason LGBT youth are at risk for suicide?

LK: I don't know that it's anything new; I just think we're hearing about it (suicides) more. It's always existed. I tried to kill myself my freshman year at Yale, that didn't make the papers, part-time because I didn't succeed. But I think it's been here forever. I think that the knowledge base is different. But I do think the fact that we don't have any opportunity to learn our history is very harmful to us. I don't think what they teach in school—the queer theory, the gender theory—is gay history. I attempted to do this with Yale, and they closed me down because I screamed too much about what they were doing that I didn't think was right. And they wouldn't do what I wanted, which is to teach that Abraham Lincoln was gay, George Washington was gay, let's find out who was gay, let's name them. Black people began to be taken seriously, as a discipline to study, the minute that Thomas Jefferson's Black mistress was validated academically. If we could do the same for Lincoln and Washington, who were both gay, among many, many others, maybe they would take us more seriously.

TB: Your 2007 speech, "We're Not Crumbs," was during the presidential primary. When Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were running and fighting it out for the LGBT vote. You were saying both of them were not the solution. What do you think of Obama now?

LK: I think Obama is a very careful bureaucrat who says the right things and then doesn't do them. And he has this way of pacifying the Human Rights Campaign and all the people who are fighting for us in D.C. to shut them up, and it's not satisfactory.

TB: What about on AIDS?

LK: On AIDS he's bad. I don't know if you saw how far behind they are on funding international AIDS commitments, and the Ryan White money is really bad in so many states. I don't think we face up to the fact sufficiently that we are hated, and I use HATED in capital letters and urge everyone to consider that that's what is going on. I am not talking about dislike or discomfort, I'm talking about hate... The things the Tea Party and these Republicans are saying, saying in public about us, you couldn't say about Jewish people, about Black people... hateful words, that is hate.

TB: What about low self-image? Is that contributing in unsafe sex?

LK: That's another question like why isn't everybody fighting for their lives. Why isn't everybody taking better care of themselves? What's the big deal about using a condom. I think they're sexy myself. I don't know.

TB: Is it an internalized hate?

LK: I don't like these jargonese expressions. "Internalized homophobia." Nobody likes themselves, whatever they are, gay straight, fat, thin—you're never happy with yourself. Or you're always aware that you could be a better self. I don't know. They think all these drugs [are a solution]... anybody who has been on these drugs for any length of time will tell you, they're not always so easy to take as everybody thinks, not to mention the cost.

TB: I wanted to ask you about a few folks we lost and your memory of them. Including Stephen Gendlin. You did a great memorial tribute to him when he died in 2000.

LK: That was a very moving experience, I have a vision of them dying side by side in the hospital... Lori Cannon is still the keeper of the shrine.

TB: There is a new book about Vito Russo, co-founder of ACT UP, as well.

LK: Vito was among our great people. He just took what he believed in and fuck you if you didn't agree with him. Which is what activism is all about.

TB: What about your American history book. Is it coming out next year?

LK: I am meeting with my publisher next week, and that's the same thing he's going to ask me! I try not to think about what I got myself into. After Faggots came out, around 1978, I, like so many gay writers, decided to write my Proustian life. So I started writing something, when I had the chance. I just kept writing. In the '80s, when the shit hit the fan, I didn't have quite the time. But I wrote a lot of ancillary stuff, like The New York Native articles, then I wrote The Normal Heart, and I began to realize I wanted to write the history of America, and I wanted to write a really long book. And I have no idea why. Like I was going to build the Empire State Building. It had to do more... with an intellectual challenge. I love writing a lot, I love to write, I'm miserable when I'm not in front of my computer. But everything I've written has had a different form. Every play has had a different form. Screenplays are different. What I'm writing now is not the same as Faggots. I like trying new forms. Because I don't want to write another play like Normal Heart, or Destiny, which has another structure. So it's the technique of it all that's interesting to me. What makes a person read a long book, what makes a person turn the page... It just kept getting longer and longer.
Local man with HIV prompts nationwide change in Chase Bank fees

In response to pressure from consumer and disability rights advocates, Chase Bank announced May 13 that it would end its $12 monthly fee on basic checking account customers with direct deposits of at least $500 per month in aggregate from Social Security payments. This change could save customers with disabilities in Illinois alone over half a million dollars a year.

A Chicago Chase customer contacted the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALC) in March after his account was charged a $12 fee because he didn’t have a direct deposit of at least $500 into his checking account. Because the Chase customer has a history of working in low-wage jobs, he receives two disability checks every month. When he went into his local Chase bank to complain about the fee, a customer service representative from The Bank of Security—which combines two banks—said the obvious impossibility. He then called the ALC, stating he felt the policy discriminated against people with disabilities.

The ALC partnered with Woodstock Institute to raise the fee issue with Chase and its banking regulator. Woodstock Institute, a research and advocacy nonprofit focused on fair lending, wealth creation and financial reform, and the ALC challenged the new Chase bank account fee policy that imposes on customers with disabilities and other low-income customers an excessive $12 monthly fee unless the customer has at least one direct deposit of at least $500 per month or maintains substantial assets at the bank. Under the federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), Chase is obligated to serve the banking needs of all persons in its service area, including low- and moderate-income people. Chase is currently undergoing its periodic CRA examination, which includes a fair lending analysis.

After raising the fee issue with Chase and its federal banking regulator, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Ann Hilton Fisher of the ALC and her client, and Dory Rand and Tom Feltner of Woodstock Institute met with Chase May 9 in Chicago. In addition, consumer advocates from around the country participated in the meeting, including Kevin Stein of California Reinvestment Coalition, Sarah Ludwig of NEDAP in New York City, and Peter Skellner of the Community Reinvestment Association of North Carolina. The advocates and Chase customer asked Chase to consider several options to better serve community needs, including waiving fees if the customer has direct deposits of at least $500 per month in aggregate.

On May 13, Chase announced that it has agreed to change its policy in the few “novel” cases to ensure that no one who is enrolled in Social Security payments totaling at least $500 per month in aggregate will qualify for the fee waiver. Chase is working to implement this change as quickly as possible, probably within a few statement cycles or months.

The following organizations also expressed support for this policy change and applauded the advocates’ successful efforts: World Institute on Disability (Oakland, Calif.); Health & Disability Advocates (Chicago); Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (Silver Spring, Md.); The Institute for Equal Access (Chicago); Equip for Equality (Chicago); Access Living (Chicago); and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (Washington, D.C.).

A customer remarked “When people with HIV stand up for their rights the world becomes a better place—not just for them but for so many others. We are grateful to our client for bringing this issue to our attention and to our colleagues in the advocacy community who worked with us to make this change possible.”

A letter from Larry Kramer: Please Know

The following is the flyer distributed by Larry Kramer and members of the cast and crew after some of the performances of his play The Normal Heart, now on Broadway in NYC.

Thank you for coming to see our play.

Please know that everything in The Normal Heart happened. These were and are real people who lived and spoke and died, and are presented here as best as I could. Several more have died since, including Bruce, whose name was Paul Pojjack, and Tommy, whose name was Roger McFarlane and who became my best friend, and Emma, whose name was Dr. Linda Lauben-stein. She died after a return bout of polio and another trip to an iron lung. Rodger, after building three gay/ AIDS agencies from the ground up, committed suicide in despair. On his deathbed at Memorial, Paul called me (we’d not spoken since our last fight in this play) and told me to never stop fighting.

Four members of the original cast died as well, including my dear sweet friend Brad Davis, the original Ned, whom I knew from practically the moment he got off the bus from Florida, a shy kid so very intent on becoming a fine actor, which he did.

Please know that AIDS is not a worldwide plague.

Please know that no country in the world, including this one, especially this one, has ever called it a plague, or acknowledged it as a plague, or dealt with it as a plague.

Please know that there is no cure.

Please know that after all this time the amount of money being spent to find a cure is still minuscule, still almost invisible, still impossible to locate in any national health budget, and still totally uncoordinated.

Please know that here in America case numbers continue to rise in every category. In much of the rest of the world—Russia, India, Southeast Asia, Africa—the numbers of the infected and the dying are so grotesquely high they are rarely acknowledged.

Please know that all efforts at prevention and education continue their unending record of abject failure.

Please know that there is no one in charge of this plague.

This is a war for which there is no general and for which there has never been a general. How can you win a war with no one in charge?

Please know that beginning with Ronald Reagan (who would not say the word “AIDS” publicly for seven years), every single president has said nothing and done nothing, or in the case of the current president, says the right things and then doesn’t do them.

Please know that most medications for HIV/AIDS are inhumane expensive and that government funding for the poor to obtain them is dwindling and often unavailable.

Please know that pharmaceutical companies are among the most evil and greedy nightmares ever loosed on humankind. What “research” they embark upon is calculated only toward finding newer drugs to keep us, just barely, from dying, but not to make us better or, god forbid, cured.

Please know that an awful lot of people have needlessly died and will continue to needlessly die by reason of any and all of the above.

Please know that the world has suffered at the very least some 75 million infections and 35 million deaths. When the action of the play that you have just seen begins, there were 41.

I have never seen such wrongs as this plague, in all its guises, represents, and continues to say about us all.

Signed, Larry Kramer.
Recently, you may have heard the news that the esteemed CNN news anchor, Don Lemon has “come out” and announced to the world that he is a gay or a same-gender-loving man, I congratulate him for taking this very courageous and personally liberating step. However, I am also extremely dismayed that he is being criticized for why it took him so long to do so.

Some say that Lemon came out to create buzz around the release of his new book, Transparent, and to increase book sales when his memoir is released. Others are criticizing him because he did not make a bolder public announcement. As a same-gender-loving man, I know that it is not uncommon for gay people to delay announcing to friends and family that they are gay, and perhaps with good reason.

Even though the United States purports itself to be a democratic nation that embraces all cultures, religions, and ethnicities, regrettably, still many Americans unfairly bash President Obama, spewing out vitriolic and venomous snipes characteristic of the ‘60s and adamantly oppose equal rights for same-gender-loving people--specifically in regards to marriage equality. One need look no further than the fierce battlegrounds of New York City, where a heated contentious war is being waged against same-gender-loving people to prevent them from marrying the person of their own choosing.

In the past three years there has been an unprecedented number of youth and young adults committing suicide because of gay bullying. Movies and music have been saturated for decades with violent and hateful messages and characterizations of the ‘60s and ‘70s: heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, transmascophobia, biophobia, and cissexism. These messages are not only reinforcing the idea that being gay is wrong, they are also making it harder for people to come out and lead more fulfilling lives.

