Civil unions to start

BY JOSEPH ERBENTRAUT

Months following the hard-fought and emotional legislative battle that ultimately resulted in Illinois’ new civil-union law being signed into law by Gov. Pat Quinn earlier this year, many LGBT Illinoisans have been eying June 1, the day the law finally goes into effect, with a great deal of anticipation.

In the Chicago area, that anticipation will culminate in a number of events honoring the milestone that are expected to draw large crowds. On June 2, the first day in which couples filing for civil unions will be able to mark their unions with a ceremony, some 33 couples are slated to participate in the city’s official celebration of the law’s fruition at 10 a.m. in Millennium Park’s Wrigley Square.

Quinn, as well as the city’s newly inaugurated mayor, Rahm Emanuel, will also be on hand at the event, co-sponsored by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture, Lambda Legal, Equality Illinois and the Alliance of Illinois Judges. Timothy Evans, Circuit Court of Cook County chief judge, will lead the officiation of the civil-union ceremonies.

The Millennium Park event will be followed by another multiple-couple civil-union ceremony and celebration hosted by The Civil Rights Agenda (TCRA) Friday, June 3, at the Chicago History Museum. Tickets purchased for the event, which will include 40 couples at the organizers’ latest count, will benefit TCRA’s Families United Project.

Finally, celebrants in the suburbs will not be left out, as DreamGayWeddings.com will also host civil-union ceremonies beginning at the stroke of midnight at the aloft Hotel in Bolingbrook June 2. The organization will also be hosting representatives from the Will County Clerk’s office at a welcome party the night before, Turn to page 14

Leather regions

Honoring LGBT vets

Hundreds of leather enthusiasts and the just-plain-curious flooded Chicago’s Hyatt Regency for the 33rd International Mr. Leather and the Victory Party at the House of Blues. Pictured (L-R) are International Mr. Leather second runner-up Anthony Rollar, International Mr. Bootblack 2011 Jim Deuder and International Mr. Leather 2011 Eric Gutierrez. Photo by Dave Ouano

Jim Darby speaks at a Memorial Day tribute to LGBT veterans in Space Park. Find out more on page 9. Photo by Tracy Baim
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Leather or Not

May 25, 2011

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CIAO AND WHY

WCT talked with openly gay chef Cesar Pineda about his Pilsen eatery, Ciao Amore.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

PARENTAL ADVISORY

Dana Rudolph lists dos and don'ts when it comes to interacting with LGBT parents.

A MORE PERFECT UNION

Read Sugar and Spice’s roundup of the Union Sushi + Barbeque Bar.

THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT

This week’s entertainment round-up includes items on Calpernia Adams, Lindsay Lohan and Sir Ian McKellen.

SEEING THE LIGHT

Nunn on One talks separately with Neon Trees lead singer Tyler Glenn (above, second from left) and goth-rock icon Peter Murphy.

PR photo

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Showdown looming over Tennessee’s anti-gay law

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Gay legal activists are already working on a legal challenge to a new state law in Tennessee, signed into law May 23 by Republican Gov. Bill Haslam, which prevents local governments from requiring contractors to abide by local human-rights ordinances.

The legislation, entitled the “Equal Access to Intrastate Commerce Act,” was aimed at undermining a new Nashville metro area ordinance, passed a law requiring city contractors to sign non-discrimination contracts. Haslam signed the legislation into law May 23 by Republican Gov. Bill Haslam, who took office Jan. 15, pitched his proposal for the law as a pro-business effort, saying it relieved businesses of the necessity of navigating different non-discrimination regulations from city to city. The Family Action Council of Tennessee argued that it does not target LGBT people, and noted that the law does not affect the Nashville Metropolitan Government ordinance passed by the city’s Metro Council.

However, no attempt was made prior to passage of the Nashville ordinance to relieve businesses affected by a Nashville ordinance that prohibited contractors from discriminating based on age, race, sex or disability. Greg Nevin’s of Lambda Legal’s Atlanta office said lambda is not involved in mounting a legal challenge against the Tennessee law, but he called it “a terrible piece of legislation.”

The Human Rights Campaign said Haslam was trying to score “cheap political points” by giving a “green light” to anti-LGBT discrimination. HRC noted that a number of large corporations—including FedEx, AT&T, Comcast and the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce—opposed the new state law.

FedEx issued a statement May 20 saying it “values and promotes the unique contributions, perspectives, and differences” of all its employees and is “committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.”

State Rep. Glen Casada, a Republican from Williamson County, introduced the “Equal Access” bill after the Nashville Metro Council passed a law requiring city contractors to sign an affidavit promising not to discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Specifically, the bill prohibits local ordinances from having nondiscrimination laws broader than that of the state. According to Lambda Legal, Tennessee has no statewide laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in either public or private employment.

Casada told local television NewsChannel 5 that the Nashville ordinance amounted to having the city “dictating moral policy.”

Another anti-gay bill—one that sought to prohibit teachers from providing any information about homosexuality to public school students in grades kindergarten through 4—passed the Tennessee Senate 19 to 11 on May 20 but did not get a vote in the House before the General Assembly adjourned May 21. The original bill, dubbed the “Don’t Say Gay Bill”—was amended to limit sex education curricula to “natural reproduction science.”

The Tennessee Equality Project said the bill “remains a threat to safe schools for all students in Tennessee,” even though the bill no longer references homosexuality specifically.

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LGBT Chicagos host Obama events

BY TRACY BAIN

Two events were staged in Chicago May 25 as benefits and outreach events for President Barack Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign.

The first was held at the home of Brad Lipsitz and Jonathan Pizer in the Lakeview neighborhood, the second at the nearby Sidetrack gay bar.

Addressing the crowds were the Obama campaign’s national finance director, Rufus Gifford; Press Secretary Ben LaBolt; Digital Director Teddy Goff; Project Vote Director Buffy Wicks; and Jamie Citron, director of the LGBT Leadership Council, a project of Obama for America 2012 and the Democratic National Committee. All except Wicks are openly gay staff. Other staff also attended, including openly gay Zach Portilla, at the Sidetrack event, he was present in the White House personnel department.

At the private home, staffers took questions from the attendees, who seemed wary of being pitched for more money when there is still some question about how full-force Obama will be on same-sex marriage and some more mainstream issues. While people said they were supporters of the president, they appeared to be assessing how that will translate into donations and action. The Obama staff assured that in this coming election, constituency groups such as LGBT, youth, women and others will be more involved in the campaign.

The larger and more public event at Side- track was billed as an “LGBT Campaign Kick- off.” There were handouts promoting all that Obama has done on LGBT issues, in addition to a pitch for a large LGBT event for Obama, featuring the president himself, June 23 in New York City. The host will be Neil Patrick Harris, and tickets start at $1,250. Chicago’s Laura Ricketts is among the leaders of the LGBT efforts to re-elect Obama, but she had a plane delay returning to Chicago for the events.

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Transgender report presented at Center

BY STEVEN CHATMAN

Quantifiable proof of injustice against transgender and gender non-conforming individuals now exists in the form of a new national study, titled “Injustice at Every Turn,” the survey highlights the myriad of challenges trans people face in employment, education, housing, public accommodations and more.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) presented a summary of its 200-page report, created in conjunction with the National Center for Transgender Equality, May 25 at the Center on Halsted. The Center provided a local panel of equality advocates and an open community forum to discuss the findings and current efforts to improve trans rights and equality in Chicago and Illinois.

A total of 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming individuals from all 50 states (including 173 from Chicago) completed the survey from September 2008 through February 2009. The survey’s key findings were that most of its respondents lived in extreme pov-
Undeterred by the April ruling from the European Court of Human Rights that banning Moscow Pride is illegal in multiple ways, the city banned the May 28 gay pride parade for the sixth year in a row. Activists responded by trying to rally near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and City Hall. They were violently arrested. Among those taken into custody were U.S. activist Dan Choi, International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) President Louis-Georges Tin, Chicago activist Andy Thayer and 15 Russian LGBT activists, including, according to Choi, Anna Komarova, Tim Magome-dov, Alexey Kiselev, Elizaveta Nikitina, Aleksandr Shiriav and Andzey Zayziev. Fourteen anti-gay protesters also were arrested.

“I was arrested and put in a solitary confinement without any air, without any light,” said Tin. “The policemen were calling me ‘fucking faggot.’ After four hours … I was released. My concern now is about European institutions. The right to vote of Russia within the Council of Europe has to be suspended.”

Choi live-tweeted his arrest from the moment he was placed into a police wagon until his release several hours later.

Once out of custody, he wrote: “Released. No charge, no fine. … Few bruises on left leg, scratches and swelling right ear. Punched in the face 5 times. Still alive. Overall best pride march yet.”

(U.S. Secretary of State) Hillary Clinton still needs to say something about the Russian ban on this freedom of expression. We were absolutely non-violent. My twitter feed (twitter.com/ltdanchoi) has some pics from the jail, and other details from the event. Love is worth it.”

Komarova said police pressured her to divulge information about the structure of Moscow Pride, according to British gay leader Peter Tatchell, who was in Moscow but was not detained.

The Council of Europe’s commissioner for human rights, Thomas Hammarberg, denounced Moscow’s refusal to abide by the Euro Court decision.

“I learnt that a LGBT Pride event planned for Saturday 28 May in Moscow has not been authorised by the authorities because of expected traffic obstructions and the impact of this event on the ‘psychological health and moral damage of children and teenagers,’” Hammarberg wrote. “(T)he rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are fundamental rights in a democratic society and they belong to all people. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled in two judgments against unlawful restrictions or bans running counter to the exercise of freedom of assembly by LGBT persons in the context of the organisation of Pride parades. Peaceful demonstrations cannot be banned simply because of hostile attitudes to the demonstrators or to the causes they advocate. The State also has a duty to protect the participants in peaceful demonstrations including when they hold unpopular views or belong to minorities.”

IDAHO’s Tin said the Council of Europe must react to Russia’s flouting of European law and the Euro Court ruling.

“This situation is intolerable, and cannot last anymore,” he said. “The Council of Europe, which was created to promote human rights, cannot include (in its membership) without any reaction a member state that denies human rights so clearly.”

There is video of Choi and Thayer being arrested at tinyurl.com/danchoimoscow. Choi posted a video from inside the police wagon. See tinyurl.com/chaiwagon.

In ruling against the Moscow government’s violent homophobia, the European Court of Human Rights said that previous years’ gay-pride bans by then-Mayor Yuri Luzhkov violated the European Convention on Human Rights in the areas of freedom of assembly and association, the right to an effective remedy and prohibition of discrimination.

Gay rights activists often are arrested and held in Moscow police wagons, where they are sometimes photographed and later released. The recent targeting of gay rights activists comes after the ban on the Moscow Pride event taken place on Saturday, May 28.

Andy Thayer (fourth from right, in glasses) was part of the chaos that ensued at Moscow Pride May 28. Photo courtesy of Thayer

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Diocese stops child services in wake of anti-bias law

BY CHUCK COLBERT

The Rockford, Ill., diocese announced that it would halt state-funded adoption and foster-care services at Catholic Charities rather than comply with state anti-discrimination laws. With state funding of $7.5 million, Rockford Catholic Charities handles about 350 adoption and foster-family cases in 11 counties in northern Illinois.

Officials said that the agency would terminate 58 employees.

The announcement came on May 26 at a press conference—one day after the Illinois Senate tabled an amendment that would have carved out an exemption to the Illinois Religious Freedom Protections and Civil Unions Act.

The new law, which takes effect June 1, extends all equivocal sexual-bias protections available in general state law at the state level to registered same-sex partners.

For months, the Catholic Conference of Illinois—the church's lobbying arm—sought an explicit exemption for religiously affiliated child-welfare agencies from providing adoption services to same-sex couples in civil unions.

Two previous amendment attempts failed. Church officials say that their faith, or church teaching, does not allow them to place children in homes with same-sex couples and that they are in effect being "forced" out of the adoption business.

"It's an issue of conscience," said Robert Gilligan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, according to the Associated Press.

"The law of our land has always guaranteed its people freedom of religion," said Penny Wiegert, the Rockford diocese director of communication, according to a press-conference transcript.

"Denying this exemption to faith-based agencies leads one to believe that our lawmakers prefer laws that guarantee freedom from religion," she explained. "We simply cannot compromise the spirit that motivates us to deliver quality, professional services to families by letting our state define our religious teachings."

The decision by Rockford diocese officials was not unexpected. Gilligan suggested as much earlier this month.

"There's a real possibility that we will be forced out of foster care and adoption," he told reporters at a Statehouse news conference May 4, according to the Associated Press.

However, the Chicago archdiocese had already halted its foster-care services in 2007. As the Associated Press reported, "Catholic Charities told the Chicago Tribune the decision came after a $12 million lawsuit payment caused the agency's insurer to drop its coverage." A 2001 lawsuit, settled in 2006, alleged that foster parents licensed through Catholic Charities had abused three children.

Meanwhile, officials from the Belleville, Joliet, Peoria and Springfield dioceses have not yet indicated what they will do—although last week Gilligan said, "No diocese is going to willingly put a child in a same-sex household," according to the Associated Press.

His remark drew strong reactions from gay-rights activists and gay Catholics.

"Attempts to brand same-sex couples as unfit parents solely because they are gay sends a harmful message to LGBT youth. It signals that there is something inherently wrong in being gay or lesbian and in a same-sex committed relationship," said James L. Bennett, Midwest regional director for Lambda Legal, a national advocacy organization.

"Such a policy is not in the best interest of children and is contrary to the policy of every leading professional child welfare organization in this country," he added.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said, "Gilligan's statement at last revealed what so many also suspected to be the case. That his organization cared more about enforcing its dogma than about the welfare of children in its care."

Jennifer Chrisler, executive director of the Family Equality Council, offered perspective.

"Our country is facing a child welfare crisis with 424,000 children in foster care waiting for loving, stable homes," she said. "Placement agencies have an obligation to consider the best interests of these children and welcome any qualified parent who is committed to providing a home for a child in foster care."

The Family Equality Council is a national advocacy organization for LGBT parents and children.

Marianne Duddy-Burke, executive director of DignityUSA, even offered to introduce Gilligan to her family.

"I invite Mr. Gilligan, or any other Catholic Charities or diocesan official, to come and talk with my kids and see how they feel about having two moms," she said.

"Come for dinner, and listen to our daughters pray for people who don't have enough to eat or homes to live in, or sit with us as we read books chosen to reinforce their self-esteem. Listen to my partner sing the girls to sleep with songs she wrote just for them. Then tell us that lesbian and gay people can't be good foster or adoptive parents," Duddy-Burke added.

Altogether, the Rockford diocese's decision to end its foster-care and adoption services also hit close to home for Chicago lesbian and theater performer Heather Schmucker. The National Catholic Reporter has always been very proud to say I was adopted through Catholic Charities [in Pennsylvania, 34 years ago]," she said, adding, "I'm incredibly grateful for so many of the core values I learned growing up Catholic—compassion, fairness, generosity, service, a commitment to social justice, and a responsibility to those most vulnerable in our society."

As Schmucker explained, "What saddens me most about the Diocese of Rockford's decision is that it simply stands in opposition to those very basic values that are truly at the heart of Catholic teaching."

Attempts to reach Gilligan were unsuccessful. Sure enough, Rockford diocesan and Illinois Catholic Conference officials may well be taking their cues from Rome. A 2003 Vatican document called gay adoptions "gravely immoral."

The document, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons," stated, "Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full development."

However, a Catholic majority seems to disagree with the Vatican point of view. Recent polling found that 60 percent of American Catholics nationwide say same-sex couples should not be limited in their ability to adopt of foster children, according to the Public Religion Research Institute.


In Boston and San Francisco, for example, despite the Vatican's decrying of gay adoptions as "gravely immoral," Catholic Charities agencies openly acknowledged that their programs, gay men and lesbians had adopted a small number of hard-to-place foster children.

"Children, especially those with special needs, have had very successful adoptions by caring and competent individuals and couples who also happened to be gay," said Charles Martel, a Boston-based licensed clinical social worker in private practice.

Martel is a former Catholic Charities employee in Massachusetts where he assisted in home studies of prospective adoptive parents.

He went on to explain what happened after Catholic Charities in Boston got out of the adoption business. "Other public agencies took over these services, and have been able to provide the necessary care and support, including the successful placement of children," he said. "This is what has taken place in Massachusetts, and can certainly take place in Illinois as well."

In Washington, D.C., Catholic Charities transferred its entire foster-care program to another provider, the National Center for Children and Families, a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to serving vulnerable children.

Emanuel issues Pride Month proclamation

Mayor Rahm Emanuel has issued a proclamation for LGBT Pride Month in Chicago. It reads:

"WHEREAS, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities of Chicago have organized numerous workshops, sporting events, receptions, festivals, concerts, plays, dances, and other activities to celebrate Pride Month; and

"WHEREAS, the 42nd Annual Pride Parade, one of the major events of the month, will take place on Sunday, June 26, 2011, bringing together an estimated 450,000 people; and

"WHEREAS, Chicago's diverse Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities have contributed significantly to the quality of life in Chicago; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RAHM EMANUEL, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim June 2011 as LGBT Pride Month in Chicago, and encourage all Chicagoans to recognize the many contributions the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities have made to our city.

The letter is dated May 17."

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American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) saluted and celebrated LGBT veterans on Memorial Day in Chicago. The service was held in Space Park on Roscoe just west of Halsted. Although the event was originally planned by 1VU, a social and environmental nonprofit with plans to build a monument in honor of LGBT servicemembers in Space Park, that group appears to be in transition and, as a result, AVER spearheaded the event and treated guests to a touching ceremony that featured guest speakers and song.

Chicago Gay Men’s Chorus kicked off the ceremony with the National Anthem. Jim Darby, president of the Chicago chapter of the AVER, welcomed attendees with a history of AVER. He also acknowledged openly gay 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney among the two dozen people in the crowd.

Guest speaker Congressman Mike Quigley channeled Abraham Lincoln’s ideology of “everyone being equal” and said such an idea lived on after Lincoln’s presidency. Quigley said the public should hold those in office accountable for progressive landmark decisions such as the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.

“Thank the elected officials who support the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. Thank the elected officials who support the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell and work on the officials who don’t. Human rights evolve over a period of time. There’s an evolution towards greater fairness and justice in this country—people grow,” said Quigley.

Lee Reinhart, a U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard veteran of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT), shared with guests his experience in serving in the Navy and Coast Guard as an openly gay man. Reinhart was able to serve in the Navy as an out gay man for four years and reported no discrimination. However, post-9/11, when Reinhart reenlisted to serve in the Coast Guard in 2002, he was honorably discharged less than six months later because he is gay. Reinhart said he views the repeal of DADT as a step up the ladder of equality, but warned those serving to remain private about their sexuality for the sake of their career.

“Unfortunately, ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ is still a law, even though it has been repealed,” said Reinhart. “It’s important for them [LGBT identifying servicemembers] to realize that even though the law has been repealed, it has not been certified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the president of the United States. Until that happens, they can still discharge people who come out as gay or lesbian.”

Community activist and leader Lori Cannon spoke about the Legacy Project and touched on longtime Navy physician Tom Dooley’s honorable service during the 1960s; unacknowledged as a gay man, Dooley’s “out” status is overlooked by the history books. Gay veteran Travis sent guests off with his rendering of “America the Beautiful.” In remembrance, a red, white and blue floral arrangement was installed in the park.

Coast Guard veteran Larry Simpson was delighted to attend as an out gay veteran.

“There are so many more veterans that identify as LGBT but they don’t want to identify themselves as that, but I’m willing to come out,” said Simpson.

New group aims to install Latino pride

United Latino Pride. Photo courtesy of the organization

BY NATASHA HEMLEY

United Latino Pride will be holding a weekend event June 5-12 to celebrate “who we are and who we love,” according to its website. After attending a picnic held by local Latino organization Orgullo en Accion, United Latino Pride co-founder Jessica Carrillo thought that there “just wasn’t anything out there for LGBTQ Latino individuals and decided to hold a meeting at a local cafe.”

“There’s a lot of other organizations and people that [said] let’s do more. They believed in the capacity to do more. I think we had conversations with organizations and individuals and that’s how we had the meeting,” said Carrillo.

The name “United Latino Pride” was created by the 20-plus volunteers who showed up for the first meeting last April. The mission of this newly developed group is “to honor the diversity in our Latino LGBTQ community by coming together, celebrating and educating the community as a whole, regardless of religion, politics, organization or individual status.” There are at least 30,000 Latino LGBTQs in the Chicago, who up until last year either identified with being Latino or queer, but not both, according to Pride’s mission.

“We really wanted to create something to amplifying the work that different organizations and individuals were doing on a progressive level, and also celebrate the duality of being Latino or queer, but not both, according to Pride’s organization or individual status.” There are at least 30,000 Latino LGBTQs in the Chicago, who up until last year either identified with being Latino or queer, but not both, according to Pride’s website. “There’s a lot of other organizations and people that[ said] let’s do more. They believed in the capacity to do more. I think we had conversations with organizations and individuals and that’s how we had the meeting,” said Carrillo.

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“Normally, the call to action pulled strongly at my sincere desire to see the Queer Latino community come together to heal wounds and build bridges between the cultural groups that make up our community,” said member/volunteer David Serrano. Serrano also went on to say that he believes most volunteers join the group to “celebrate the duality of our culture as Queer Latinos.”

“Events for this year, which are still to be determined, will be held at "traditionally" Latino areas like Little Village and Humboldt Park. Carrillo believes this will bring more information to those in the Latino community who are simple not aware or accepting of those in the LGBTQ community.

“We want to create awareness among the community to say look we are your children, neighbors and we are no different simply because we love someone of the same gender,” said Carrillo.

Several organizations and businesses are teaming up with United Latino Pride, including the National Museum of Mexican Art, Project VIDA (Valle yahu Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement), Illuminati and Mesh 110, among others. Visit http://www.unitedlatinopride.com for more information.

VanMeter is TPAN’s new director of development

Local HIV/AIDS agency Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) has announced that Ryan VanMeter has joined the organization as director of development.

VanMeter, who is active in Illinois politics and has managed fundraising for city, county and statewide political candidates, has worked with some of Chicago’s largest non-profit social service and health care organizations.

“We are thrilled to have Ryan join our team as Director of Development,” said Bill Farrand, TPAN’s executive director. “Ryan’s background makes him a great fit for TPAN. He is also well-respected as a leader in our community.” Originally from Kansas, VanMeter spent over a year in Germany before settling in Chicago. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Kansas with a bachelor of arts in communications studies and German, and holds a masters degree in political science from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

“I’m really excited about joining TPAN,” said VanMeter. “TPAN is one of our community’s strongest forces empowering people living with HIV and educating the larger community about HIV and HIV prevention.”

In 2004, VanMeter was named to the Windy City Times 30 under 30. He has lived in Lakeview (Boytown) for more than 10 years and is actively involved in the community. Ryan serves as board chair of the Lake View YMCA, where he has been a volunteer and member since 2002, and has taken part in the Ride for AIDS Chicago as a rider since 2009.

Legacy Project appoints board of directors

The Legacy Project—a non-profit corporation committed to fostering awareness of the vital roles LGBT people have played in the advancement of world history and culture—has announced the appointment of its formal board of directors, according to a press release. This group is composed of leading activists, fundraisers and ambassadors for the LGBT community.

The project’s board of directors includes:

—Suzie Dittman, board chair; Dittman is one of the legendary “Gang of Four” that coordinated the efforts to pass the Human Rights Ordinance in 1988. According to

Victor Salvo.

the project, “Dittman’s work has been para-

medic for the LGBT rights through the years and her patience, experience and knowledge will be extremely important as the Legacy Project embarks on its mission.”

—Paul Fairchild, board vice-chairperson; former chief development officer of Howard Brown Health Center: The project feels that “[w]ith a history in organization building through his work with Heartland Alliance and Howard Brown, Fairchild’s knowledge of fund-raising methods and his relationships within the non-profit realm will be instrumental in the development of the Legacy Project.”

—Cleo Wilson, executive director of Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art: Wilson showcases the contributions of under-represented artists and communities through Intuit, and is a former executive director of the Playboy Foundation.

—Owen Keehnen, board secretary: independent LGBT historian, author and researcher: The release states that Keehnen’s “assistance with biographical research and candidate-nomination processing is essential to The Legacy Project’s central mission of sharing these important LGBT figures with the community.”

—Lori Cannon, founder of Open Hand/Chi-

cago: The project feels that Cannon’s “experi-
ence in grass-roots organizational development, and her wide array of contacts and respected presence in the non-profit world make her a tremendous asset to the success of the Legacy Project.”

—Jason Hendrix, board treasurer; finance associate, Chicago Area Interpreter Referral Service: According to the release, Hendrix’s “experience handling financial accounts for various non-profit and LGBT corporations will help The Legacy Project move forward with fiscal assurance.”

—Gerri Spillane, assistant professor and member of the Education Leadership Depart-

ment at National-Louis University: The proj-

ect hopes to utilize Spillane “in furthering The Legacy Project’s goal to raise awareness of our history for LGBT youth.”

—John Menefee, graphic design specialist, Leo Burnett Advertising: The project stated that Menefee’s “knowledge of brand creation, graphics and advertising through emerging technologies will assist The Legacy Project with establishing brand recognition by re-

fashioning its corporate image with an eye toward educating the public about the or-

ganization’s mission.”