In conclusion, I wish to state that when questioned by the media as to why he chose this moment and time to come out, Lemon responded by stating that he did it to save lives because so many LGBT youth and adults are committing suicide.

As a global HIV advocate, I know that Lemon’s coming-out is extremely significant, not only because his actions are a deterrent in regards to keeping same-gender-loving people from committing suicide, but also because it is proven by clinicians and HIV caregivers the world over that people who embrace their sexual orientation are less likely to become infected with HIV.

Today, millions of Americans remain unaware of the fact that HIV rates continue to climb at terrifying rates in the African American and Latinx communities. More than 3 million individuals in the United States are now HIV positive, and 1 out of 5 people are unaware that they are even infected with the disease. According to The Centers for Disease Control, AIDS is the third leading cause of death for both black men and black women ages 35 to 44.

I think news analysts and author Herndon Davis said it best when he expressed his congratulations to Lemon in his article, “Will Black America Embrace CNN’s Lemon’s Lemon’s Coming-Out?”

Davis said, “Whether you are straight or gay, you should embrace Don Lemon’s coming out not because of a politically correct induced statement but because he is someone taking a risk, placing himself, his career and even his physical safety on the line in order to help so many others. And that within itself is well worth our support. Congratulations to DonLemon!”

I would like to add “Yes, I agree” to that thought-provoking statement.

Terry Angel Mason is a best-selling author and HIV/AIDS advocate.

Claudia A. Perry

Adding ‘M’ to LGBT

So the law has almost caught up with LGBT love. Whether you’re planning a civil union or not, everyone needs to talk about the “M” word at some point.

The “M” word is “money.” Here’s a series of questions on my website, http://www.claudiaperryink.com, that can help you start that talk with your loved ones. Most people say they need to have this conversation with their children in the recent bashing and criticizing of Lemon for not being more vocal on issues that relate to the African-American community and intimating that the only reason Lemon is covered by CNN is because he is a fair-skinned brother whom as Manago puts it, “may possibly be in his position at CNN because he is a light-skinned, handsome Black man who is likely seen, by Whites, as less threatening than another type of Black man.”

While I do agree with Manago, that CNN has skated around and even blanketed ignored pertinent issues that pertains to the African American community and same-gender-loving people, I do not agree with his assessment of Mr. Lemon’s statements, skills, qualities or reason for hiring Lemon. Lemon is a man of integrity. He is personable and caring, in addition to being an excellent journalist who is more than qualified to be an anchor for CNN.

Moreover, I applaud CNN for supporting Lemon in his decision to make his sexual preference public and I believe that they were very wise to do so. If you ask Madow, as you know, is perhaps one of the most respected and courageous same-gender-loving female journalists on television today.

People all over the world regularly view her and appreciate her thorough, unvarnished, incisive cutting-edge style of reporting. I sincerely believe that because Lemon has elected to be more transparent regarding his personal life is poised to add a new dimension of one of CNN’s most dynamic and most watched anchors, who will boldly seize new opportunities to address many of the issues that Manago claims are instinctively omitted by CNN.

Lemon will also likely remind everyone in any type of judgmental action, that Lemon’s private life is exactly that: private. It is none of anyone else’s business to refer to the elements, factors and reasons that motivated him to bravely announce to the world that he refuses to go on hiding this aspect of his “private” life any longer. Furthermore, it is clear to me that this revelation has no doubt added ‘M’

Claudia Perry is a broker for a several insurance companies and an advocate for Equality Illinois. For more information, visit http://www.claudiaperryink.com.
Summer theater preview for 2011

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

The great outdoors might not be so great for allergy sufferers and for those who burn far too easily in the sun. So for some indoor summer fun, check out these shows that are brand spanking new (or just new to Chicago), or of LGBT interest.

Brand new, or new to Chicago

The Detective’s Wife, Writers’ Theatre, Glencoe, now-July 31: This world-premiere drama by Keith Huff (Mad Men) is about a widow who undertakes her own investigation to uncover why her police detective husband was gunned down while on the job. 847-242-6000

Mugger for Two—a Killer Musical, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, now-June 19: Its a musical murder comedy by Joe Kinosian and Kellen and where one actor plays the inspector and another plays all 10 suspects while both play the piano. 312-595-5600

Waiting for Dreib Peterson, Annoyance Theatre, now-July 7: Its a dark comedy about two women who are obsessively in love with an alleged murderer. 773-561-4665

Northwest Highway, Gift Theatre, May 26-July 17: William Naedved’s world-premiere drama is about a man who must face facts when he attempts to sell his Jefferson Park home. 773-384-5877

Mother Bear, Mortar Theatre Company at Athenaeum Theatre, May 26-June 19: Chicago premiere of Jayne McGhan’s drama is about a union organizer who attempts to recruit a gang of truckers in the Utah desert. 800-982-2787

The Sign of the Four, City Lit Theater Company, May 27-July 31: The world’s most famous detective is back in Terry McCabe’s world-premiere adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s second Sherlock Holmes novel. 773-293-3868

The Last Act of Lila Kadios, Lookingglass Theatre, June 1-July 24: Celebrate the company’s Regional Theatre Tony Award with a world-premiere ensemble piece about a spirited woman in the twilight of her life. 312-337-0665

Sister Calling My Name, Uncovered Theatre Company at Trap Door Theatre, June 2-12: Buzz McLaughlin’s drama is about a man who must come to terms with his mentally disabled (but extremely artistically talented) sister. 773-384-0494


The Chicago Landmark Project, Theatre Seven of Chicago at Greenhouse Theater Center, June 2-July 10: A world-premiere compilation spotlights 12 short plays in repertory by 12 playwrights exploring 12 different Chicago neighborhoods. 773-404-7336

15 minutes, The Ruckus at The Side Project Theatre, June 2-24: Mitch Vermiersch and Aaron Dean’s drama is about five people who meet a strange man in an ultra slick urban environment. 773-769-7257.

Lighthousekeeping, New Leaf Theatre at Storefront Theater, June 8-July 17: Georgette Kelly’s world-premiere adaptation of Jeannette Winterson’s novel is about a young woman who is sent to apprentice with a blind Scottish lighthouse keeper. 312-742-8497

Field of Souls, eta Creative Arts Foundation, June 9-July 31: An African-American family’s dreams go awry when a soldier returns home in Darlette McAlpin’s drama. 773-752-3955

Yellow Face, Silk Road Theatre Project at the Chicago Temple, June 14-July 17: Chicago premiere of David Henry Hwang’s Obie Award-winning comedy is about a writer’s struggle to define racial identity in contemporary America. 312-443-3800.

Middletown, Steppenwolf Theatre, June 16-Aug. 14: The regional premiere of Will Eno’s murder comedy explores the joys and sorrows of being a new father. 312-335-1650

Northwest Highway, Image from The Gift Theatre, June 20-July 24: Written by a Chicago playwright, this world-premiere family musical is about a family visit in the summer of 1955. 847-242-6000.

The Sign of the Four, Athenaeum Theatre, May 26-June 19: Chicago Premiere of Jayme McGhan’s Drama is about a young woman who is sent to apprentice with a blind Scottish lighthouse keeper. 312-742-8497

Comicon’s comic drama explores the dark aspects of a supposedly friendly small town. 312-335-1650

Chinglish, Goodman Theatre, June 18-July 24: A world-premiere comedy by David Henry Hwang is about an American businessman who tries to conduct business in China, only to discover that he doesn’t know how to operate in the system. 312-443-3800

Cinque Shanghai Extreme, Navy Pier Skyline Stage, June 23-Sept. 5: A new circus revue features death-defying tricks executed by imported Chinese performers. 800-745-3000

A Girl with Sun in Her Eyes, Pine Box Theatre at The Second Stage Theatre, June 25-Aug. 7: The premiere of Joshua Rollins’ drama is about two police detectives who must get over their issues to investigate the disappearance of a fellow South Side Chicago officer. 773-549-1815

Let X, Nothing Special Productions at Strawdog Theatre, June 27-July 20: Gwydon Suliban’s dark comedy is about a train conductor who would like to have an adulterous relationship with his wife’s mathematician friend. 773-528-9699

Cinque du Soleili’s OVO, United Center, Limited run begins June 30: The human-circus spectacular is inspired by insect life. 800-650-1480

The Adventures of Pinocchio, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, July 13-Aug. 28: A world-premiere family musical by Neil Bartram and Brian Hill is based upon Carlo Collodi’s classic tale of a wooden puppet who yearns to become a real boy. 312-595-5600.

The Rose of Stambul, Chicago Folks Operetta at Chopin Theatre, July 16-31: Leo Fall’s classic Viennese operetta about an independent-minded woman in a Turkish harem might as well be new since it hasn’t been seen locally in more than a half century. 708-383-2742

The Mommies—A Musical Blog, Royal George Theatre, open run beginning July 28: A musical comedy revue explores the joys and sorrows of motherhood. 312-988-9000

For the Boys, Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire, Aug. 17-Oct. 16: A new musical by Aaron Thielen is based upon the 1991 Bette Midler film about the careers of big band USO entertainers. 847-634-0200

Of LGBT Interest

Sleeping with Straight Men, Luridous Theatre, Turn to page 24
Chuck Renslow—co-founder of the International Mr. Leather (IML) contest and owner of one of the first leather bars in the world—is the subject of a new biography that offers a backstage, all-access peek into the mind and heart of this controversial and well-respected figure.

Over the last several decades, many writers have attempted to pen Renslow’s biography, but his complex and inspiring life-story has never made it into book form—until now. Leatherman: The Legend of Chuck Renslow, written by Chicago journalists and authors Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen, is the story of a sexual renegade and a savvy businessman whose Chicago bar, the Gold Coast, set the standard for raunchy kink and gay sexual liberation.

Shortly after graduating from Lane Technical High School, young Renslow, who is now 81, launched what was to become a six-decade-long empire, starting more than two dozen businesses in Chicago including bars, discos, photo studios, health clubs, bathhouses, gay magazines and newspapers, hotels, restaurants and bookstores. Throughout it all Renslow dealt with Mafia and police payoffs; anti-gay political policies; harassment from censors; and even controversy within the gay community.