—Leslie Schreiber, director of media rela-

tions, Winger Marketing: “Leslie’s experience and success in the field of public relations and marketing will prove invaluable as we promote The Legacy Walk as a major public LGBT History attraction,” according to the release.

—Paul Highfield, senior manager, Levi-

Strauss Store Development: The project stat-

ed that Highfield’s “knowledge of corporate- and community-based fundraising, as well as his contacts among influential individuals in the entertainment industry, make him a vital resource to The Legacy Project’s fundraising goals.”

With the organization’s leadership in place, the Legacy Project has set its sights on the installation of The Legacy Walk, which will transform the “Northalsted Streetscape” into the only “walking museum” in the world dedicated to celebrating the many contributions LGBT people have made. The dedication will take place Oct. 11, 2012—National Coming Out Day—a day that also marks the 25th anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for lesbian and gay civil rights, when the idea for The Legacy Project first came to life. According to Legacy Project Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo, “Hundreds of thousands of us were there—living his-

tory rising up against the country’s explod-
ing hatred and indifference to our plight. Juxtaposed against the first National Coming Out Day celebrating our past was the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt symbolizing the plague poised to kill us all… all I could think of was ‘If we can’t remember our history once we are gone…?’”

The Legacy Walk will consist of 18” x 24” bronze plaques affixed to the 22 rainbow pillars that designate Halsted Street as the center of Chicago’s LGBT community. A visi-

tors’ resource center and gift shop, with an interior exhibit space, is being planned to one day house all the plaques that have been ordered while also hosting special exhibits, visiting lectures and multimedia presenta-
tions to further The Legacy Project’s mission.

By choosing 2012 as the official launch of The Legacy Walk, the organization intends to take advantage of new opportunities to work with Illinois Safe Schools, the Prevent School Violence/Illinois coalition and gay-straight alliance advisors to develop and evaluate educational materials, based on The Legacy Walk, that will help LGBT youth confront anti-LGBT bullying—and their own sense of cultural isolation—with knowledge.

Tax-deductible donations can be made through Gerber/Hart Library, which is acting as The Legacy Project’s fiscal agent until confi-

firmation of their 501(c)(3) status is completed this summer. For more information, to volun-

teer or to donate, visit http://www.legacy-

projectchicago.org or call 312-608-1198.

Read the latest on the legislative redistricting vote online at http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.
Anti-gays rally at Loop church

BY JOE FRANCO

“What do we want? EQUAL RIGHTS! When do we want them? NOW!” Imagine that chant from a group of more than 50 proponents of same-sex marriage equality while “Ave Marie” was being sung in the background. That was the dramatic scene today in front of the Thompson Center in Chicago? was not the real target” for the rally but was the church before marching down Dearborn to the Thompson Center. Michael Ramos, a public-safety official for the church, reported that some participants showed up the previous Friday in error and that it was the only way that he had been made aware that there were any protestors coming at all. The Chicago Police Department was on hand with ATVs to escort the rally participants to the Thompson Center.

The Gay Liberation Network’s (GLN’s) Bob Schwartz believed that the “civil-unions bill was not the real target” for the rally but was “an organizing tool for an anti-gay marriage amendment.” The website for Americans For Life, a group of nearly 150 individuals representing Americans for Life, Americans for Truth, the Pro-Life Action League and various evangelical, protestant and Roman Catholic Church congregations rallied against the Illinois civil-unions law, which goes into effect June 1.

Dick Walsh, head of Americans For Life, opened the rally by saying, “We will win! God is on our side.” Walsh claimed, “We’re here because God told us to be here.” Walsh’s flyer, posted on his website, claimed that “homosexual marriage is wrong because: it’s not marriage because procreation is impossible, it violates the natural law of sexual purpose, it promotes the homosexual lifestyle, known to spread the deadly disease AIDS, it defeats the interest of government in promoting the family unit in society” and several other allegations.

Walsh added, “The real bullies are across the street”—referring to the pro-LGBT activists. He said, “I am here in defense of my grandchildren. One man and one woman are incapable of sin when done in the bounds of traditional marriage.” Walsh could not be contacted for further comment.

Also on hand was Rev. Hiram Crawford, Jr. (Crawford’s father was most famous for his support of the Daley Plaza Nativity display, and for opposing the Chicago gay-rights bill with pickets and newspaper ads in the 1980s.) Crawford, Jr., invoked the Late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., saying that he was “a family man” and that he was there, as were the others to “stand up for life and righteousness.” Several bystanders not affiliated with either set of demonstrators began to boo. “Who are these people? Why are they in Chicago,” asked one woman.

Schwartz said that he was pleased with the turnout and support from the advocates of same-sex marriage equality. GLN was the catalyst for the counter-demonstration, which involved numerous other local pro-LGBT advocacy groups. “We will not them codify bigotry in the state constitution,” Schwartz said. “Where ever they go, we will follow!”

—Assistant: Bill Kelley
Diversion program involves transgender women

BY KATE SOSIN

A group of Chicago legal experts has instituted a new diversion program (one run by a police department or some other office that is designed to enable alleged offenders of criminal law to avoid criminal charges and a record) aimed at helping one of the city’s most marginalized populations. Transgender women charged in incidents where sex work can now opt to complete a diversion program much like the one that has been offered to non-transgender women for years.

The program came about because, according to organizers, the number of arrests of transgender sex workers has increased over the past few years.

QUEST works like many other diversion programs. First-time offenders can opt to complete a one-day program in lieu of other penalties, both legal and financial. The program went into effect in early May and has already served at least 11 people.

“We would like to see young trans women have other options,” said Bennett Lawson, a spokesperson for 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney’s Office. Tunney’s office collaborated with other QUEST organizers to create the program. Lawson said that Lake View has seen an increase in sex work and complaints in the neighborhood.

“If we could lower the amount of arrests, the amount of calls [about prostitution], that would benefit everyone,” Lawson said.

According to a recent National Gay and Lesbian Task Force survey, unemployment rates for transgender people are twice the national average. In Chicago, 27 percent of respondents reported being fired for being transgender, a percentage point higher than the national average for transgender people.

The QUEST program is designed to address some of those challenges by offering participants GED classes, housing, computer training and free non-mandatory HIV and STI screenings.

The one-day session will be held at Christian Community Health Center, 9718 S. Halsted. At the end of it, participants will receive a certificate to bring back to the court, and their charges will be dismissed. The session costs $25, but according to QUEST organizers, fundraising efforts at Boystown clubs will cover the costs for those unable to pay.

QUEST founder and Assistant Public Defender Susan Matusy-Ehrlich told Windy City Times that she pursued creating the program because both non-transgender and men and women have access to different diversion programs when charged with sex work or solicitation. She said that everyone involved thus far was happy.

In Chicago’s transgender community, however, the announcement of QUEST was met with heavy skepticism. No transgender organization was in the announcement of QUEST was met with heavy skepticism. No transgender organization was involved in the creation of the program, much like the one that has been offered to non-transgender women for years.

The program has already made one small error: it refers to transgender people as “transgenders,” a commonly used term that is generally deemed offensive and grammatically inaccurate.

Daniel-McCarter said that unless QUEST organizers consult directly with the community affected, the program could be creating new sets of problems for transgender people. He said that a diversion program for just transgender women could unnecessarily out many people as transgender, putting them at risk of violence, discrimination and humiliation.

He also said the program does not address another problem facing transgender women in Lake View: Many transgender people have argued over the last two years that police arbitrarily arrest transgender women for being out after dark in Boystown and charge them with prostitution. Windy City Times was not able to confirm this.

Program materials for QUEST claim that it is the first of its kind in the nation. At least one similar diversion program does exist already, however. The Washington D.C. superior court offers and eight-week program to transgender women.

Matusy-Ehrlich said that she and other QUEST organizers are working now to include more LGBT organizations in the ongoing creation of QUEST.

Stalemate develops in transgender situation

BY KATE SOSIN

Transgender activists from the group Illinois Gender Advocates (IGA) are facing off with the ACLU over a lawsuit that by most counts, aims to do exactly what IGA has been working toward for months.

On May 10, the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) that challenges Illinois’s requirement that, prior to obtaining their birth certificates, transgender people must undergo surgery in order to change their birth certificates. IGA also found the policy problematic but says it has been working on changing the policy internally, that they were nearing a resolution with IDPH, and the new lawsuit could hamper their efforts. The disagreement has become the subject of an often awkward and public stalemate between two groups working toward the same goal.

“This wasn’t stepping on us,” said IGA Chair Candice Hart. “It was stepping on us.”

Hart said that she did not even know the ACLU was filing suit until she read about it in the newspaper. “We were concerned as well as dismayed that the ACLU would take such action without so much as giving us a heads up,” Hart said.

In January, IDPH released a new proposed policy on transgender people and birth certificates. That policy, which mandated a laundry list of surgeries before a gender marker could be changed, was met with strong critiques from trans rights organizations. Such surgeries can cost in the tens of thousands of dollars and are rarely covered by insurance companies. It was also met with scorn by the ACLU.

Hart said that she felt fairly confident that the ACLU knew that IGA was working on changing the policy already.

John Knight, director of the LGBT Project of the ACLU of Illinois, is the attorney on the case. He told Windy City Times, “I don’t think I knew that IGA was involved [in re-drafting the policy],” although he did know that the department was under revision. However, Knight added, his clients were denied birth certificates. In April, the Cook County sheriff’s office announced that its annual Pride Month network event helps LGBTQ professionals network personally and politically: “It is important for our community, the gay and lesbian community, to gather and show our strength in numbers as well as show our support for those businesses that support us.”

Vital Bridges Pride kickoff event June 5

HIV/AIDS agency Vital Bridges will host a “Kick-off to Pride” event at ACME restaurant, 5308 N. Clark, on Sunday, June 5, at 11 a.m. Guests will enjoy a buffet, champagne and martinis, all while supporting Vital Bridges and their initiatives.

The kickoff is a Chefs and the City culinary series event. Chefs and the City will take place Friday, July 15, at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago. Tickets for the June 5 event are $30 each; see http://www.vitalbridges.org/pages/event-detail/17.php?id=11 for more information.

‘Out of the Office’ Pride Month event June 7

Real-estate firm Baird & Warner has announced that its annual Pride Month networking event, “OUT of the Office,” will be held Tuesday, June 7, at Vertigo Sky Lounge, 2 W. Erie, 6-8:30 p.m. The event is open to LGBTQ professionals and their friendly co-workers, business vendors, friends and family.

The annual event, in its sixth year, is Baird & Warner’s alternative to the Pride Parade. It also serves as a fundraiser for Chicago-based organizations, although a suggested donation of $10 at the door. This year’s beneficiary is Vital Bridges, a Lake View organization that helps people impacted by HIV and AIDS. Past beneficiaries of the mixer have included the La Casa Norte, Gay Games, Chicago House, AIDS Care Chicago and Chicago 2016.

Jim Schiefelbein, vice president and chief marketing officer at Baird & Warner, said the event helps LGBTQ professionals network personally and politically: “It is important for our community, the gay and lesbian community, to gather and show our strength in numbers as well as show our support for those businesses that support us.”

6/1/2011

Windy City Times
Ryan Dahms has been giving massages since he was a kid and the joke had long been that, eventually, he go to school for massage therapy and then do it professional.

Now, he is—inside his two-bedroom apartment. Dahms has been licensed for almost three years and has a customer base of men and women ranging in age from their 20s to their 50s—including a large contingent of gay men.

“I’m a healer,” Dahms said. “Massages encourage blood flow, which brings more oxygen to the limbs and creates overall relaxation.”

Dahms gives up to five massages daily, each for a minimum of 60 minutes. He charges $1 per minute, which he calls “a blue-collar massage,” because he feels everyone should have access to a massage to help maintain their health, not just the affluent.

Ironically, Dahms has never had a professional massage himself.

In addition to massages, Dahms also offers the healing energy work of reiki.

His massages usually focuses on deep tissue and/or trigger-point—and the atmosphere includes candles and New Age/ambient music or Bob Marley songs, a stark contrast to Dahms’ personal musical interests, which are “harder and faster—the more experimental, the weirder the better,” he said.

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The stats

Name
Ryan Dahms

Hobbies
Writing, painting and working out

Home
Has lived in Germany and five states in the United States

Fashion
Is a jeans-and-T-shirt guy

Relationship status
Single

Tattoos
Three, including an abstract design on his left leg that he personally did.

“My God, it came out OK,” he said.

Also has an abstract tat on his right arm.

Education
Received his degree from The Soma Institute in Chicago

Favorite Chicago restaurants
India House and El Gallo Bravo

Favorite all-time musical group
Guns N’ Roses
Organizations discuss civil-union nuts and bolts

BY TERENCE CHAPPELL

Debated, negotiated, compromised and tabled—but civil unions are now a reality for same-sex couples in Illinois.