A collaborative effort between the two authors, Baim—publisher and executive editor at Windy City Media Group, which produces the flagship Windy City Times—focused on topics related to media, politics and legal issues, while Keehnen, at Windy City Media Group, concentrated his efforts on Renslow’s early years in Chicago including bars, discos, photo studios, health clubs, bathhouses, gay magazines and newspapers, hotels, restaurants and bookstores.

For the book, we interviewed many current and past Family members, because he was an internationally renowned artist and a Chicago treasure.

OK: There were so many facets about Renslow that we printed somewhere, and then reprinted or gossiped about, and they took on this life of their own. A lot of those things proved to be false or exaggerations. However, for me, I think the personal stuff might actually be more surprising than the public aspect. That’s one of the things that makes his life so cool is that there is no one area that was boring. I think his personal interests will surprise a lot of people.

WCT: As is the case with any iconic figure, there are many rumors and myth-like stories associated with Renslow. What are some things you learned about Renslow that might surprise readers and fans?

TB: There are many, many myths about Renslow, including ones he happily helped cultivate over the years. In the book, we address as many as we could—some myths proved to be true, and some were false.

Ultimately, the conclusion we came to is that no exaggeration is needed where Renslow is concerned. He did accomplish so much in his life, and some of it was pretty amazing. He was involved in Democratic politics, published magazines, newspapers, fought postal censors, donated to charities, started IML, and so much more. It was hard to get a handle on all of it, but we feel we did our best to capture the essence of the man.

OK: The images really bring so much of the story to life. My favorites are the Etienne/Dom murals and artwork, as Tracy mentioned, as well as the pre-AIDS photographs. They really help to capture the feel of an era and show this incred-

Chuck Renslow and his mother, Charlotte. Photo courtesy of Chuck Renslow

Renslow in 1948 at the desk of the studio he ran with John Baran. The studio was called Renslow Studio; John Baran, photographer. Photo courtesy of Chuck Renslow

Renslow’s long-time partner Dom Etienne. Oregudos in the 1950s. His artwork was used to help promote numerous Renslow projects, including the Gold Coast and International Mr. Leather. Courtesy Leather Archives & Museum

TIMELINE

The life and legend of Chuck Renslow

The Legend of Chuck Renslow, written by Chicago journalists and authors Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen, is the story of a sexual renegade and a savvy businessman whose Chicago bar, the Gold Coast, set the standard for raunchy kink and gay sexual liberation.

By TONY PEREGRIN

The life and legend of Chuck Renslow subject of new biography

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May 25, 2011

WINDY CITY TIMES

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Hey, look around! It’s summer in Chicago: the trees are leafy and green, the flowers are in bloom and its sidewalks are filled with people. OK, this weather has been a bit strange this year, but nonetheless the warm season is upon us and that means theater under the stars as comedy, drama and music move to the Great Outdoors throughout our region. Here are a few of our perennial favorites.

**On, Wisconsin**

**American Players Theatre, Spring Green**—In recent years, American Players Theatre (APT) has vigorously marketed itself to Chicagoans and employed several well-known local directors such as William Brown, Jane Henson, and Kevin Chapman. The APT’s major production this year is Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, which makes a perfect garden setting for Door Shakespeare’s 12th season, with its new, comfortable and weather-sheltered venue and its forty degrees and foggy. OK, the weather has been a bit strange this year, but we’re right on the brink of summer. “Summer”—you remember. Not switching on the porch light until after 8 p.m. There are soft breezes by the lake instead of Captain Ahab-strengthening gales. You can have canned beer that doesn’t freeze your fingers, and picnics with sparkling chilled wine.

You can also take off your clothes to play outdoors—well, maybe not all your clothes, but dressing in shorts and sandals and skimpier tank tops to engage yourself in healthy exercise, or to enjoy the sight of other scantily clad people engaging in healthy exercise. Theaters in Chicago are likewise looking to provide a burst of pulse-pumping tester-ones (June 26-Aug. 6; 309-438-2535). Also, Shattered Globe’s bar-hopping interactive production of Early Days and Dirty Romeo and Juliet proposes to smooth the course of true love by allowing audiences to offer advice to the immature lovers and their confederates (currently playing in an open run; 773-770-0333 for times and locations).

**Summer’s just star-crossed hets—a short drive to the western suburbs takes you to Oak Park Festival Theatre’s double ticket of the almost all-male Henry IV and Henry V, replete with “band of brothers” orations and battlefield farewells (June 11-Aug. 20; 708-465-7733). But don’t let the still too modern costume pageant, there’s always Broadway in Chicago’s touring production of West Side Story. Can you get more sweeter than a rumble in The Heights (July 19-Aug. 14; 800-904-0391)? Finally, there are the shows that blend sex and violence: Group fertility rites are at the focus of Eupirides’ 2,500-year-old tragedy, adapted by Oedipal Theatre’s Jamie Bragg into The House of Bacchus, a modern shouter about an orphan boy’s rise to power in the sodid world of gay brothels and hustlers (June 25-Aug. 6; 773-732-7077). Women also sling steel and body fluids this summer: the fiery Babes With Blades slash buckles in The Double, Barbara Loth’s com-icing an open run; 773-904-0391). For you cheep-socky fans, the intrepid Dewdrop continues to avenge her beloved—and unfaithful—lesbian lover in the tarentino-esque Soul Samurai until June 5 (773-975-8150). Redtwist’s revival of Bug. Tracy Letts’ locked-room study of lovers infected with all-American paranoia, is the first local production since its premiere in the mid-1990s, where it went on to become a movie directed by William Friedkin (May 27-June 26; 773-728-7528). However, on a distinctly different note, the folk who brought you Boobs and Goombas! return to Gorilla Tango armed for a Dungeons & Dragons-styled burlesque entitled—are you ready?—The Fellowship of the Boobs (June 2-Aug. 25; 773-598-4544). Be sure to wash the kids,mousemove them, and marvel at that bare and gleaming skin can be downright devastating.

**The Park Oak Festival Theatre will feature, among others, Jack Hickey (above) as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Lila M. Stormer**

For the last decade, performances have been in a handsome, purpose-built 250-seat outdoor theater. This year’s June 23-Aug. 7 season offers Romeo and Juliet, The Winter’s Tale and The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged), a comic romp through 37 plays in 97 minutes. Bloomington-Normal is heaven for those who love luxury B&Bs, antiquing and Victorian architecture. Tickets: http://www.thesifestival.org, $27-$57

**First Folio Theatre, Oakbrook—The summer offering for 2011 is Romeo and Juliet, July 6-Aug. 7, directed by Nick Sandys (who would have played Romeo just a couple years ago). He’s also an esteemed fight director so the swordplay should dazzle. First Folio is in the bucolic setting of the Peabody Estate, Mayslake Forest Preserve, with beautiful gardens and even a charming little chapel. Bring your own blanket or folding chair (or rent one), come early to pick-nic and relax. The official prohibition of alcohol is not too strictly enforced. Tickets: http://www.firstfolio.org, $29-$35

**Oak Park Festival Theatre, Oak Park—Something has happened to the fireflies—there aren’t nearly as many as there used to be—into woody Austin Gardens in the Oak Park Historic District. Instead, you can watch the many rabbits cavort as the sun goes down and the stage lights come up between two mighty oak trees. For its 37th season, June 9-Aug. 20, the Oak Park Festival offers The History of Henry IV (Shakespeare’s Parts 1 and II combined) and Henry V. There are bleacher seats, or bring your own blanket and/or chair. Austin Gardens is an easy drive, off the easy street parking, and also just a short walk from the Blue Line terminus at Harlem. Tickets: http://www.oakparkfestival.org, $25.

**Theater on the Lake, Chicago—The red brick pavilion on the lakefront at the foot of Fullerton has played host to summer theater since 1942. For some years now, it’s offered a summer showcase of Off-Loop productions from the regular season and this year is no different. Theater on the Lake will present one-week runs of eight shows, June 15-Aug. 7, among them hits from The Obie, Infinamous Commonwealth, Eclipse and Collaboration ranging from Ibsen’s A Doll’s House to Big River and the songs of Harold Arlen. Although your head is covered, the walls are open to the elements and the chill off-the-lake breeze does sometimes blow, so we’ve included this venue in our outdoor category. Tickets: http://www.chicagolanddistrict.com, $17.50. As with all outdoor venues, especially those beyond the city limits, bring a sweatshirt or jackets against the chill night air, and bring insect repellent. Mosquitoes like summer theater, too, and they like summer theater audiences even more! Summer theater stars by JONATHAN ABARBARAN

**Summer Theater Roundup**

**Summer: Theater sex and violence in 2011**

BY MARY SHEIN BARDNIGE

You’d never know to look outside now, but we’re right on the brink of summer. “Summer”—you remember. Not switching on the porch light until after 8 p.m. There are soft breezes by the lake instead of Captain Ahab-strengthening gales. You can have canned beer that doesn’t freeze your fingers, and picnics with sparkling chilled wine.

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**Romeo and Juliet. Photo by David Rice**
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Heartbreak House
By George Bernard Shaw
Directed by William Brown
Now playing at 3655 N. Clark St., Chicago
“UNQUESTIONABLY BRILLIANT.” — CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
“BE AMAZED AND AMUSED.”
“VISUALLY GORGEOUS AND EXQUISITELY ARTICULATE PRODUCTION.”
—BROADWAY WORLD

Theater Review
Hickorydickory
Playwright: Marisa Wegrzyn
At: Chicago Dramatists, 1105 W. Chicago
Tickets: http://www.chicagodramatists.org;
$32
Runs through: June 12

BY JONATHAN AABARBAEL

Marisa Wegrzyn’s premise is that embedded within each of us is a “mortal clock,” literally a pocket watch on a chain, pre-set for the final moment of our life. Most people remain unaware of it, but a few gain knowledge of their mortal clock and undergo painful extraction operations to gain advance knowledge of when they will die, or attempt to alter the time mechanism. Should a mortal clock stop too soon, an individual doesn’t die but instead is frozen at his/her age at that moment, retaining the knowledge this conceit could be a springboard for metaphysical science-fiction this concept could be a springboard for the pursuit of immortality and the control of this world of metaphysical science-fiction

In the world of metaphysical science-fiction, Wegrzyn does explore the latter, but refuses to explore the former, which is odd and brave of her because it’s the obvious avenue. The theme of Hickorydickory, however, isn’t length of life but quality of life as measured by love given and received. Not unlike Harry Potter (to which Wegrzyn includes a shout-out), love is a secret weapon. Those who tamper with mortal clocks do so not to extend their own lives, but to extend the lives of those they love. Of course, every action has a reaction so Hickorydickory is both optimistic and cautionary.