Effective June 1, same-sex couples will have the same marital rights as their opposite-sex counterparts under the Illinois Religious Freedom and Civil Union Act, which Gov. Pat Quinn signed into law. LGTB organizations Lambda Legal and Equality Illinois recently hosted a teleconference that offered an inside look into the new, landmark law, its benefits and the next steps. Spearheaded by Equality Illinois' CEO Bernard Cherkasov and Lambda Legal's senior staff attorney Christopher Clark, the two answered questions on civil-union issues that included tax breaks, insurance policies and other mutual benefits as well as new responsibilities under the new law. Cherkasov believes that the teleconference was a step in the right direction of keeping the LGBT community informed on such a long awaited, hot-button decision.

“We wanted to ensure that our community and that our allies are educated on what civil unions are and how they will impact the lives of people across the state,” said Cherkasov.

In particular, the teleconference covered the rights granted to same-sex couples under the civil-union law. Such rights include the ability to visit one’s partner in the hospital and to make medical decisions, divorce, the right to sue over one’s partner’s death and the right to live together in nursing homes.

Other rights that are granted to heterosexual couples in marriages but are still not applied to same-sex married couples or those that will enter into a civil-union include joint filing of federal taxes; the right to receive social security payments upon partner’s death; immigration rights for foreign partners; and the right to inherit a partner’s property without paying federal estate taxes. Currently, religious institutions are still not obligated to recognize same-sex relationships.

Clark advised that same-sex couples looking into entering a civil-union should be taking into consideration the many positive implications and benefits of this historic civil union law, the Department is available to provide timely Information and answer questions from the families, employers, and insurance professionals impacted by the law.

For more information and updates, the insurance department provided a fact sheet at http://www.insurance.illinois.gov.

“Whether through auto, life, homeowner’s, renters or health insurance, nearly every Illinois resident relies on an insurance policy to provide financial security,” said Illinois Department of Insurance Director Mike McRath in a statement. “As the people of Illinois celebrate the many positive implications and benefits of this historic civil union law, the Department is available to provide timely Information and answer questions from the families, employers, and insurance professionals impacted by the law.”

SIDEBAR

Insurance dept. has info on benefits, protections

In addition to other new rights, those entering into civil unions can expect a change in insurance benefits. The Illinois Department of Insurance published important new insurance benefits and protections available to civil-union spouses.

“Whether through auto, life, homeowner’s, renters or health insurance, nearly every Illinois resident relies on an insurance policy to provide financial security,” said Illinois Department of Insurance Director Mike McRath in a statement. “As the people of Illinois celebrate the many positive implications and benefits of this historic civil union law, the Department is available to provide timely Information and answer questions from the families, employers, and insurance professionals impacted by the law.”

For more information and updates, the insurance department provided a fact sheet at http://www.insurance.illinois.gov. In addition, for a list of insurance companies licensed to operate in Illinois and informatics regarding the law, visit the department website at http://insurance.illinois.gov/ch/2011/cb2011-06.pdf.

—Terrence Chappell

afforded to married couples in the state, when it comes to federal matters, the civil unions remain unrecognized.

“There is something a little bit both exciting and bittersweet that it’s not full marriage,” said Jim Bennett, regional director of Lambda Legal’s Midwest office, before noting that many of the couples participating in the Millennium Park event still have their eyes set on a full-fledged marriage ceremony in the future.

“You don’t want to rain on an amazing parade but [the law] is a great step and it’s nice that Illinois is on the leading side of making equality happen,” he added.

Veteran gay activist Rick Garcia, who lobbied aggressively for the bill’s passage, noted such as the call from some conservative activists, including American for Truth about Homosexuality head Peter LaBarbera, for a measure on the civil-union law to be placed on a statewide ballot in the next election. “It’s important for us to be vigilant and keep our eyes on the goal of full equality,” Cherkasov said, “and we need to take every threat that comes our way very seriously.”

Cherkasov added that he hoped couples embarking on civil unions would sign up for Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal’s jointly launched Civil Union Tracker to aide their organizations’ abilities to keep tabs on any problems or questions that arise for those applying for licenses.

Christopher Clark. Photo by Yasmin Nair

"I truly think that Illinois took a giant leap in the right direction with legalizing civil unions," Hildebrand told Windy City Times in a separate conversation. "I think this is great and it’s just good to know that this is an option for me and my partner." Although the recognition and legalization of civil unions are a benefit for the LGBT community, Cherkasov still warns that though the new law is a reason to celebrate, it is just the beginning.

"The civil-union law is not the end all to our LGBT equality. It’s an important milestone on the state level in providing some of the rights and responsibilities that marriage only makes available to heterosexual couples. However, at the same time, there are limitations to the civil-union law. First of all, it’s not portable. So, if same-sex couples travel outside of Illinois, they’re relationship will not be recognized," said Cherkasov.

According to both organizations, Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal partnered up for the teleconference not only to keep the public informed on current updates concerning civil unions but also because each fulfills a needed mission towards working to fulfill equality for the LGBT community. While Equality Illinois maintains a mission to protect and secure equal rights for the LGBT community according to its website, Lambda Legal works to towards legal and policy progression for the community.

“We make sure that we coordinate our efforts together where it makes sense so that we can accomplish our mission of full equality," said Cherkasov.

In celebration of the new law, the city of Chicago Commission on Human Relations’ Advisory Council on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues has partnered up with Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the Chicago office of the American Library Association, and the Alliance of Illinois Judges to host a grand civil-union ceremony in Millennium Park June 2 where 30 couples will commit themselves to each other through a civil union. The following evening, The Civil Rights Agenda will host a mass civil-union ceremony at the Chicago History Museum. Both Cherkasov and Clark are married, and though both men feel there is a lot more on the agenda regarding equal rights for the LGBT community, the passing of the civil-union law is a time to raise a glass and rejoice in the victory.

“This is a great step forward for same-sex couples because same-sex couples were not able to get married in the state of Illinois," Clark said. "They will be able to become legal civil-union partners in the state of Illinois. They will be able to solemnize they’re union. They will be recognized.

Brazil's Sao Paulo has been among the states where same-sex couples are able to marry, but civil unions are now a reality for same-sex couples in Illinois. While some of his colleagues may have expressed concern for their constituents’ reactions over their vote in support of the measure, Harris stated media coverage showing families, couples and county clerks’ offices alike preparing for the law’s implementation, most interestingly appearing in the state’s central and southern regions, have indicated “the people of Illinois are way ahead of their legislators on this issue.”

“It’s an emotionally charged issue and everyone has their opinions but I just watch the TV stations and read the newspapers down here [in and around Springfield] and they’re talking about families who are so happy for their brother or sister or son or daughter who are finally seeing their relationship recognized," Harris told Windy City Times. "That helps you realize this is truly changing a lot of peoples’ lives for the better.”

Emanuel described the occasion as marking “a day of celebration and an historic milestone on the road to full marriage equality for LGBT Illinoisans” in a city news release, minimizing the assertions of the bulk of queer activists across the state that civil unions still fall short of their end goal. Although the law will grant many of the same legal protections to same-sex (as well as heterosexual) couples who register for civil unions as those the law will provide “necessary protections that families need now until the time we have same-sex marriage” in Illinois but was quick to add the caveat that “separate is not equal and a civil union is not a marriage.”

“We have a job ahead of us to make sure there is only one set of rules and one yard stick for everyone,” Garcia said. "This is a time to be celebratory and happy but it is also a time to recommit ourselves to equality and fairness.”

Andy Thayer, co-founder of Chicago’s Gay Liberation Network, noted the idea of civil unions for same-sex couples as separate but equal as “oxymoronic” though he hoped the law’s passage would “help hasten the day of full legal equality.”

In the months that followed the state legislature’s approval of the bill late last year, social conservative groups, most notably the Catholic Conference of Illinois, supported repeated attempts to weaken the law, particularly as it pertained to gay and lesbian parents’ adoptive and foster care rights.

Thayer hoped LGBT activists in the state would take the opportunity to face any further such opposition from faith-based groups head-on—something he felt activists in other statewide battles in recent years have failed to do.

“In the California defeat with Proposition 8 and Maine with Question 1, our community hesitated to take on ‘religious’ bigots and those were hesitations which proved disastrous.” Thayer noted. “It is my hope that many more LGBTs begin to feel that we cannot give a ‘religious’ exemption for bigotry.”

Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov, too, called for continued vigilance on the community’s part against further opposition, such as the call from some conservative activists, including American for Truth about Homosexuality head Peter LaBarbera, for a measure on the civil-union law to be placed on a statewide ballot in the next election.

“It’s important for us to be vigilant and keep our eyes on the goal of full equality,” Cherkasov said, “and we need to take every threat that comes our way very seriously.”

Cherkasov added that he hoped couples embarking on civil unions would sign up for Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal’s jointly launched Civil Union Tracker to aide their organizations’ abilities to keep tabs on any problems or questions that arise for those applying for licenses.
New Listing

1555 N Dearborn 1003
$1,149,999
Diane Freeman 312-640-7010

1753 W School
$535,000
Owner's duplex plus first floor rental in awesome area warrants expansion, conversion to single family home or just moving into and enjoying ID#07811502
Charlie Vernon 847-491-1655

1457 W Cuyler 3W
$369,900
Southport corridor - top floor vintage rehab. Two bedrooms plus office / bonus space. Master suite w/twin/adjacent two bedrooms. Hardwood floors, bay windows, solid core doors, granite & SS kit. ID#07810648
Laura Arnett 773-775-1855

1565 N Hoyne 3
$309,900
Remarks- The heart of wicker park! Wonderful, tree-lined street scape of historic homes & 1 block from Damen Rail! Spacious living room has fireplace. Large kitchen/Parking space included/Ask about appliance credit! ID#07788763
Jody Bartley 773-697-5555

420 W Belmont 26-A
$219,900
Sunny and bright 2 bedroom/1.1 bath corner unit w/ balcony. Building features an indoor rooftop pool, sand beach, sauna, party room & doorman. Assessments include heat, water, cable, cooking gas, pool etc. Garage parking available ID#00211420
Michael Parish 773-549-1855

5919 N Paulina 3W
$187,000
Incredible 2 bedroom/1 bath penthouse. Exposed brick with lots of light. Unit features hardwood floors throughout, marble bath, spacious balcony, kitchen w/stone counters, SS appliances & 42" cabinets. In-unit W/D FHA approved ID#07757915
Erik Blev 773-549-1855

4350 N Broadway 509
$175,000
Short sale Buena Pointe-a condo that feels like a home! Open spacious floor plan with SS apps, granite counter tops, side by side w/d, gas fireplace, balcony & more. Extra large master bedroom w/great closet space w/g master bath! ID#07736431
Leila Keene 773-697-5555

1510 S Komensky
$55,000
Nice block 2 flat w/new roof, new hot water heaters and porch. Enclosed back porch. Set back offers huge manicured front lawn. Great investment or primary residence. ID#07812059
Debra Snow 708-697-5900

NEW LISTING

420 W Belmont 26-A
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Sunny and bright 2 bedroom/1.1 bath corner unit w/ balcony. Building features an indoor rooftop pool, sand beach, sauna, party room & doorman. Assessments include heat, water, cable, cooking gas, pool etc. Garage parking available ID#00211420
Michael Parish 773-549-1855

5919 N Paulina 3W
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Incredible 2 bedroom/1 bath penthouse. Exposed brick with lots of light. Unit features hardwood floors throughout, marble bath, spacious balcony, kitchen w/stone counters, SS appliances & 42" cabinets. In-unit W/D FHA approved ID#07757915
Erik Blev 773-549-1855

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Debra Snow 708-697-5900

NEW LISTING

OUT OF THE OFFICE

Baird & Warner presents:
A networking event for LGBT professionals and their colleagues and friends to kick off pride month in Chicago!

Tuesday, June 7th 6 to 8:30pm
Vertigo Sky Lounge 2 West Erie

Cocktails sponsored by
GREY GOOSE World’s Best Vodka

$10 suggested donation to benefit Vital Bridges, a non-profit agency committed to help people throughout metropolitan Chicago impacted by HIV and AIDS to improve their health and build self-sufficiency. Guests will enjoy complimentary appetizers and 2 drink tickets good for sponsored cocktail.

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2114 W Homer
$900,000
Rarely available in Bucktown 3br/3ba+library/den, wide brk bungalow on dble lot w/ side yard & sep. artists studio/office. ID#07810533

2150 W McLean 1W
$675,000
Spectacular contemporary 3 bed/2.1 bath duplex down in heart of Bucktown built in '07. Designers unit w/10' ceilings, private balcony! ID#02307917

353 W Chicago 4W
$650,000
Breathing vintage pent-house duplex-up 3 br/3ba + den, 4th br 2 master suites! 2300 SF w/dramatic cathedral 25'ceilings, ID#02307895

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Long road back:
Chad Hendry running against HIV

BY ROSS FORMAN

Chad T. Hendry remembers the moment like it was yesterday, one of those where-were-you-when-lifetime-moments. It was Dec. 30, 2009, at 11:07 a.m. in Hollywood, Calif., at the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center. Hendry was 30 at the time and admits now that he was well aware of what he might hear, though he held out hope, as slim as that may have been. He vividly recalls the exact words he heard: “You are negative for hepatitis C, but you have come back reactive for HIV.”

His heart sank and, though he did not immediately cry, he wanted to. Fear swept over shame, along with guilt. He was numb from head to toe.

Hendry’s journey to that fateful day actually started about a year earlier. He had a lot of stress and issues he was dealing with—people very close to him dying of cancer, a bad break up, job stress. So Hendry sought out a way to numb the stress and pain of life.

He tried crystal meth—and was immediately hooked.

The progression was swift and the consequences were immense, he said. “In one year’s time, I lost my career, threw away school, lost my home, my car, my friends. I sacrificed everything for the drug and the lifestyle that came along with it. Plus, he got wrapped up in a sexual addiction.

“When I first moved to Chicago I saw an advertisement for the Team to End AIDS (T2) endurance training program and I knew that I wanted to challenge myself and run with that team,” Hendry said. “I wasn’t able to run [for T2 in 2010] because of all the other things going on [in my life], but this year I am determined to do it. With the encouragement of Alexian Brothers Bonaventure House, I was able to join T2.

“One of the reasons I wanted to run with T2 was to be able to raise money for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. I call it putting my gratitude in motion. I want to give back to the many agencies that have helped me save my life and find a new way to live. I also knew that if I was going to be able to train for a marathon I needed the encouragement of teammates.”

“Events such as the Ride For AIDS or T2 could mean the difference between someone having access to food and shelter, life-saving medical services that have helped me save my life and find a new way to live. I also knew that this was my chance at a new way of life. I wouldn’t take back my actions so freely given to me which was a chance at a new way of life. I couldn’t take back my actions in addiction or the fact that I have HIV. I am now uniquely qualified to approach life with empathy and compassion. I believe that it’s a gift and I intend to give that gift away to others.”

Hendry does volunteer work for several area agencies, including the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) and the Chicago House & Social Service Agency, where he works in HIV prevention, outreach and testing.

Hendry was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. His family moved to Naperville and Lisle for a few years in the early 1980s until his parents divorced, and then he moved back to Utah. At 21, he moved to Palm Springs, Calif., and he lived in Southern California for the next eight years.

Hendry ran the 110-meter hurdles in high school and has competed in numerous 5K races. In 2008, he trained for the inaugural Pasadena Marathon, but it was cancelled due to fires.

“HIV/AIDS awareness is essential. I currently do HIV outreach and testing in the local bathhouses. I also wear the ‘HIV Positive’ T-shirt all of the time in public in an effort to facilitate a conversation with people, [and] ideally, to dispel stigmas and misconceptions about people living with HIV/AIDS. I also write a blog about my life in recovery from addiction and living with HIV, about my every day struggles or thoughts, and more. I believe by being honest about having HIV and my addiction that, hopefully, I might make it easier for someone else to reach out to his or her trusted support.

“It has been an amazing challenge. It definitely takes him out of his comfort zone.

“Events such as the Ride For AIDS or T2 could mean the difference between someone having access to food and shelter, life-saving medical services, a new way of life, and more. I believe, because of programs like these, underserved populations are able to have access to services that might not be available otherwise. I also believe that programs like these give the average person a way to give back and help their community. For me, it’s a way to give back directly to the organizations that have helped me save my life, such as Alexian Brothers Bonaventure House, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Test Positive Aware Network and Chicago House.

“Anyone interested in supporting Hendry on his fundraising for T2 on behalf of ACF should visit http://acf.aidschicago.org/retc/.com/chadthendry.
Whoopi Goldberg is coming to Chicago for the annual Speaker Series Luncheon, presented by and benefiting Chicago House and Social Service Agency.

Goldberg, who calls Daytime Emmy Award-winning show The View (ABC-TV) her home, will be the third speaker in the series, following Madeline Albright and former President Bill Clinton. Goldberg’s appearance is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 4, at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel, 17 E. Monroe, starting at 11:30 a.m.

“Our Inaugural Speaker Series Luncheon aimed to bring attention to and create dialogue surrounding Chicago House’s mission and the core services that we provide to formerly homeless men, women, and children who are affected by AIDS,” said Chicago House Manager of Special Events Jeremy Hilborn. “In continuing to offer a diverse voice behind our urgent mission, in the event’s third year, we wanted to deviate from a marketing, publicity, ticket sales, and more.

Jeremy Hilborn and Madeline Albright. Photo courtesy of Hilborn

He added, “Whoopi can deliver a serious message in an optimistic way that everyone can relate to.”

Hilborn, 34, who lives in Chicago’s Uptown neighborhood, is responsible for overseeing the event, which includes venue selection, contract negotiation, travel arrangements, and more. Plus, he oversees a team of production consultants, and also works on the event timeline, manages and trains staff, volunteers and table captains. Hilborn also manages printing, marketing, publicity, ticket sales, and more.

Hilborn, who is gay, has been at Chicago House for nine years.

“T’m looking forward to working with her team in the coming months to secure media interviews, and to debride her on the ever-changing work that Chicago House does in support of people affected by AIDS,” he said.

Pictured, from left: Director Gregory Gross; Dennis Belogorsky, Frank Parker, Helena Bushong, and Walter Maul. In Front: Hope Barrett. Photo by Kate Sosin
By Patrick DuVall

As the HIV/AIDS epidemic carries into the second decade of the 21st century, Keith Green has emerged as a strong contender in the fight. When meeting him it is impossible to overlook his deep respect for individuality and the importance of having AIDS, his passion for encouraging good in those who need it most.

For seven years, Green has been involved with a number of direct, community-based outreach programs, and, this past February, Green was hired as the new director of federal affairs at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC).

While the face of HIV/AIDS has changed over the past 30 years, so has the complexity of the struggle to combat the disease. Green is a new sort of AIDS health professional that looks beyond traditional treatment methods. “HIV is a symptom of a much larger combination of sicknesses,” Green said. “[Like] poverty, homophobia, racism, and sexism. I’m more interested in figuring out how to tackle some of those larger issues, in and out of the context of HIV, so that we can move away from the epidemic.”

He goes on to say that, while sexual health education is an absolutely necessary part of the overall strategy, people would “throw all of that out of the window if [they] don’t have anywhere to sleep.”

Green started work on his Ph.D. in social-welfare policy to further deepen his understanding of the issue, “I went to school to be able to mix the sort of community-based perspective with what I was learning from academia, pull them together to really drive the work, to help it make better.”

When Green started at AFC earlier this year, a new Congressional session was beginning with a strong GOP majority in the House of Representatives. Revising the budget was at the top of the list of the new Congress, and one of the first cuts proposed was the elimination of federally funded needle-sharing programs. Green quickly got to work contacting elected officials and he helped to develop a strategy that eventually kept the needle-sharing programs in place.

While he has many duties as director of federal affairs, Green’s primary responsibility is monitoring how federal funds are applied, specifically making sure that Illinois is in alignment with the national HIV/AIDS strategy. Dr. Margo Bell, a pediatrician who has worked with Green for the last six years on various sexual health initiatives, reports that Green is always asking “Is the fight about money, or is the fight about people?”

With strong roots in community advocacy, it seems that, at least in Illinois, Green one of the people who makes sure money for AIDS initiatives gets where it needs to go.

In April 2010, Bell approached Green about serving as project director for a pre-exposure prophylaxis ( PrEP ) study. Dubbed “Project Prepare,” the trial tests the effectiveness of Truvada, a powerful anti-retroviral drug, as a method of HIV-prevention in young men in the Chicago area. Dr. G. Hoesch, an expert on adolescent psychology, was the principal investigator on the project.

During the recruitment phase of Project Prepare, Green informed his research assistants that their time would be split equally doing research and outreach. Although women and HIV-positive individuals were excluded from the study, Green’s team did their best to direct people to places in their community where they could get tested and keep them informed about available resources. They even went so far as to escort people to appointments at local clinics and follow up to direct them to treatment, if necessary.

Green was very careful to tailor the study to fit the needs of the community. In Green’s words, “they were doing a lot of volunteer work in the field, which, you know, is uncommon in research, and is what, at the end of the day, has made a difference for us and for our community—and it’s continuing to make a difference.”

On Nov. 23, 2010, Gladstone Institutes, a non-profit independent research organization affiliated with the University of California at San Francisco, published data on a similar international study in The New England Journal of Medicine. The results showed that the rate of HIV infection was dramatically lowered with the correct dosage of Truvada. After Gladstone’s Iniciativa Profibiosis Prevention (IPEx) data was released, Project Prepare was put on hold; and Green called a community forum at Center on Halsted to discuss the potentially game-changing results. A major concern voiced at the meeting was about the ethics of giving some participants a placebo when the IPEx study had such success. After he advocated with the principal investigators, Project Prepare was reinstated, and all participants taking the placebo were given the opportunity to join the main branch of the Stroger study.

Green also reached out to Dr. Robert Grant, principal researcher of the Gladstone Institutes study, in an effort of folding Project Prepare into the main IPEx trial. Concerned about the lack of young people involved in the first cohort of participants, Green strongly lobbied for his work with Hoesch and Bell to be included in the larger work. Men who have sex with men in their teens and 20s have one of the fastest rising rates of HIV infection in the country. Green knew that for the study to have the most impact, data from younger people would need to be captured. Earlier this year, Stroger Hospital became an official IPEx testing site, and Green is now working with the head investigators to translate the information about the study to a younger audience.

Bell enlisted Green to serve as director for another project based out of Stroger Hospital offering evidenced-based interventions to the Chicago house ball community. Made famous by the 1990 documentary film Paris is Burning, the house ball scene is an underground group of primarily LGBT individuals who compete for trophies in different categories based around gender presentation and class. The ball scene is a safe haven for transgender people and gender non-conforming gays and lesbians. There are formalized groups within the community—referred to as “houses,” headed by a man or woman, termed the House Parent. Members of the Ball scene have been one of the groups hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. In Green’s words, “One of the things the house ball community taught me is that poverty is a huge driver of the epidemic in particular. People lose their jobs for a number of reasons. One of it has to do with homophobia and discrimination against more effeminate men and trans folks.”

During a focus group Green and Bell conducted with the House Parents Association, the community leaders said the epidemic had reached the point that they were attending three to four funerals a month within the region. They also expressed concerns about seeking out help, due to their past history of opening their community to scientists and artists, only to be exploited. Green is very sensitive to these issues, and is working to shape his programs to create a sustainable environment for the scientists to get the data they are looking for and the community the resources it needs. For Green, it’s not just about the research. It’s about being able to give people the tools they have to have to improve their lives and to help them find what it takes to keep going.

As with Project Prepare, Green is working to translate the resources of the community health system to best help a high-risk community. The project will soon launch a series of interventions that will feature educational materials on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, food, and guest speakers on topics like stigma and the medical and pharmaceutical options available.

The personal is political

Being involved in community outreach is now an essential part of Green’s life and work. He has reached a level of success professionally, holding two degrees, working with at-risk communities, and now with the largest AIDS organization in Chicago; however, it was not always this way. The journey to reach this point was a long one.

In 1994, when he was 17 years old and still a senior in high school on Chicago’s South Side, Green was diagnosed as HIV-positive and given roughly 10 years to live. After a few attempts at pursuing the future he had hoped for, Green accepted that he only had a limited amount of time left. He decided to enjoy his remaining time, but largely ignored the disease, forgoing medication or treatment of any kind. For eight and half years Green lived his life and held a variety of jobs, including claims adjustor for an insurance company, bookstore clerk, and roller rink manager.

In 2002, while he was living in Charlotte, N.C., Green’s health declined drastically. An old friend of his claimed him as a domestic partner to get him insurance coverage. Blood work revealed his viral load was in the hundreds of thousands, his T-cell count was at 30 and he was 50 pounds underweight. He was immediately hospitalized. At that point he assumed that his 10 years had come a little early, and it wasn’t until his doctor gave him a copy of Positively Aware, an HIV-treatment journal published by Chicago-based AIDS community group Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), that Green began to think about the future again.

Soon after the initial incident, Green moved back to Chicago with a thirst for knowledge, and started attending TPAN meetings regularly. Eventually he began working at TPAN and earned a bachelor’s degree in social work from Northwestern University while struggling with a bad case of immune reconstitution syndrome. During this time, he even had hippy wounds open up during a final exam. Green’s reaction was to retreat the wound and finish the test. He aced it.