This world-premiere production is in three acts and runs two hours and 40 minutes, which is somewhat longer than it needs to be. Other than that, there’s no fault to be found with how director Russ Tutterow and his amiable five-person cast have brought it to life with humor and compassion. Simon Lashford’s storefront scenic design, brimming with clocks and tools, is a thing of beauty, and Barry Bennett’s music and sound-scape add an important element.

Still, I wanted this work to soar more than it does; I wanted to be swept up in it, and I wasn’t. It took me a few minutes to figure out why (or why not): It’s the fact that Wegrzyn tells her story within a mundane context of kindly nor insignificant jobholders. This jubilantly amusingly recounted and recreated by performer/author Mary Fons, all the while she asserts that she should be the famed gay icon’s daughter. SCM

Soul Samurai. Infusion Theatre Company at Theater Wit, through June 5. In Studs Terkel’s America, there are neither insignificant jobs nor insignificant jobholders. This jubilantly proletarian musical revue is how grateful we oughta be for that. MSB

SUMMER from page 19

atte Company at Heartland Studio Theatre, now-June 4: Ronnie Larsen’s comic drama is based upon the 1995 Jenny Jones Show shooting tragedy about a gay man who revealed his secret crush on a straight man. http://luchechristians.com

TROGG! A Musical, Hell in a Handbag Productions at Chopin Theatre, now-July 3: A new drag musical by David Cerda, Cheryl Snodgrass and Taylor E. Ross spoofs Joan Crawford’s final film about a living prehistoric caveman who is discovered in 1960s California. 800-838-3006

Gee, UK! Pride Films and Plays at Theater Wit, June 1-19: A series of one-night-only readings features gay British plays like My Night with Reg, Maurice, Blowing Whistles, Pig and The Pride. 773-506-8150

Lips Together, Teeth Apart, Remariable Productions at Viaduct Theatre, June 2-July 2: Terrence McNally’s 1990’s comic drama about two heterosexual couples who vacation in a Fire Island beach house after a relative has died from AIDS. 773-296-6024.

Vincent River, Theatre Y at Lacuna Artist Lofts, June 7-Aug. 27: Philip Ridley’s drama is about a mysterious young man who confronts a mother grappling with the death of her gay son. http://theaterry-y.com

The Homosexuals, About Face Theatre at 325 Tudor Court, Glencoe, Thursday–Sunday through June 19, 2011


CRITICS’ PICKS

Passing Strange. Balliwick Chicago at Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, through May 29. JC Brooks and The Uptown Sound really rock it out in this funny and touching coming-of-age story of an African-American artist who leaves the conformity of suburban Los Angeles to find inspiration in Amsterdam and Berlin. SCM

Performing Tonight: Liza Minnelli’s Daughter, The Neo-Futurists, through June 4. The life, career and other odd trivia surrounding Liza Minnelli gets obliviously and amusingly recounted and recreated by former/author Mary Fons, all the while she asserts that she should be the famed gay icon’s daughter. SCM

—By Aabarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

WINDY CITY TIMES
THEATER REVIEW
The Gospel According to James
Playwright: Charles Smith
At: Victory Gardens Theatre
at the Biograph, 2433 N. Lincoln
Phone: 773-871-3000; $20-$50
Runs through: June 12

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE
One day in 1930, in the Indiana town of Marion, a white man was shot and killed, three Black men were arrested, two were hanged by an angry mob, one was spared and a white woman was somehow involved. Of these facts we are sure—or are we? No sooner do we become acquainted with one version of the events than it is contradicted by another, introducing a Rashomon-styled dialectic of conflicting reports.

Memory is a slippery creature. Studies have shown that individuals viewing the same event may come away with widely differing descriptions and that gullible citizens can be likewise psychologically manipulated into fabricating fictional occurrences. Human beings may may deliberately erase from their consciousness what is too painful to bear, or flat-out lie, for reasons noble or ignoble. Add in other factors—passage of years, rewards to be reaped, arguments over whether some things ought to be remembered—and it’s hard to know just what to believe.

A lynching is a sight so terrifying to behold that writers habitually restrict themselves to painting us a single shocking picture of the grisly scene before quickly turning to related (and safely distant) topics—aggravating incidents, grieving families, bystander response, etc. However, playwright Charles Smith doesn’t provide us with a tidy concluding statement to assure us that Truth Will Out and Justice Triumph. Indeed, the final testimony in his play is that of a character whose contribution to the brutality is speculative, lacking a deathbed confession. Instead, the initial exchange of flashbacks gradually gives way to an atmosphere of operatic emotion, climaxed by an account of the fatal execution in all its rural-gothic horror—a progression meant, presumably, to render us so viscerally stunned as to be indifferent, if not oblivious, to the absence of a resolution to the nebulous questions raised.

Under Chuck Smith’s expert direction, guest artist André De Shields delivers a Hoosier tornado of a performance, orating and sparring with Linda Kimbrough as his flinty (but always secondary) antagonist, while a bevy of capable young supporting players—in particular, the mighty-voiced Christopher Jon Martin and the quietly stoic Diane Kondrat, as a pair of concerned parents—skillfully anticipate the atrocity to come. So go ahead and leave your intellect in the cloak room at intermission, if you like, but don’t forget to bring your hankies with you.
Ten years have passed since Stevie Nicks released her last solo album, but she’s still the same gay-loving goddess of earthy rock she built her legend on. The new release, In Your Dreams, is exactly how the gypsy queen left us—with that uniform sense of mystical otherworldliness that’s made Nicks a go-her-own-way virtuoso since her days with Fleetwood Mac. White horses, vampire tales and ethereal love parables all seep into this set, Nicks’s first all-new studio project after reuniting with Fleetwood Mac for 2003’s Say You Will.

“WCT: Why did it take so long to release another solo album?”
SN: “Well, I just think it’s very fun to see. When I was wearing my beautiful white Morgane Le Fay dress and my black velvet jacket, that dress just took off. I noticed how popular that dress was from the impersonators. [Laughs] I was laughing, and Morgane Le Fay was just tickled pink. So every time I’d do a little change, like in the “Secret Love” video with the long floor-length, we’re laughing—Lori and Sharon and I are laughing going, ‘We’re single-handedly going to bring the ball gown.’”

“VCT: Drag queens will be all about that, you know.”
SN: “Yeah—I love it!”

WCT: “Glee recently dedicated an entire episode to Fleetwood Mac’s Rumours album. How do you feel about having your work on a show that’s been so controversial regarding using other artists’ songs?”
SN: “You know, I went on there when they were doing ‘Landslide’ and I stayed there for six hours and watched them film the whole thing. I watched Gwyneth [Paltrow] and Brittany [Heath] Morris and Santana [Naya Rivera] sing the song 50 times, and I had such a good time. What I was very touched by was that Lea Michele, who plays Rachel, said to me, ‘You know, in all the big songs that we’ve done, which is many, nobody’s ever called us or come down or even written a note thanking us for doing ‘Jessie’s Girl’ or a Journey song.’ They do such great versions of all these songs; the original writers cannot fault them. They’re magnificent—every one of them. And she goes, ‘Nobody except you has ever come down and told us that they thought we were doing a good job.’ And I thought that was so sad. Very, very disrespectful.”

WCT: “As someone whose music has spanned many generations, how does it feel working with a new generation of performers—like the Glee cast or, for instance, Taylor Swift at the Grammys?”
SN: “Yes, I love that. A lot of the songs they love are songs that I wrote when I was really young. ‘Landslide’ was written in 1973; I was 27. I may sing it now at 62, but I was 27 when I wrote that song. It’s not like they love a song that was written by a 60-year-old woman. They love a song that was written by a 27-year-old girl. So I’m thrilled, and I don’t write any differently now than I did when I was 27. I just go to the piano—inspired by something that happens to me—with a cup of tea, incense burning and the fire in the fireplace.”

WCT: “Was your muse for ‘Moonlight (A Vampire’s Dream),’ which was Twilight-Inspired, Taylor Lautner’s abs?”
SN: “No. It’s nothing about him at all. The first and third verse were written about me and Lindsey [Buckingham, of Fleetwood Mac] in 1976; the second verse and the chorus were written about Bella and Edward. It really is an amazing blend—an ancient story blending Lindsey, Stevie, Bella and Edward, and everything in between. It’s my favorite. And, by the way, I have listened to ‘Secret Love’ and ‘A Vampire’s Dream’ for the last two and a half months and I’ve lost 12 and a half pounds just from treadmilling to ‘Secret Love’ and ‘A Vampire’s Dream.’”

WCT: “No way. You treadmill to your own music?”
SN: “Yeah! And I have never gotten tired of either of those songs. I’ve just been listening to those two songs for two and a half solid months, and I am thinner than I’ve been since 1989. I really attribute it all to those two songs.”

[End of article]
The Topp Twins; film notes

As I noted when the delightful documentary The Topp Twins: Untouchable Girls played at Chicago's Reeling Film Festival last fall, it wouldn't fall hard for a movie that documents the extraordinary life of former farm girls turned country-western-folk superstars Down Under who just happen to be twins—and lesbian, to boot! Le- anne Pooley's entertaining movie is the increasingly rare queer-themed movie that's actually getting more than a one-week engagement in Chicago (continuing its theatrical run through May 31 at Facets). Rarer still, the Topps are performers who—with equal parts talent, verve and wit—have broken a sweat.

Since they happen to be twins—and lesbian, to boot? Leanne Pooley's entertaining movie is the increasingly rare queer-themed movie that's actually getting more than a one-week engagement in Chicago (continuing its theatrical run through May 31 at Facets). Rarer still, the Topps are performers who—with equal parts talent, verve and wit—have broken a sweat.

Marcus Patrick in Violet Tendencies.

The Topps Twin.

witty timing—have broken down cultural barriers left and right in their homeland without apparently breaking a sweat.

Now it's been 25 years. Jools and Lynda Topp, who hail from New Zealand, started out on a dairy farm performing their infectious "little bit of country, little bit of rock-n-roll" tunes in the hinterlands, eventually working their way toward the bright environs of Sydney and beyond. Along the way the duo created a batch of comedic characters that became sure-fire crowd-pleasers left and right in their homeland without apparently breaking a sweat.

The documentary had its premiere Feb. 25 before a sold-out audience at the Gene Siskel Film Center. Director Morten's team followed five Black youths for two years to "get a glimpse of their lives, their struggles, and their dreams." The youths come from diverse backgrounds, including one teen boy raised by two gay dads and one genderqueer young woman who is struggling to understand her parents' lack of acceptance.


"Woke Up Black" screening at ICE Theater June 8

Filmmaker/activist Mary Morten's new independent documentary, Woke Up Black, will have a screening Wed., June 8, at 7 p.m. at ICE Theater 14, 210 W. 87th.

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Lesbian wins ‘Amazing Race’

BY ROSS FORMAN

LaKisha Hoffman was born in Rosewood Community Hospital, grew up on the city’s South Side and became a basketball standout at Seton Academy in suburban South Holland.

Now 31 and living in New York, Hoffman still calls Chicago home and has plenty of fond memories of the Windy City—other than the fact it is quite windy.

“I want to come back [to Chicago] so bad, but the weather … that wind, the snow, the winter,” she said. “The things that I remember the most of Chicago are, holidays [and events] … things like the Taste of Chicago, the fireworks on the Fourth of July, BBQs over Memorial Day weekend.

“I also remember walking along Lake Shore Drive, field trips to the [Willis] Tower, and more. I definitely consider Chicago home.

Hoffman averaged 16.2 points and 12.1 rebounds per game as a high school senior, and has been honored for her basketball skills by the Chicago Tribune, among others. She was a three-time all-conference player and two-time team MVP. She led Seton Academy to the Class A Elite Eight in the annual state tournament.

“I loved my high school experience,” Hoffman said. “My most memorable [high school] experience was going downtown during my senior year [for the state basketball playoffs].

She then took her gym shoes to Western Illinois University and then to the University of Louisville.

“Louisville was a great experience,” Hoffman said.

Hoffman, who is now a teacher and coach, also is a millionaire—or at least part of a million-dollar team.

Sisters LaKisha and Jennifer Hoffman were crowned champions of The Amazing Race: Unfinished Business on May 8, as the returning 14th-season Racers highlighted the special two-episode finale broadcast of the CBS reality competition’s all-stars edition. The Hoffman sisters were the first team to cross the finish line in Miami in the 18th season of The Amazing Race.

They won the $1 million grand prize.


“I’m still taking everything in, I’m still in shock that we won,” said LaKisha, a lesbian. “It hasn’t hit me yet, not even close. And I don’t know when it will, so I’m just going about my everyday life, with school, coaching, etc.

“When we finally got our checks, I didn’t cash it for days, and everyone was wondering what I was waiting for.

“My sister and I definitely feel like we can accomplish anything that set out to do, but we know that this would be a huge feat. Sure, we had the confidence that we could win, but actually winning is still amazing. It’s still very, very surreal.”

Hoffman, now working on her master’s degree in social work, said she will use part of her winnings to pay off school bills. They also plan to buy a home for their mom, and LaKisha added that she will invest some, too.

“We have always been very, very close. We’ve accomplished a lot of things apart, but this is the first thing that we accomplished together, as sisters, so it’s a great feeling,” LaKisha said.

“We got along this Race. The first time [on the show], we struggled in the beginning. This time, we had one blow up; that’s it.”

LaKisha, who is four years older than Jennifer, said the show looks a lot easier on TV than it is in reality. Plus, the show doesn’t always capture their moments of physical and mental exhaustion—or the time when they had not showered in four days.

“The Race is draining,” she said. “It’s a great experience, but you definitely have to be mentally, physically and emotionally capable of handling the challenges that the Race gives you.

She said her favorite stop on the Race was Australia. “It’s absolutely beautiful; the weather was perfect; the people were very nice. I definitely want to go back and visit,” Hoffman said.

Her least favorite stop was China, if only because it’s the hardest place to navigate in because of the language barrier, she said.

LaKisha’s sexual orientation was never mentioned on the show.

“I already know that. Is that all?” LaKisha’s nerves were quickly calmed.

“That was an easy coming-out,” LaKisha said. Then she told a friend, who admitted she, too, was lesbian. Then there was her mom, which was a different story.

“She definitely is opposed to my sexuality,” Hoffman said, who noted that their relationship has grown and improved since she told her mom.

“I think she recognizes that my sexuality is just a small part of who I am. She still loves and accepts me as her daughter, despite her religious views [on homosexuality].”

The rest of her family is totally fine with her sexual orientation, she said. So, are you single?

Hoffman laughed.

“Yes, she is, but, Hoffman added, “Someone is close to my heart right now.”
Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams stakes claim to Chicago

BY LISA KLEIN

"Furnishing your home is a big deal," said Mitch-
ell Gold, chairman and co-founder of the life-
style home furnishings brand Mitchell Gold +
Bob Williams.

Chicagoans will now have another option as
the company opens its first Signature Store in Il-
linois in Lincoln Park this summer. (Some items
are currently available in Chicago at Bloom-
ingdale’s, Jayson Home and Garden and Michael-
ian & Kohlberg.)

The 10,000-plus-square-foot, two-story busi-
ness will be across the street from the new Apple
store. Gold said it’s a perfect location, as Mitch-
ell Gold + Bob Williams shares a similar customer
base with the technology brand that’s "into de-
sign and performance."

The store will offer couches, chairs, dining
sets, storage units like dressers and entertain-
ment centers, rugs, lighting, pillows, mirrors,
wall art and more. They’ll also feature fine-art
photography by Tipper Gore (the two got a look
at her work while designing the interior of her
and Ali’s home).

"Everything in our store is organized to give
customers a good shopping experience," said
Gold. Furniture will be set up in room vignettes
across limestone tiled floor, ceiling-to-floor
windows giving an open feel and adding natural
light.

Coffee and other beverages will be served and
the music will be changed at different times of
day to set the right mood. The store will also be
dog-friendly. Gold said he and Williams are all
about making people comfortable and ensuring
that they won’t feel "rushed or harried."

Gold and Williams describe their furniture as
"soft and modern." They take inspiration from
a range of places. "It could be a flea market in
Hickory (N.C.), a vacation in St. Barts or a safari
in Africa," said Gold. Designs are traditional yet
"distinctly modern," drawing from styles from the
1950s through the ‘80s.

"Bob and I want things that are really going
to be around for a long time," said Gold, adding
that they only design furniture that they’d want
in their own homes.

Customers can choose from several in-stock
fabric options for upholstered items, or custom-
design their own looks with 350 fabrics and 50
leathers. They can also bring in their own mate-
rial to use.

Gold and Williams have published two home
decorating books, Let’s Get Comfortable in 2007
and The Comfortable Home in 2009, both filled
with tips, tricks and ideas they’ve put together
through the years.

Gold started the company in 1989 with Wil-
liams, who was president of design and his
partner. Headquartered in Taylorsville, N.C., the
company has grown to almost 600 employees
with retail stores across the country and in Puer-
to Rico, Mexico and Canada.

Their furniture has been featured in numerous
home decorating magazines, is used in several
hotels, such as the W, and won design awards.

Gold saw an article about the furniture in-
dustry being one of the worst environmental
offenders when starting up the company, and
"we decided we were going to do things in an
environmentally responsible way."

They found a foam manufacturer that produces
no CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons, organic com-
pounds that deplete the ozone layer); use wood
from trees that grow back quickly; and make sure
their factory is eco-friendly. Gold now serves on
the board of the Sustainable Furnishings Coun-
cil, helping to monitor other furniture produc-
ers.

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams is committed to
equality in the workplace and has a 100 percent
rating with the Human Rights Campaign. They
try to get involved in every community where
their stores are, and hold a lot of non-profit
events, especially for the LGBT community.

"LGBT consumers really have to consider what
stores they’re supporting," said Gold. He added
that many large retailers support political candi-
dates that push anti-LGBT legislation.

Gold also edited the book Crisis, published in
2008, a collection of 40 stories about growing
up gay in the U.S., including those of Williams
and himself.

Gold and Williams think that their store will be
a great fit for Chicago, noting the mix of clas-
sic and modern in the architecture that matches
their aesthetic. "Chicago is a city of great taste,"
Gold said.

The Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Signature
store will be located at 1555 N. Halsted. The
planned opening is for mid-August and a grand
opening charity benefit will be held in Septem-
ber.
Highlights of the 2011 New York International Auto Show

By JOE TRALONGO, GAYWHEELS.COM

This year at the New York International Auto Show (held April 22-May 1 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center) the theme we repeatedly heard more than any other was fuel economy—or, to be more precise, 40 mpg fuel economy. Auto makers, both foreign and domestic, rolled out a number of high-mileage cars that promise to help us all fight the pain of four- and five-dollar-a-gallon gasoline. However, there was also excitement in New York with sporty concepts and luxurious land yachts peppering the Javits Center halls.

—2012 Subaru Impreza: A reworked Subaru Impreza Sedan and Hatchback receive more angular sheetmetal, a much needed interior upgrade including more front and rear-seat legroom, and a new 2.0-liter boxer engine teamed to either manual or CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) automatic transmission. That last bit of information is crucial to the Impreza’s story, as Subaru is promising cars equipped with the CVT will see 36 miles-per-gallon, making the 2012 Impreza the most fuel-efficient all-wheel-drive car in America.

—2012 Volkswagen Beetle: The new 2012 Beetle is set to hit VW showrooms this fall, and what a splash it will make! While still recognizable as the iconic VW coupe, the 2012 VW Beetle is a bit longer and less rounded than the last model; it’s also much more athletic and muscular. Beetle fans can choose between three engines: a 2.5-liter normally aspirated engine, a 2.0-liter turbodiesel engine, or a 2.0-liter turbocharged engine (the same found in the sporty GTI.) Both manual and automatic transmissions, including VW’s DSG dual-clutch automatic, will be available. Pricing has not yet been announced, but rumor has it that the 2012 Beetle will start under $20,000.

—2012 Audi A7 Sportback: Joining the small but steady proliferation of what are being dubbed “four-door coupes,” the A7 also incorporates the best attributes of a wagon as well. Surprised guest Stephen Colbert appeared on stage, partially to help launch the new car and partially to announce his collaboration with Audi in the Charleston Bermuda sailing race. All jokes aside, the A7 is a stunning car with a fastback like rear end that, though not quite as obvious as the BMW 6GT’s rear, is certainly more handsome than the Porsche Panamera. Models will include gasoline and diesel engines, as well as Audi’s famed quattro all-wheel drive.