While at TPAN, he started community outreach programs that took sex education right to the dance floor of nightclubs in the neighborhoods hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. Green would dance with the crowd and pass out condoms and candy. He also taught classes at the organization to teach people with HIV about the biology behind the disease and the different treatment options available. His favorite class was the ABC’s of Anti-Retroviral Therapy. He even became assistant editor of Positively Aware.

Green brings out the best in people. When he was struggling to form a picture of his future during his first major illness, a close family friend gave him the encouragement and hope he needed to get back on his feet and build a life for himself. Although he has come a long way since then, Green hasn’t forgotten those times or those words. He is busy balancing federal advocacy with the AFC, managing a potentially life-saving study and developing educational programs for at-risk communities—the normal ups and downs of a man in his 30s. While he is always looking for how he can best help his community next, Green still remembers the power that a little bit of hope can have to inspire someone on the brink of defeat.

Keith Green. Photos courtesy of Keith Green

Keith Green. AIDS@30. Windsy City Times. June 1, 2011.
45,000 walkers raise $6.2 million at New York AIDS Walk

The 26th annual AIDS Walk New York (AWNY) drew a massive crowd of 45,000 participants to Central Park May 15. The event began with a star-studded opening ceremony followed by a 10-kilometer walk, and raised funds for GMHC and 41 other AIDS service organizations in the tri-state area. Record-breaking corporate sponsorship bolstered the event’s fundraising results, as did the large turnout of individual walkers, who together raised multi-millions of dollars to combat the epidemic.

“As we look back on 30 years of this devastating epidemic, I’m proud to see so many people walking with us, raising urgently needed funds, and committing to a future without HIV and AIDS,” said Marjorie J. Hill, Ph.D., CEO of GMHC.

“Infections among youth, African Americans, Latinos, women and gay men are on the rise; an aging population living with HIV will soon be facing new obstacles to their health and well-being. Yet today, I witnessed a community ready to confront head-on the challenges of this disease—and win.”

Celebrities made a strong showing at this year’s event. Notable AIDS Walk supporters included Matt Bomer (White Collar); Julie Bovens, Ty Burrell, Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet (Modern Family); Wilson Cruz (My So-Called Life); Chanchita Ferrell (Two and a Half Men); Mondo Guerra and Jack Mackenroth (So-Called Life); Conchata Ferrell (Two and a Half Men) and Wilson Cruz from My So-Called Life. Photos by Adam Fredericks

The cast from the stage show Priscilla: Queen of the Desert.

Wilson Cruz from My So-Called Life. Photos by Adam Fredericks

CEO of GMHC, Marjorie Hill, Ph.D.

HIV treatment stops transmission

BY ENDY VÁZQUEZ

International research led by the National Institutes on Health (NIH) now has strong evidence that HIV treatment helps prevent transmission to sex partners.

This is the first time that gold-standard research—a randomized, controlled clinical trial—successfully demonstrates the concept of “treatment as prevention.”

“Previous data about the potential value of antiretrovirals in making HIV-infected individuals less infectious to their sexual partners came largely from observational and epidemiological studies,” said Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), in a press release. “This new finding convincingly demonstrates that treating the infected individual—and doing so sooner rather than later—can have a major impact on reducing HIV transmission.”

According to the release, “Men and women infected with HIV reduced the risk of transmitting the virus to their sexual partners by taking oral antiretroviral medicines when their immune systems were relatively healthy.”

The study, HPTN 052, conducted by the U.S.-based HIV Prevention Trials Network, found a 96-percent drop in the risk of infection with the use of antiviral therapy. It looked at 1,763 couples from around the world in which one partner had HIV and the other one didn’t. Half of the positive partners were put on anti-HIV therapy immediately. The other half received therapy when they experienced an AIDS-related event such as PCP (pneumocystis pneumonia) or a serious decrease in their immune-system function (as evidenced by a drop in their CD4+ T-cell count down to 250).

The positive participants had moderately healthy immune systems when joining the study (between 350 and 550 CD4+ T-cells), so they did not have advanced disease. The numbers of HIV-positive men and women in the trial were nearly equal.

HPTN 052 was designed to determine whether treating HIV-positive people with antivirals may protect their partners from HIV infection. It is also looking at the optimal time to start therapy in order to prevent illness and death.

The vast majority of the couples (97 percent) were heterosexuals, and NIAID emphasized that “this precludes any definitive conclusions about effectiveness in men who have sex with men.” The couples participated from 13 sites in Botswana, Brazil, India, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Thailand, the United States and Zimbabwe. They all received safer-sex counseling, free condoms, treatment for STIs (sexually transmitted infections), regular HIV testing and evaluations and treatments of complications related to HIV.

Of 38 infections that occurred, 28 were genetically linked to the positive partner (seven were not and four are still undergoing analysis).

Of these 28 infections, only one occurred in the treatment group of the study. This represented a 96-percent decrease in the risk of infection.

The findings were released early (the study was scheduled to end in 2015) and, based on these results, all of the HIV-positive people in the deferred treatment group were offered antiretroviral therapy.

In early 2008, Swiss HIV experts published a consensus statement saying that HIV-positive people are nearly non-infectious if they are on effective antiretroviral therapy (considered a viral load test result of less than 40 copies) for at least six months and have no other STIs. The consensus was based in part on a relatively small study with heterosexual couples from Rakai, Uganda. There was limited data on reduced transmission via male-to-male sex. For more on the Swiss statement, see http://www.positivelyaware.com or http://www.aidsmap.org.

There is also research showing that some men who have undetectable HIV in their blood streams (below the level of detection on a viral load test) still have detectable levels of virus in their semen. According to the website of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the concept of HIV treatment as prevention is a promising avenue for lessening the risk of infection, but is not foolproof.

Courtesy of Positively Aware, from Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN).
A small town's transformation

Do any of these names ring a bell: Joel Drake Johnson (playwright), Ronald Reagan (actor/president), Roddy Reed (Tony Award winner), Jeanie Linders (writer and producer of the hit show Menopause the Musical) or David Klaman (nationally recognized visual artist)? All of these big names in the arts world graduated from a high school in a small town of 15,000 in northwest Illinois. These talented individuals were all raised along the scenic Rock River in Dixon, Ill., has a major transformation since these individuals left the town; they probably wouldn’t recognize it today.

Today, Dixon has a thriving downtown, a thriving arts scene—and a thriving gay scene. The downtown has two art galleries, sushi bar, French bistro, Italian cafe, two bookstores catered to the arts, a revitalized 1920s performing arts theater, a Black church, a Muslim mosque and its first openly gay council. As a matter of fact, in the town’s election a month ago Dixon elected its first female council member, the first openly gay man (who, by the way, was only seven votes short of being the top vote getter) and a gay-friendly mayor. This is not the Dixon of Johnson, Reagan, Reed and Klamann.

There is currently a partnership developed to bring to the downtown Dixon’s first gay bar. Also, Dixon has a huge Fourth Of July parade that now features gay activist groups and a large presence of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

In Johnson’s play Show Me the End Of The Tour, a very different, dark image of Dixon is shown. His play is about a gay man from Dixon who lives in Chicago and decides to go back to Dixon with his partner to visit his mother in a nursing home. This play shows a very small-minded town in relation to homosexuality; it shows an emotionally numb community. Dixon is not at all a part of my hometown, and I am very grateful every day as an openly gay man and I’m accepted, without reservation, by everyone. Johnson should write a new play showing how small towns can transform and remake themselves. Dixon sure has.

When one small-town high school gives the world the likes of Jordan, Reagan, Reed and Klamann, there is something very special about that. When a small town opens its arms to gays and lesbians there is something remarkable about that. A small town should not be judged by the cover of its past, but by the strides it is making for the future. If I could miraculously get Johnson, Reed and Klamann back to Dixon now I wish they knew past conceptions and prejudices would be greatly altered.

The nation and world have been enriched with great art that has filtered out of Dixon, Ill., from four individuals who call Dixon home. That a town of 15,000 in the middle of an agricultural zone can produce such extraordinary talent is an amazing story. That a small rural town can be accepting and nurturing to the gay community is someone else of which we can be proud.

Phillip Lefevre, who is currently self-employed, grew up in Dixon and is a 1981 Dixon High School graduate. He has taught in public schools in both New York and Chicago.

History in New York

Dear friends and colleagues,

I have been truly blessed having had the opportunity to meet all of you over the course of my lifetime and throughout my professional career. So many of you have contributed to my ability to live the American dream allowing me to achieve what was different than anyone in the United States until Bob, my partner of 23 years, and I could bring to the downtown Dixon’s first gay bar. When one small-town high school gives the world the likes of Johnson, Reagan, Reed and Klamann, there is something very special about that.

It would be easy to paint Catholic Charities a complex world.

We live in a world that continues to preference the needs of the poor.” We live in a world that continues to preference the needs of the poor. “We live in a world that continues to preference the needs of the poor. I am confident that with your encouragement of people like you. I never felt my life was different than anyone in the United States until Bob, my partner of 23 years, and I could bring to the downtown Dixon’s first gay bar.

It is an opportunity to spend the evening with the President. I hope that I will have a chance to see all of you in the near future and please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Warm regards,
Wally Breuer
Chicago

Looking at Catholic Charities

Dear Editor:

Should Catholic Charities be able to discriminate against LGBT couples?

If they can do that without receiving public monies they certainly have a right in our society, under freedom of religion. However, Catholic Charities also supports one of the Church’s most ancient moral teachings: “From the apostles to the present, the magisterium of the church has insisted that those in power are morally obliged to prefer the needs of the poor.” We live in a complex world.

It would be easy to paint Catholic Charities with the broad brush stroke of homophobia, but that would tell the whole story. As a Catholic I am opposed to any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation. That leaves me with one option: to find another path that may speak to my conscience.

Is it possible I wonder to seek some form of common ground so that Catholic Charities can continue its good work on the adoption front, while at the same time not discriminating against same-sex couples?

I am asking for people of good will on both sides of the divide to engage in a form of dialogue that respectfully challenges the other without cutting off dialogue. Currently, the Illinois Catholic Conference seems incapable of such a form of dialogue, as does some of our gay politicians.

Joe Murray
Rainbow Sasha Movement

Steve Nicks disconnect

Dear Editor:

I feel disappointed that Steve Nicks blew at least four opportunities to demonstrate she’s capable of reflecting on why gays connect with her music and what it means in a larger context [in an interview in the May 25 issue of Windy City Times]. Instead, her answers became a self-indulgent digressions and ruminations on her fairy-tale world. To each his own, but I like a diva who knows how to ride a unicorn and think on her feet.

Eugene Skaja
Chicago

Send letters and viewpoints to Andrew@WindyCityMediaGroup.com. Items may be edited for length or clarity.
THE ‘HEART’ OF THE MATTER

From left: Lee Pace, Jim Parsons, Joe Mantello and Patrick Breen star in Larry Kramer’s The Normal Heart on Broadway. See more below.

PLAYING AIDS FOR COMEDY AND TRAGEDY ON BROADWAY

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

In the 30th-anniversary year of the first reported cases of HIV/AIDS, it’s interesting to note that the Broadway shows The Book of Mormon and The Normal Heart, two strong contenders for 2011 Tony Awards, both touch upon the still-incrédible disease in utterly different ways.

Seeing both shows on the same day during a recent trip to New York offered up an unexpected and unsettling chance to reflect on the way that each dramatized HIV/AIDS (and to generally weigh in on the merits of both critically acclaimed productions).

The Book of Mormon seems guaranteed to triumph when the Tony Awards are handed out on Sunday, June 12 (broadcast on CBS-TV at 7 p.m.). The Book of Mormon leads the musical field with 14 Tony Award nominations, which is the second highest number of nominations in the history of the Tony Awards after the 15 nods The Producers received in 2001. Although The Normal Heart has just five nominations, many Tony handicappers are predicting that Larry Kramer’s seminal 1985 AIDS drama is favored to win the trophy for best revival of a play.

The AIDS references in The Book of Mormon are all played for gallows-humor laughs. But what would you expect when you look at the credentials of the show’s creators? Matt Stone and Trey Parker, the hypocrify-exposing jokesters behind the award-winning animated TV comedy series South Park, are making their Broadway debut with The Book of Mormon. Joining Stone and Parker for his second Broadway show is Robert Lopez, a Tony Award-winning composer of Avenue Q. He is also the co-creator of the hit 2003 Sesame Street-spoof TV comedy series South Park, are making way show is Robert Lopez, a Tony Award-winning co-creator of the hit 2003 Sesame Street-spoof Avenue Q.的房子.

Let’s just say that The Book of Mormon lives up the authors’ infamous reputations in terms of delivering a smartly irreverent and uproarious profanity-filled show that gently mocks its characters while being simultaneously sweet about them. As expected, Stone, Parker and Lopez rightly take aim at many of the quirkier aspects of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (official name of the Mormon church), but it’s not a mean-spirited exercise religion bashing since the show also emphasizes the positive aspects of faith and devotion.

Boy, are the beliefs of its leading characters supremely tested in The Book of Mormon. Golden boy Elder Price (a freshly scrubbed and powerful-ly voiced Andrew Rannells) isn’t so happy when he’s paired up with a sci-fi loving and known liar companion like Elder Cunningham (goodball Josh Gad). Both missionaries are sent to civil war-torn Uganda, where they are at a loss to find lessons from their faith to cope with the country’s rampant problems including poverty, murderous warlords, female genital mutilation and disgusting bizarre AIDS superstitions.

Book of Mormon co-directors Parker and Casey Nicholaw (who is also the show’s choreographer) bring out plenty of staging flash for this joke-filled and often deliberately juvenile fish-out-of-water story, but they help to keep emotion genuine for the conflicted (albeit generalized) characters.

Although the score to The Book of Mormon is relentlessly catchy and funny, one could quibble about the authors’ lack of originality since they are all far too keen to make so many of their songs meta parodies of numbers from other musicals. Hence the God-cursing song “Hasa Diga Eebowai” is actually scathing spoof of The Lion King’s “Hakuna Matata,” or how the “Spooky Mormon Hell Dream” apes the style and irreverence of the Hades-set Act II of Jerry Springer: The Opera.

Also, there’s no doubt that the Act II number “Joseph Smith America Moses” is directly inspired by the “Small House of Uncle Thomas” sequence from The King and I. But the whole number serves as a hilarious summation that highlights how religious stories can be used to help people in troubled times and situations.

If The Book of Mormon’s characters’ lack of concrete information about preventing HIV/AIDS offers gross-out humor in The Book of Mormon, it’s much more outrage-inducing in The Normal Heart. Larry Kramer’s 1985 drama The Normal Heart has all the power of a from-the-heart message moral to the gay community for its rampant internalized homophobia that hindered a successful mobilization to get information out about the stigmatizing disease.

Directors George C. Wolfe and Joel Grey keep the agitating and often irritating fictional stand-ins for Kramer himself. Equally impassioned is Ellen Barkin as the feisty Dr. Emma Brookner, whose tough-love arguments for abstinence are understandably brushed off as unreasonable.

Though a period piece, The Normal Heart remains vital as a rallying call for the LGBT community to continue to fight for its rights and to not backslide when it comes to the dead-serious matter of battling the spread of HIV/AIDS.


Please send theater news and other related tidbits to scottishplayscott@yahoo.com or Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com.
The Colton brothers have all paid a price for money from its sale to rescue his failing business—his own hands, middle son Wilson needs the refuses to abandon the land he has tilled with are looking to drill on the site. Oldest son Roy bequeathed to the clan’s three surviving sons, Seven years earlier, the Colton family farm was It’s a premise straight out of Eugene O’Neill: Runs through: June 6 Phone: 312-733-6000; $30 Playwright: Darren Canady of the Dust

**THEATER REVIEW**

**Brothers of the Dust**

Playwright: Darren Canady

At: Congo Square at the Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, 777 N. Green

Phone: 312-733-6000; $30

Runs through: June 6

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

It’s a premise straight out of Eugene O’Neill: Seven years earlier, the Colton family farm was bequeathed to the clan’s three surviving sons, but with no boundaries to mark each individual’s portion. Now it is 1958 and big oil companies trying to better themselves in a nation still riddled with racial segregation and prejudice: Roy’s devotion to his agricultural patrimony has him nearly bankrupt—misfortune that his materialistic spouse will not tolerate. Oliver fled north to the big city, where his sexual needs soon under- mined his writing career, despite a well-placed mentor’s intervention. Add to these tensions the desire of Roy’s teenage son for a college education, and you have a recipe for conflict to strain the bonds of filial loyalty. These situations sometimes erupt in a fury almost exceeding the confines of Congo Square’s cozy auditorium, but at no time does the cast assembled by director Daniel Bryant lose control of its text, however earthy its language, violent its threats or operatic its emotions. James T. Alfred, Anthony Inns and Austin Talley make the contentious siblings a trio of contrasting personalities, as do Shanesia Davis, Velma Austin-Massey and Tracey N. Bonner’s portraits of the women on whom they rely, with Edgar Miguel Sanchez rounding out the ensemble in the role of the restless young Jack. The technical team of Andrei Onegin, Casey Siens, Samantha Jones, Rick Sims and Jesse Gaffney—who collectively locate us within our environment with pinpoint accuracy—should also be commended. To city-dwellers, a patch of soil may seem a curious treasure to rouse such passions as Canady has us witness, but at a time when countless citizens face the loss of their homes, his efficiently crafted parable reawakens our awareness of the reasons that men have fought throughout history for possession of the only enduring fortune craftsmanship reawakens our awareness of the reasons that men have fought throughout history for possession of the only enduring fortune

**CRITICS’ PICKS**

The King and I, Porchlight Music Theatre at Stage 773, through June 5. Porchlight Music Theatre’s first Rodgers and Hammerstein musical turns out to be an intimate and fine farewell from departing artistic director L. Walter Starks. SCM

The Madness of George III, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, through June 12. This gorgeously costumed drama entertains with modern relevance as it shows the political machinations that play out when Britain’s King George III descends into a state of “madness.” SCM

Soul Samurai, Infusion Theatre Company at Theater Wit, through June 5. Not another cheesey spoof, but an adrenaline-pumping multi-media roller-coaster ride through a post-apocalyptic Freudian universe as dark as your favorite graphic novel, MSB

Watership Down, Lifeline Theatre, through June 19. Rabbits have always num- bered among the most empathetic of folk-tale creatures, and never more so than in this classical myth transposed to lapin culture with all the heroic violence and glory intact. MSB

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge and Morgan

**THEATER REVIEW**

**Trogg! A Musical**

Written by: David Cerda

At: The Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division

Phone: 800-838-3006; $15-$28

Runs through: July 3

BY JERRY NUNN

The gang from Hell in a Handbag circles back in time to bring a prehistoric musical to life with Trogg! This production is loosely based on the Joan Crawford 1970 horror movie Trogg. Dorn- ning his pantsuit and heels David Cerda leads the cast of beach loving teens while they find a cavern in a midst. Dancing in the sand can be fun but when the neanderthal is dis- covered and unleashed on the town science begins to clash with the population. Cerda’s deadpan Joan as Dr. Joan Cannon really takes the cake and has several bust out loud laughing moments. Her flash card therapy has mixed results on the pet troglo- dyte, lucky for the civilians music takes over to calm down the furry creature. Chad Ramsey as Trogg has an energy that is host to watch. Ed Jones as Carol Ann is a standout as usual having appeared in several of the Handbag’s shows. The crowd loved Alex Grelle as Peanut who adds a lot to a role that could have been a throwaway. Dig in to the atheist chill as this camp will make you pay for more. The music is fun and matches the beach theme with a style Frankie Avalon could appreciate. “Barbara, please” don’t stop wearing that wig furnished by BC Kalz, like many of the outlandish hair stylings this could win an award on its own. The family dynamics of characters is great fun to watch. The strange drive that Joan resonates with her test tubes reminds everyone of why Mommie Dearest is an over the top favorite. So if you are fan of drive-in movies and campy classics this is the play you have been craving. If not, somehow I don’t think Joan will mind if you stay at home and scrub your floor. This was Crawford’s last big screen appearance and but will definitely not be the last for this comedy crew. If you have not checked out The Joans make plans to this summer. Remember: No flash photography at the show or “Trogg will become enraged.”

**THEATER REVIEW**

**You’re Being Ridiculous...my first time**

Directed by: Eric Hoff

At: Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee

Phone: 773-598-4549; $15

Runs through: June 3

BY JERRY NUNN

Jeremy Owens presents a cast of five with stage readings of the members’ first sexual experiences. With no introduction, Anne Taylor starts the show or “Trogg will become enraged.”

Jeremy then re- counts his days of sleeping with a girl through gay colored glasses. Ryan Hastings gets graphic with talk about Greece and Joseph Varisco describes an adventure on Craigslist gone wrong. Kathleen Gibson brings the black back like a new Lisa Lampanelli to stir the house and finish the show. First Time is fast-paced but could stand to have a straight man’s story, with three openly gay men cast members not leaving a lot for some audience members to latch onto. (What a switch this is with a Windy City Times reviewer looking for straight instead of gay content.) Think of the show like the Penis Monologues that can get a little one-sided. While the atmosphere is relaxed, the performers could stand to set down their drinks and get off book a bit more. Everyone seems to be having fun, though, with some classic moments that, for the most part, is well-written by the no-longer-virginal cast.

**THEATER REVIEW**

**’Darkest Before Dawn: A Gay Cabaret’ in June**

Following its sold-out premiere in Oak Park, Passion Theater’s “Darkest Before Dawn: A Gay Cabaret” transfers to Center on Halsted June 16-18 in honor of Pride Month.

Eighteen LGBT and gay-friendly perform- ers, including accomplished actors and a former American Idol contestant, perform contemporary songs and monologues celebrat- ing the struggles and triumphs of the LGBT journey.

Tickets are $15 in advance, $20 at the door; visit http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/178171.
THEATER REVIEW
The Outgoing Tide
Playwright: Bruce Graham
At: Northlight Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie, Skokie
Phone: 847-673-6300; $30-$50
Runs through: June 19

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE
Carolyn Heilbrun, the pioneering feminist scholar also known as whodunit-author Amanda Cross, had long proclaimed that on the day that she saw no future but “inevitable deterioration”, she would take her own life. That day arrived October 9, 2003, and, at the age of 77, she did as she promised, leaving a note reading “The journey is over, Love to All.”

So you see, there’s a real-world precedent for the argument proposed in Bruce Graham’s intelligent and highly original play premiering at Northlight Theatre. Its premise is simple enough: feisty Gunner Concannon is gradually succumbing to Alzheimer’s disease and suddenly his wife’s favorite expression, “Have you lost your mind?” isn’t funny any more. Graham doesn’t take the easy route in discussing his discomfiting topic, however—Gunner is not reduced, dramatically, to a passive victim whose fate is left for others to debate and ultimately determine. No, Gunner has made his own departure plans, and they don’t include geriatric services aimed at prolonging length of days, but not of consciousness. (“I didn’t work all my life to give it away to a bunch of doctors!”)

Why would someone choose suicide as his deliverance from this mortal coil? Fear of intolerable physical or psychological abuse (and only each individual can determine what comprises “intolerable”) figures in Gunner’s decision. So does redemption—the insurance money paid upon his death will redeem the past sacrifices made by his loved ones on his behalf. The only snag in his patently rational proposal is his need to explain himself to his distraught spouse and ambivalent son, pursuant to receiving assurance of their understanding and approval.

It takes a likewise steadfast production team to pull against the urge toward knee-jerk emotionalism—after all, this is America, where frontier values declare every life worthy of preservation (an attitude diminishing in popularity under economical pressure, but that’s a subject for another play). Director BJ Jones and a cast led by John Mahoney, with muscular support forthcoming from Rondi Reed and Thomas J. Cox, never flinch from Graham’s unswerving candor, commanding our attention right up to the final moment when Andrew Hanlon’s superlative seaside soundscape signals Gunner’s farewell ferry ride on the Chesapeake Styx.
THEATER REVIEW
Fifty Words
Playwright: Michael Weller
At: Profiles Theatre, 4147 N. Broadway
Tickets: 773-549-1815; http://www.profilesstheatre.org; $35-$40
Runs through: June 26

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

Jan and Adam have a night alone. Their 9-year-old son finally is away on his first sleep-over, accompanied by his pet hamster that the troubled kid imitates by piling up clothing in a closet as a nest. For Jan and Adam it’s a night of Chinese food, champagne and monkey sex—or so Adam tells Jan, in short order, calls “a withholding, anxious, critical bitch.”

Yeah, they have issues, which have led to Jan’s withdrawal of physical affection despite evidence that they still love each other with passion edgewise. Withdrawal of physical affection despite evidence that they still love each other with passion edgewise—this might make for an interesting bedroom scene, save for the fact that there are few of them. In Fifty Words, Weller piles on revelation after revelation with regard to Jan’s and Adam’s personalities, past histories and current motives: Jan is a work-obsessed perfectionist, Adam’s little architectural firm is failing, Jan never wanted to be a parent in the first place, Adam indulges their son, Jan hates Adam “for making me have to be a parent in the first place, Adam indulges their son, Jan hates Adam “for making me have to be a parent in the first place.”