—2013 Ford Taurus: Ford continues to make small but significant improvements to its biggest sedan, proving that the company is no longer content to sit by and watch foreign competitors overtake its newest models. In addition to its panel includes cool grooved bars that mimic the flamboyant old dashes from the 50s and 60s, as well as more interior room and a stunning attention to detail. We flat out love this interior. The biggest news, however, is the addition of the Malibu Eco, which uses GM’s Assist electric motor generator to assist the gasoline engine, returning an estimated 26 mpg city and 38 mpg highway.

—2012 Hyundai Accent: Hyundai has been on a tear lately, and the new Accent is proof the Korean car company is showing no signs of slowing down. The lightweight Accent looks great, comes loaded with features, yet will probably barely reach the $17,000 mark with all the bells and whistles. Better yet, Hyundai is promising 40 mpg highway when either the manual or automatic transmission is paired with the 1.8-liter turbodiesel engine. Figures like these also mean the Accent bests the Honda Fit, Ford Fiesta and Mazda Mazdas2 in both horse-power and fuel economy.

—2012 Honda Civic: The previous Civic ran for five years with only minor changes and still looks as fresh and modern as the day it was launched. Not wanting to tempt fate, the all-new 2012 Honda Civic doesn’t venture too far from the successful formula that helped make the last Civic a perennial best seller. While the basic size and shape are familiar, the exterior is now a bit more vivid, with added dimensional sculpting on the hood, trunk and sides. There are a total of seven Civic models, including the sporty Si, Eco-friendly Hybrid and the luxurious EX; this year also marks the return of the fuel-efficient HTR trim. Our own Nick Kurczewski will have a full write up on the new Civic soon, so check back for his in-depth review.

—2012 Chrysler 300 SRT8: Hot on the heels of the new 300 sedan comes its sinister alter ego, the SRT8. Still smooth and stylish, the Chrysler 300 SRT8’s massive HEMI V8 engine, which is good for 465 horsepower, can rocket this big sedan from 0-60 mph in the four second range. Talk about your ticket magnet! Also making their debuts were two new 300 trims: The S trim is endowed with a more urban, youthful appeal, while the C Executive line is designed to be the most luxurious 300 model ever.

Favorite concepts
Concept cars are only dreams formed in metal and plastic (and sometimes clay). But, dreams do come true, which is why we have our fingers crossed for these two concept beauties:

—Scion FR-S: This car finally delivers on Scion’s promise of a youthful, aggressive and fun-to-drive coupe that anyone can afford. The FR-S features a 2.0-liter boxer engine, rear-wheel drive and a lightweight body with a nearly 50/50 front to rear weight distribution. However, it’s the styling that really gets us. WOW.

—Mercedes-Benz Concept A-Class: Fun, smart and small are not adjectives normally attributed to Mercedes-Benz cars, but this little concept could very well change all that. If MB does it right (and prices it right), the A-Class Concept could be the car that finally pulls in the super cool, super young buyers that have long alluded the German luxury car giant. Read more about autos at http://www.Gaywheels.com.

1st Prize $1500
Full contest details: TheQuestForBrian.com

The Quest For Brian
A novel by Jeff Graubart

“...must be read, especially by those of us who lived through and experienced some of it and by the younger generations who must get a sense of our history and who we are...I cannot recommend this highly enough and must say that even with its tremendous length; I did not want it to end.”

Amos Lassen - Library Pride, ReviewsByAmosLassen.com

2011 Essay Contest on Jeff Graubart’s shocking memoir about gay activism in 1970s Chicago and Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

May 25, 2011

WINDY CITY TIMES
WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP PRESENTS

9th Annual

WINDY CITY
GAY IDOL

CHICAGO'S BIGGEST GLBT CONTEST!

THE SEMI-FINALS @ Sidetrack
3349 N. Halsted

Get ready for the Final 20
as they compete to see which 12
will advance to the finals!

SAT. JUNE 4
Doors open at 2, show begins at 3
$10 cover

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$1000 Cash, Trip to Vancouver, theatre/concert tickets & more!
Audience prize: TRIP FOR TWO to Vancouver.
Enter to Win at Semi-finals and Finals!

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For more, visit windycitymediagroup.com or e-mail cynthia@windycitymediagroup.com

Windy City Media Group includes Windy City Times, Nightspots and WindyCityQueercast.com

sponsored by
JUNE (various dates) - ART EXHIBIT - to celebrate L/G Pride at the Urban Art Retreat (Lil Longley, 1957), 5 S. Spaulding. Opening reception: June 4 (7-4 p.m.). Other related events throughout the month.

“Under a New Moon” (various dates) - WINDY CITY GAY IDOL SEMI-FINALS - 9 p.m. on WTTW11 HD (11.1). Repeated on June 18, 7 p.m. on WTTW11 HD (11.1). Features stories told by LGBTs about their lives, hopes, struggles and contributions towards advancements in equality for the LGBT community.

JUNE (various dates) - WOMEN’S EVENTS - “What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?” identifying your true career direction. Repeated on June 18, 7 p.m. on WTTW11 HD (11.1). No charge, but advanced registration required. For location and information: 312-494-0022.


JUNE 19 - JUNE 22 - WINDY CITY TIMES - “Pride On the Water” by Chicago History Museum (CHM), 161 N. Clark. 10-11:30 a.m. $15 ($10 CHM members). Repeated on July 9, 8 and August 6. This area was settled in the 1850s and is one of the youngest hate-crime victims in modern history who was murdered on June 17, 1982. It explores the ancient Native American two-spirit tradition presented on WTTW11 HD (11.1). Repeated on June 18, 7 p.m. on WTTW11 Prime (11.2). www.pbs.org/independent Leben/spirit or www.wttw.org.

JUNE 21 - JUNE 29 - CHICAGO 2011 - “Road Trip” - "Out in Chicago" is a city guide to the newly opened Chicago History Museum exhibit, "Out in Chicago," with TCAW event proceeds going to the Families United Project. Tickets: Community guests $50; Couples $75 (suggested donation), but no couple will be turned away from the exhibit. www.tcaw.org.

JUNE 23 - JUNE 26 - WINDY CITY TIMES - “Pride On the Water” by Chicago History Museum (CHM), 161 N. Clark. 10-11:30 a.m. $15 ($10 CHM members). Repeated on July 9, 8 and August 6. This area was a suburb at the turn of the century and is where Wrigley Field was built in the early 1900s. In the late 1970s the area blossomed when LGBTs moved in. Explore the history and architecture of the country’s first officially recognized gay neighborhood.


JUNE 30 - JUNE 30 - ART EXHIBIT - "At Right Angles" by NewTown Writers at Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway. 7:30 p.m. Tickets: $12, online or cash. newtownwriters.org.

PRIDE MONTH CALENDAR
www.ChicagoPrideCalendar.org   •   PrideChgo@aol.com   •   773-348-8243

Visit ChicagoPrideCalendar.org for a full list of events.

Call phone number listed on each event to verify date, time and location. To view the entire PRIDECHICAGO Calendar and to enter an event, go to PRIDEChicago@aal.org.
**WINDY CITY TIMES**

May 25, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JUNE 22 - AWARDS CEREMONY</strong></td>
<td>“30 Under 30 Awards” by Windy City Media Group at Center on Halsted, 1865 N. Halsted, 5:30 p.m. The awards honor 30 outstanding young (under 30 years old) LGBT individuals (and allies); <a href="http://www.windycitymediagroup.com">www.windycitymediagroup.com</a>. 773-871-7610.</td>
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</table>
| **JUNE 22 - OPEN MIC NIGHT** | “All the Beloved” for Pride Month at 3338 N. Broadway, 7 p.m. Includes poetry, music, dancing, etc. www.broadwaychurchchicago.org. |}

**For travel to the parade and other pride events**

**ride the CTA/PACE/METRA.**

[www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) (1-888-YOUR CTA) or [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com) (1-312-322-6900)

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- **$25 daily dining credit**
- **A Pride Welcome Gift at check-in**

Offer is based on availability and valid for stays Thursday-Sunday until September 5, 2011. Some restrictions and additional conditions apply.

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**Windy City Black LGBT PRIDE**

- **JUNE 28 - GAY MEN’S BOOK DISCUSSION**
  - “Today’s Gays” (article) by Larry Kramer at Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville, 7:30 p.m. www.gerberhart.org. info@gerberhart.org. 773-381-8030.
- **JUNE 29 - SERVICE**
- **JUNE 29 - PLAY**
  - “Good Boys & True” by Kokandy Productions presents Towle Theater at 1229 W. Belmont, 8 p.m. Tickets: $22 (reservations suggested). (Repeat performances on June 30, July 1, 2, 6-9). www.goodboysandtrue.com. jcasey@towletheater.com. 773-975-8150.
- **JUNE 30 - WINDY CITY BLACK LGBT PRIDE**
  - Beginning this week there are dozens of events scheduled for the LGBT Black Pride celebration. www.windycityblackpride.org.
ARTISTS
CALL FOR ARTISTS: SKOKIE ART GUILD'S 50TH ANNUAL ART FAIR. July 9 & 10, 2011. Fine art, prints and awards. Held on the Village Green, 5211 W. Balston St., downtown Skokie, IL. Apply now. For applications or information: skgoheartguild.org or 847-877-8163. www.skgoheartguild.org (6/30/11-18)

ASTROLOGY

CLEANING SERVICES
CHESTNUT CLEANING SERVICES: We’re a house cleaning service for homes, small businesses and small buildings. We also have fabulous organizational skills (a separate function at a separate cost that utilizes your assistance) for what hasn’t been cleaned in many months or years due to long-term illness, depression, physical/mental challenges, for the elderly, if you have downsized and more. Deemed about going home to chaos? We can organize your chaos, straighten out your chaos, help you make sense of your chaos and finally clean what is no longer chaos. Can we help you? Bonded and Insured. Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575. www.ChestnutCleaning.com

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DECK RESTORATION. Restore your deck. We will clean and stain to get rid of that old dull grey. Protect your wood. 847-416-3422 (6/21-14)

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HOUSEMAN/HOUSEKEEPER. Professional Houseman needed. Couple in Chicago is seeking an experienced Houseman with long term interest to assist in the care of their modern home. Candidates should have experience in high and homes, be very hands on (willing to clean), and have excellent references. Technical savvy with SmartHomes and commercial systems is a plus. Schedule is days, Monday through Friday, 40 hours per week. Send resume to circunst@gmail.com. (6/25/11-2)

HOME IMPROVEMENT
BATHROOM REMODELING, HOME REPAIRS, PAINTING & MORE. Licensed-Bonded-Insured. One year warranty. Price by the job - not the hour. FREE estimates! Check us out on Angie's List. Andy OnCall, 773-244-9961. www.getandy.com (9/3-11-26)


INTERPRETER
FOR YOUR AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE/ENGLISH INTERPRETING NEEDS: To consult with you or your company with your ADA needs. Diana Thorpe CI/CT/NC Master, Nationally Certified Interpreter, 773-401-1339, or e-mail thorpe2001@aol.com (7/18)

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WE ARE AN EXPERT, FULL-SERVICE MOVING COMPANY with over a decade of excellence serving our community. We pride ourselves in offering top-quality, efficient, low-cost, damage-free moves. Small to large trucks, fully equipped with modern tools, supplies of the trade. Rates for guaranteed professional staff: 2-man crew $65/hr; 3-man crew $85/hr; 4-man crew $105/hr. (plus low, one-time travel charge.) Call 773-777-1110 or www.chicagocrescentmovers.com. (3/23/11-26)

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FOR SALE - HOMES

FOR SALE - OUT OF TOWN
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COUNTRY LIVING! Completely remodeled farmhouse on 3.6 acres in Foreston IL. Less than 2 hours from Chicago. This is the getaway you’ve been looking for! Doug ReMax of Rock Valley (815) 222-5806. (5/18-11/2)

FOR SALE - HOUSES
Residential Real Estate
773.398.4097
chadduda@gmail.com

FOR RENT - OFFICE/STUDIO/ RETAIL SPACE
Clark Sevigny Store Rent 8237 N Clark Edgewater
RENT SPECIAL, up to $5000 commission paid to PROCURING CAUSE. New completely remodeled space available, 12’ high deco tin ceilings exposed brick walls, 2/3 block north of the Raven Theater. Drive by and call Gus 847-267-1422 (6/1-11/4)

FOR RENT - ONE BEDROOM

FOR RENT - TWO BEDROOMS
NORTH PARK COMFY AP! Sunny, newly painted and clean 1000+sq ft 2 Bdm; second floor of 2-FLAT in quiet area; HROW Floors Throughout; eat-in kitchen and separate DR; large LR with built-ins, working WBFP; sunporch, free laundry, good closets, easy parking, fenced yard; pet friendly (w/fee), no smoking. Near NISU. Available May 1, 5975/eo + security. References/credit check. To view call 773-573-9252 between 10 am-6 pm. (5/18-11/4)

FOR RENT - THREE+ BEDROOMS
BEAUTIFUL, BRIGHT AND SPACIOUS 3 Bedroom 2nd floor apt. in desirable FOREST GLEN/SAUGANASH area. Large kitchen, LR, and DR, C/A and great yard. Across from Metra and a walk from blue line. Blocks from 90/94 and easy access to 294. NON SMOKING. Available immediatly. Call 773-617-2025 $1,500 per month all utilities included. (5/18-11/4)

FOREST PARK & RMS/2BA $1600. 3br/2ba in 2flat with 2car garage, use of basement, family room, deck, decorative fireplace. New kitchen, tile baths. Hardwood floor in 2nd & 1st. Call Joyce 708-218-0846/ jpronel@netscape.net (5/18-11/1)

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BELLAMINA FACELIFT MASSAGE. Creating Beauty with Healing Hands. Marilyn Fumagalli, CMT, Bellamina Specialist. Located in Andersonville’s historic Calo Theater Building. Mention this listing for $5 off your first appointment. (773) 965-0972 (7/2-11/26-45)

GARAGE SALE
EDGEWATER NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE SALE 17th Annual Edgewater Neighborhood Garage Sale. Nearly 150 sellers! Located in the Edgewater neighborhood bounded by Broadway (1300W) to Clark (1500W) and Ridge (1600N) to Devon (4400N). Maps will be available with sellers’ locations. Don’t miss our yearly event!! SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 9AM – 6PM. (6/21-11/2)

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THE CONDOMINIUM EXPERTS
• Large crews • One Day Cleaning • One Day Sealing • On Time
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SPRITUALITY
Let’s hear it for the boys! A talented trio of testosterone—Michael, Adrian and Mejia—took the final three slots May 23 at Roscoe’s, 3356 N. Roscoe, 3356 N. Roscoe. Send resume to clrdunst@gmail.com. (8/3/11-4)

WINDY CITY TIMES
May 25, 2011
CLASSIFIEDS
REAL ESTATE
Celebrations

Share your special moments with the community in Windy City Times’ new announcement section!

McRaith’s goodbye
State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz; Mike Bauer and partner Roger Gles; Personal PAC CEO Terry Cosgrove; former state Sen. Carol Rones; Chicago Department of Public Health’s Christopher Brown; AIDS Foundation of Chicago President/CEO David Ernesto Munar; and WGN-TV entertainment reporter Dean Richards were among those who attended the farewell party for Michael McRaith at the sports bar Roadhouse 66 May 21. McRaith, the openly gay director of the Illinois Department of Insurance, will lead the new Federal Insurance Office in Washington, D.C. McRaith—who said he was “honored and humbled” when he found out about the federal position—will work with Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn through the end of this legislative session, which ends in May; he starts with the Treasury Department in June. Photos by Hal Baim; many more online at http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com

Celebrations

Got something to celebrate? Send us information on your civil union, anniversary, adoption, marriage or any other joyous moment in life to appear in our new section, Please send an email to andrew@windycitymediagroup.com and let Windy City Times join in your celebration.

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LEATHER PATTERN

Thursday-Monday, May 26-30

International Mr. Leather (IML) 2011 will take place, with the main base of operations at the Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Wacker.

Photo from 2010 by Steve Starr

SUCH A T’S

Wed., May 25

Ts, 5025 N. Clark, marks its 10th anniversary.

Image from website

Chris Keliner Photography Opening Party

In celebration of IML weekend, Parker presents Chris Keliner Photography. Chris Keliner’s work has been shown locally and internationally. Come celebrate and support local art. 7 p.m., Parker on Clark, 6341 N. Clark, http://www.parkeronclark.com

IML Opening Ceremonies: Event includes the introductions of contestants and judges, doors open at 8 p.m., event begins presented by D 1 Jude in the Grand Ballroom; 8 p.m., Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker, http://www.iml.com/visitorguide/schedule.php

Exhibit opening of “A Room of Her Own” Be the first to see the premier Women’s Leather History Exhibit; 8:30 p.m., Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview Ave., http://www.lam.chicago/exhibit/schedule.php


RuPaul’s Drag Race Season 3 Finalist Carmen Carrera at Spin RuPaul’s Drag Race Season 3 Finalist Carmen Carrera, will be making her Chicago debut at Spin! There will be two shows, 11:00pm and 1:00am; 11p.m., Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont, http://spin-nightclub.com


Saturday, May 28

Belmont-Sheffield Music Festival 27th annual fest on Memorial Day Weekend, held in the shadows of the Belmont El stop on Sheffield between Belmont and Sheffiel, http://www.chicagoevents.com

Grabbys Award Show Join us at the Park West Theater for the 2011 Grabbys Award Show, where fans come first! See your favorite adult film stars in an evening that highlights the talent and performan- ces in the industry, 7:30 p.m., Park West Chicago, 3232 W. Armitage, http://www.milohq.com

Mr. Club Krave Contest/Thunder Concert Ticket giveaway Crowning the new Mr. Club Krave. If you would like to compete please send an e-mail to john@club krave2@yahoo.com for registration form and rules and regulations. Murray Benitez (Mr. Club Krave 2010) will be handing down the crown to the newly crowned Mr. Club Krave. It’s going to be a fierce competition, 10 p.m., Club Krave, 3132 S. Western, http://www.clubkrave.com

Blowoff Party Rock and electronic music powerhouse Richie Morel and Rob Moud host and DJ ZEKE BOWMAN, a musical smorgasbord featuring their myriad signature mix of indie rock, electro and house. $18.00, 21+ p.m., Metro Chicago, 3710 N. Clark, http://www.blowoff.us

Sunday, May 29

Cycleout: Bike the Drive Join lovely ladies from Sapphic Adventures to enjoy the skyline and the shimmering water of Lake Michigan as you cruise up and down the entire length of Lake Shore Drive; 7-9:30 p.m., Foster Street Beach House, 5208 N Lake Shore, http://www.sapphicadven- tures.com

Free BBQ/Jock Party Open at noon with go-go boys, games and more. $10 Miller Lite & Coors Lite drafts, free BBQ 4-7 p.m., 13 p.m., Spin Nightclub, 800 W. Belmont Ave, http://www.spin-nightclub.com

Chicago Queer Bangers Meet-Monthly queer writing group. Free writing, constructive feedback, and encouraging ongoing publication opportunities. 1 p.m., Gerber-Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville

Memorial Day BBQ: Starting the Sunday and Memorial Day weekend, Scoot will barbe- que every Sunday until Labor Day week- end. Brats, ribs, hotdogs, chicken and more. 1 p.m., Scoot’s, 1829 W. Belmont Ave. PFLAG Oak Park Family Potluck Parents, family and friends of lesbians and gays — is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgen- dered people and their family and friends. 5 p.m., Fox Center, 640 S. Oak Park, Oak Park., http://oakpark-pflag.blogspot.com

International Mr. Leather Contest Open at noon with go-go boys, games and more. $10 Miller Lite featuring American English; 5 p.m., Harris Theater for Mu- sic and Dance, 205 E Randolph

The War Party featuring Frankie Knuckles DJ Frankie Knuckles and David Har- les are gonna rock the house with the DJs Frankie Knuckles and David Har- les are gonna rock the house with the hottest party in Chicago, 9 p.m., Green Dolphin Street, 3200 N. Ashland, http://www.clubdist.com/net/the-war-party-featuring-frankie-knuckles-tickets-31474

Monday, May 30


Tuesday, May 31


Join the Impact Chicago planning meet- ing Join the Impact Chicago is a political- ly independent organization of Chicago- based grassroots activists fighting for full equality for LGBT people in all matters governed by civil law in all 50 states, 10 a.m., 600 S. Michigan, Columbia College - basement, http://jointheimpactchicago.com

Cee-Cee LaRouge’s Miss Gay Illinois USO–
“Tony must like boys, because he’s marrying this—this little, small girl with no tits and—that looks like a boy.”—Marc Cherry’s alleged quip to Nicolleto Sheridan at the wedding of Tony Park-er and Eva Longoria. Just a tantalizing glimpse of what will come out in N’ic’s lawsuit for wrong-ful termination from Desperate Housewives.

I am just famous enough. People often rec-ognize me at events. However, without hair and make-up, I can go to the grocery store virtually undetected (much like Faye Dunaway or the Col-lins sisters), but not undetected by that Dan Renzi isn’t recognized from his stint on The Real World in 1996. It’s taken me a while to realize that the impact this groundbreaking MTV show had on pop culture during its peak is stagger-ingly, Why, Dan’s almost like Snopki—but with less hair and make-up. This is all apropos of our recent venture into Fatburger on Miami Beach. Within minutes, Dan was accosted by a swarm of very young people who’d lost the toddlers during his RW stint. After talking to them (and was the inevitable letdown—Don Lemon. There are two types of people reading this column— people who don’t know who Don Lemon is, and people who thought Don Lemon was already out. For those who fall in between the cracks, Lemon is a dashing African-American anchor on CNN. I suppose I should say “congratulations”—in be-tween years.

Of course, we were all hoping the newscaster coming out would be Anderson Cooper. There are two types of people reading this column— people who already know Anderson Cooper is gay, and people who think Liberace just never met the right woman. (Honey, he was the right woman.) One of my favorite Cooper pics is him posing backstage with Scissor Sisters, arching his eyebrow whilst ogling Jake Shears’ crotch. Well, Andy, have I got a photo for you. Jake recently received some jockstraps from the company Nasty Pig and decided to take photos of himself posing as ... well, a nasty pig. He was so happy with the results, he told the company “I want my own jockstrap line”—which certainly wouldn’t be an unlikely career move for the for-mer go-go boy. While this isn’t the first glimpse we’ve had of his bursting package or bare ass, it won’t stop us from posting the pics on BillyMas-ters.com.

Weeks ago I told you about the Hollywood Bowl presentation of Hairspray that will take place Aug. 5-7. Back when I first announced this event, I said that Edna would likely be played by Bruce Vilanch. And that almost happened. Then La Cage aux Folles closed on Broadway. The connection? Now Harvey Fierstein is available— and he always wanted to do “Hairspray” in L.A. (When the national tour came to town, it was led by La Vilanch.) So in one of those exclusives you’ve come to expect from me, look for Harvey to reprise his Tony-winning portrayal of Edna Turnblad at the Hollywood Bowl. And in yet an-o ther scoop, I can tell you that Edna’s hubby, Wilbur, will be played by Drew Carey. At some point, I expect he’ll bellow, “Come on down!”

By the time this column hits the street, Celeb-rity Apprentice will be finished—much like the Donald’s political career. While we don’t know who won, it certainly wasn’t Star Jones. Once NeNe Leakes was gone, there was little reason to keep Star around. Yet the two have another tie—allegedly NeNe is “dating” Star’s ex, Al Reynolds. (I believe “dating” is a legal term for “giving each other facials.”) NeNe might wanna hold onto AI because he may be coming into some money. We’re told that when he and Star divorced, there was a clause prohibiting either from making “disparaging remarks” about the other, and violation of this term would result in a penalty fine of $50,000. Clearly, legal eagle Star added this clause so that AI couldn’t write a tell-all. Therefore, it’s even more delicious that she may be the one who violated the terms by talking about AI and NeNe to Wendy Williams. Star should know better—after all, she is a law-yer!

When celebs are asked to be called a Nasty Pig, it’s definitely time to end yet another col-umn. I know I said I’d be staying in L.A. for a couple of weeks, but with The Go-Go’s at Manda-lay Bay May 27 and Jeff Timmons with the Chip-pendales at the Rio All-Suites Resort, it would appear I’ll be celebrating Memorial Day in Las Vegas. While I’m tempting Lady Luck, you can keep up with the latest gossip from the one site that ain’t no gamble—www.BillyMasters.com. If you’ve got a question, I’ll try to squeeze it into a future column. Just drop a note to Billy@Bil-lyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before “Hairspray” features a spirited game of Plinko! So, until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
More sports figures out of the closet

BY ROSS FORMAN

Gay men and women have been coming out in the sports world at a record pace in 2011, leading some sports-minded people to think it’s like 1947—another year when something really big happened.

As of mid-May, 27 people with ties to sports (athletes, coaches, team executives, media members, etc.) have come out of the closet, more than in any year in the past.

No doubt more will come out in the second half of 2011, perhaps a high-profile name, too, not just high-profile professional athletes supporting gay equality.

“My prediction for 2015 is, we will look back at 2011 as the year gay equality in sports made its seismic shift. While we might not have our Jackie Robinson, 2011 will be our 1947,” said Cyd Zeigler, co-founder of the popular gay sports website Outsports.com.

Jackie Robinson broke major league baseball’s color barrier in 1947 and now, in death, is immortalized. Major League Baseball has held a Jackie Robinson Day in April every year since 2004 to commemorate and honor his life, not just his baseball career. Robinson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962 and his number 42 was retired throughout baseball.

In 1997, Major League Baseball retired Number 42 for all teams, thus, no future player could wear number 42 at the time.

Robert Irvin, a former Chicago Bulls basketball player who saw his number retired in 2004 to commemorate and honor his life, not just his baseball career. Irvin was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2004. His comments about professional sports being one of the last frontiers of acceptance for gays and lesbians is unfortunately accurate. Hopefully his revelation is another chink in the armor of homophobia.

Rick Welts, the president and CEO of the Phoenix Suns, revealed in an interview with The New York Times in May that he is gay. His high-profile coming-out attracted supportive calls and/or emails from Charles Barkley, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban and Arizona Cardinals President Michael Bidwill, among others. Welts told The Associated Press that, within 24 hours after the New York Times story hit, he had “a couple hundred” supportive emails, some from people he didn’t even know.

The day after Welts came out, former Villanova basketball player Will Sheridan, who graduated four years ago, revealed he is gay. Sheridan is only the second former Division I male basketball player to publicly come out as gay: John Amaechi was the first. Travon Free, who played at Long Beach State University, previously came out as bisexual.

Sheridan revealed to ESPN.com that he came out to his teammates and dated men while in college.

Sheridan was followed days later on the coming-out trail by Jared Max, a sports-talk host at ESPN 1050 in New York City. Max came out in the final minutes of his radio show May 19, talking about how the coming-out of Welts and Sheridan, along with the supportive words of Basketball Hall of Famer Charles Barkley, pushed him to come out. Ironically, his radio show is called Maxed Out.

“I’m taking this courageous jump into the unknown having no idea how I will be perceived,” Max said on air. The same day as Max’s announcement, the world learned Scott Norton also is gay. Norton is the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) Rookie of the Year, and he wrote on the PBA website that chose to come out because it’s “important to show people that being gay has nothing to do with one’s ability to do anything as a man, least of all compete at the highest level of sports.”

Many on the NBA Tour knew he was gay, Norton added.

“To me the impact of [Welts’] coming out is best measured by what he went through to get here,” Zeigler said. “Welts sacrificed personal happiness to stay in the closet for decades. He manoeuvered the death of a partner and managed to secure a 14-year relationship. He sacrificed his own integrity. When he decided to come out, he went through hoops and over countless emotional and mental hurdles. And after all of that, he decided that coming out was too important to himself and to young people. Given that, it seems to me this is a pretty big deal on a deep personal level to him and to a lot of people in the West.”

“Unfortunately people like Welts, who are successful businessmen with strong legacies and deep pockets, continue to convince themselves that they have to stay in the closet. But Welts’ coming out is a very big deal because we’re seeing, yet again, that they don’t have to [worry]. Welts didn’t have to endure years of silence and the loss of a relationship. He has the support of his league commissioner, his team owner, and the star player on his team. He could have done this years ago with the same result, and his coming out is powerfully shining light on the increased acceptance of gay people in sports.”

Zeigler said Sheridan’s coming-out also is an important step forward for race relations; Sheridan is Black. And the coming-out of CNN host Don Lemon, who is African-American, on the same day that Welts did also is high-profile, significant.

Chicago Bulls player uses anti-gay slur; reaction is swift

Chicago Bulls center Joakim Noah used an anti-gay slur during game three of the team’s Eastern Conference series with the Miami Heat, according to USA Today.

Noah used the same slur that Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant said last month— one that caused him to be hit with a $100,000 fine from the NBA.

The Bulls player was fined $50,000, according to the Chicago Tribune. The NBA office announced that Noah was fined for “using a derogatory and offensive term from the bench,” adding that Noah’s fines was less than Bryant’s because “Kobe’s fine included discipline for verbal abuse of a game official.”

After the game, Noah said he was sorry: “A fan said something, and I said something back. I apologized. I don’t know what’s going to happen. I got caught up, I didn’t mean any disrespect to anybody.”

“Why are we impressed by the NBA’s precedent-setting effort to eliminate gay slurs on the court,” said Joe Solomon, president of the Human Rights Campaign. “We are seeing a new conversation beginning in the world of sports, where a growing number of pro-athletes are publicly standing up for equality,” Kevin Boyer, GLAAD Chicago Leadership Council co-chair, stated before news of Noah’s fine hit that “The NBA and the Bulls must take action against Joakim Noah. Anti-gay slurs fuel intolerance and have no place in sports. The NBA has a responsibility to create a safe environment for fans, employees and players and, yes, even fans of opposing teams who heckle players. Noah’s non-apology, excusing his behavior by blaming “frustration,” shows that he doesn’t really understand that these kinds of slurs aren’t ever acceptable. Coming so close on the heels of the public incident with Kobe Bryant, the NBA needs to take swift action in speaking out against Noah’s remarks.”

Mark Sakalares, commissioner of the Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association’s (CMSA) men’s basketball league, released a statement saying: “Even our hometown heroes make mistakes that can be not only offensive but harmful. CMSA is also the proud home of the world’s largest gay basketball league, and we often gather to cheer for the Bulls—for our favorite NBA team.

Noah’s slur came a week after Phoenix Suns executive Rick Welts came out of the closet.
Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC

Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas. He is a longtime advocate for and member of the LGBT community, and is involved in several charitable groups, community associations, and professional organizations. Ray is a member of Clark Hill PLC, a full-service law firm consisting of a diverse team of attorneys and professionals committed to our clients and our communities.

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