Jan harbors suspicions that Adam has been unfaithful on his frequent business trips. However, the real issue here would seem to be a profound and fundamental difference in personalities, perhaps relating more than a little to self-image and notions of self-worth. Broadly speaking, Jan is buttoned up and Adam is laissez-faire. Michael Weller’s taut little play—he never explains the meaning of the title, but suggests that audiences will know—has an abundance of brilliantly written, flowing language; not poetic stuff but everyday speech taken to richly rhythmic and, sometimes, witty heights. It’s delivered with gusto and utter authenticity by Katherine Keberlein and Darrell W. Cox, who are thoroughly engaging and effortlessly believable as Jan and Adam, as telling in their quiet moments as in their explosive ones. These are in-your-face performances (and, I should add, sexually graphic) in a very intimate storefront space.

The play is about relationships as they are often held together—and saved from tipping towards the ridiculous—by the strength and veracity of Keberlein and Cox as staged by Profiles artistic director Joe Jahraus, who embraces the play’s swiftly changing rhythms. The play is abetted by scenic designer Thad Halstein’s stylish, colorful but claustrophobic upscale kitchen in a Brooklyn brownstone.

THEATER REVIEW
Porgy and Bess
Composer: George Gershwin; Libretto: DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, Ira Gershwin
At: Court Theatre, 5353 S. Ellis
Phone: 773-753-4472; $45-$65
Runs through: July 3

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

Court Theatre definitely deserves an “A” for ambition in tackling The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess. Too bad the end results aren’t always satisfactory.

Although it first opened on Broadway in 1935, many critics have since championed Porgy and Bess as “The Great American Opera.” So it took considerable effort by Court Theatre to reduce and revise Porgy and Bess to squeeze into its intimate 260-seat space. Undoubtedly director Charles Newell and music director Doug Peck were aiming to bring out more layered and nuanced performances by condensing Porgy and Bess to just a 15-member ensemble. And since so many jazz artists have covered immortal Porgy and Bess tunes like “Summertime,” and “It Ain’t Necessarily So,” it’s not sacrilege to alter vocal keys or scale down composer George Gershwin’s original orchestrations to be played here by just six musicians.

However, to my taste, much of the epic dramatic sweep of Porgy and Bess is lost in this Court Theatre adaptation. The physical limitations of the Court’s space are often distracting, particularly for some character entrances (notably Todd M. Kryger as the crippled title character of Porgy) and at the end of a few climactic scenes (like the Kittiwah Island aftermath of Crown’s rape of Bess). The abstracted white design concept imposed by Newell and his design team smacks of high-concept artiness (particularly the dominating square platform and descending fabric strips of John Culbert’s set and Jacqueline Firkins’s bleached costume scheme). Even worse, the lack of specificity to locales is potentially baffling for some first-time audiences.

However, aside from these staging shortcomings, Court’s Porgy and Bess still can move audiences thanks to the impeccable musicianship of its cast and band performing the glorious Gershwin score. Sean Blake is appropriately cocky and slickly as the drug-peddler Sportin’ Life, while Bethany Thomas masterfully navigates the growling passion and soprano sobs of the funeral lament “My Man’s Gone Now.” James Earl Jones II’s Crown is also sung with plenty of power and macho swagger.

There’s no denying that Kryger and Alexis J. Rogers sing marvelously in their respective title roles of the beggar Porgy and the good-time girl Bess. But I wanted more chemistry and complexity from the two (I also wanted more emotional extremes in the Bess of Rogers, whose take on the role shows more calculation than desperation).

Now there is always room for great works of American musical theater to be smartly reconceived on an intimate scale, as the Court Theatre has shown in the past with such award-winning productions as Man of La Mancha or Caroline, or Change. But in the case of such an operatic and iconic property like Porgy and Bess, bigger is better in my book.
Lady Gaga returns with the highly anticipated album Born This Way. The title track still gets me pumped up with the catchy, reinforcing lyric “I’m on the right track, baby.” She continues to be a voice for those who feel like outsiders, as apparent on “Bad Kids” and “Highway Unicorn (Road to Love).” Despite its irresistible sound, “Scheiße” (German for “shit”) is a dose of shock value pulled out of Madonna’s time capsule circa 1994. During “You and I,” I can imagine my dad interrupting Gaga mid-song to correct her grammar. The second single, “Judas,” has a thumping beat, but ultimately comes across as knock-off with a show on Friday, June 17. Both be- loved New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys tour. Unfortunately, the dimpled Broad- way veteran has no Chicago-area dates currently listed.

Can’t get enough Glee? Members of the cast have three concerts lined up for Friday, June 3, and Saturday, June 4, at Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim, Rosemont. Fans of Pink should check out Jessie J’s Who You Are. The British newcomer shows her feisty side on “Price Tag” and “Nobody’s Perfect.” The album’s showstopper is the YouTube breakout “Big White Room,” based on the singer-songwriter’s hospital stay when she was 11. “Casu- alty of Love” recalls the big, passionate vocal delivery of Joss Stone.

J. is one of the co-writers behind Miley Cyrus’s hit “Party in the U.S.A.” It is also refreshing to hear that this young artist does not smoke or drink unlike her peers Pink, Adele or Britney Spears. Matthew Morrison’s self-titled debut mirrors his hit TV program Glee with its star studded guest list and clever covers. Gwyneth Paltrow joins Morrison for a reworking of “Somewhere over the Rainbow,” while Sting guests on a remake of his own “Let Your Soul Be Your Pilot.” Sir Elton John appears on a medley of “Mona Lisa & Mad Hatters / Rocket Man.” Former ‘N Sync member JC Chasez contributes the up- beat “Don’t Stop Dancing” and “Hey.” “My Name.” “It Don’t Matter to the Sun” and the Kris Allen-penned “Still Got Tonight” prove to be solid pop ditties. Morrison’s debut is fun, romantic and schmaltzy— well suited for his loveable character, Will Schuester. Morrison canceled some of his scheduled solo ap- pearances so that he can open for the wildly popular New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys tour. Unfortunately, the dimpled Broad- way veteran has no Chicago-area dates currently listed.

The results found on Sing It Loud are rewarding, lang gives her best Elvis Presley impersonation on “I Confess” and seamlessly returns to her country roots on “Inglewood.” The remake of “Heaven” by The Talking Heads is absolutely godlike.

The Grammy winner and the Siss Boom Bang will be at Ravinia in Highland Park on Thurs- day, June 23. lang hints that this tour will mark her last time performing “Hallelujah,” as writer Leonard Cohen wants to put the often-covered classic to rest. Also coming Ravinia are The Go-Go’s and B-52’s with a show on Friday, June 17. Both be- loved bands have queer members and they have toured together in 2000.

The Go-Go’s just released a 30-year anniver- sary edition of the debut Beauty and the Beat, which contains “Our Lips Are Sealed,” “How Much More” and “We Got the Beat.” The relis- sue has a bonus disc with a concert from 1981, notes from each of the five members, a photo of the set list from bassist Kathy Valentine’s first concert with the all-female-band and Charlotte Caffey’s notes as she wrote “We Got the Beat.”

I fondly remember checking out Beauty and the Beat and Blondie’s Parallel Lines on cassette from the library often as a little kid. Thirty years later, it aged well. Last year, lead singer Belinda Carlisle came out with her autobiography, Lips Unsealed.

Haberdashery’s synth-pop outing, Tonight the Angels, is not “computer blue.” It is bub- bling over with early Depeche Mode-like endear- ing, love songs. The title track is an electronic lullaby, while “Tonight Is Forever” serves as a security blanket.

All of the material on Tonight the Angels is written, arranged, performed and sung by local artist Stephen Pearlman. Haberdashery is going to release all 10 tracks as singles, complete with a B-side, remixes, cover art and a music video for each. Some of the material is posted at http://www.haberdasheryinfo.com as a free download.


WINDY CITY TIMES

June 1, 2011

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Lady Gaga.

Lady Gaga returns with the highly anticipated album Born This Way. The title track still gets me pumped up with the catchy, reinforcing lyric “I’m on the right track, baby.” She continues to be a voice for those who feel like outsiders, as apparent on “Bad Kids” and “Highway Unicorn (Road to Love).” Despite its irresistible sound, “Scheiße” (German for “shit”) is a dose of shock value pulled out of Madonna’s time capsule circa 1994. During “You and I,” I can imagine my dad interrupting Gaga mid-song to correct her grammar. The second single, “Judas,” has a thumping beat, but ultimately comes across as knock-off with a show on Friday, June 17. Both be- loved New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys tour. Unfortunately, the dimpled Broad- way veteran has no Chicago-area dates currently listed.

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J. is one of the co-writers behind Miley Cyrus’s hit “Party in the U.S.A.” It is also refreshing to hear that this young artist does not smoke or drink unlike her peers Pink, Adele or Lily Al- len. For the first time since the ‘80s, kd lang has a proper band, Siss Boom Bang, backing her up. The results found on Sing It Loud are rewarding, lang gives her best Elvis Presley impersonation on “I Confess” and seamlessly returns to her country roots on “Inglewood.” The remake of “Heaven” by The Talking Heads is absolutely godlike.

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L’Amour Fou; The Tree of Life; film notes

French fashion genius Yves St. Laurent and Pierre Berge, his lover and business manager for 50 years, created a dynasty that survived until St. Laurent’s retirement in 2002. Together, the duo wrought what is perhaps the most groundbreaking fashion merchandising enterprise in history. However, unlike the glorious, lavish, sensual excesses of other recent fashion documentaries—with Valentino: The Last Emperor being the supreme example—director Pierre Thoretton’s L’Amour Fou (which translates as “mad, crazy love”), opening June 3 at the Music Box, doesn’t seem mad or crazy about either the clothes or the man who created them.

Also, there’s not much love in this ultimately and rather surprisingly chilly movie, either. Instead of fashion—which was at the epicenter of the couple’s life—Thoretton focuses on the story of Berge’s disposal of the couple’s vast art holdings after Laurent’s death in 2008. However, in doing so, he doesn’t bother with the how, where or why the duo found the time to accumulate such an overwhelming collection (which we are shown in detail) or, more importantly, whether it brought either of them any real pleasure. Apparently Berge isn’t interested in revealing that, either. What does become obvious is that, either. What does become obvious is that, either. What does become obvious is that, either.

There’s not a whiff of sentimentality in either Berge’s reminiscences about life with YSL or Thorotton’s film, and it’s not until we discover Berge’s passion for gay rights and AIDS activism that he displays a bit of fire (a passion that, apparently, YSL did not share). Unspoken but riding just under the surface are a lot of unanswered questions about the intricate nature of the relationship between the two men, and Thoretton doesn’t bother to address them. (Whoever interviewed Berge obviously followed a lot of ground rules and stayed within the barriers in exchange for this unprecedented access.)

The film, which concludes with the record-breaking auction of the artwork (attended by a suddenly griefed Berge), doesn’t even give us the tally ($261 million at a first auction, $13.4 million at a second) or tell us that most of the profits were donated by Berge to AIDS charities. However, that last fact might have destroyed the irony behind the film’s title and revealed a touch of warmth that would have subdued the otherwise rather fascinating but admittedly dour spell that Thorotton and his principal subject cast on their audience.

It’s been six years since writer-director Terrence Malick’s last movie, The New World, and years elapsed between that and the one before it and more years before the one that preceded it. Like Stanley Kubrick before him, each new Malick film arrives with “event” status. The Tree of Life, which just won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival, certainly lives up to that standard. Like his other films, The Tree of Life fuses the natural world to Malick’s narrative. However, unlike Days of Heaven, The Thin Red Line, et al., the movie—which ostensibly tells the story of a stern autocrat (Brad Pitt) holding sway over his wife and his three sons in Waco, Texas during the 1950s—is light years beyond what Malick has previously attempted. At one point, the movie digresses into a 26-minute retelling of the birth of the cosmos, earth and civilization (complete with dinosaurs). The sequence is reminiscent of Kubrick’s 2001. (Get your acid tabs out, folks.) Then, seamlessly, unbeknownst, Malick returns to the story of Pitt and his family without missing a beat. (It evolves into a variation on the Cain and Abel story amidst the loss of innocence of the eldest son.)

Stuffed with gorgeous imagery, fluid camerawork and marvelous performances from Pitt, Sean Penn, Jessica Chastain and newcomer Hunter McCracken (most of whom speak their dialogue in voiceover), Malick’s is a true hybrid—a dense mixture of so many film, art and music elements I wasn’t sure at its conclusion whether I had attended a movie or a religious service. Audiences will argue the merits of this ground-breaking work for decades to come but I’m convinced that I’ve witnessed a masterpiece.

Film notes:
—The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is hosting Restrepo: A View from the Trenches of Afghanistan Wed., June 1 at the Sputrus Institute, 610 S. Michigan. Sebastian Junger, best-selling author of War and the co-director of the Oscar nominated 2010 documentary Restrepo (along with photojournalist Tim Hetherington, who was recently killed while on assignment), will discuss the film with audiences after a 5:45 p.m. screening and then sign copies of the book at 8:15 p.m. Registration and a cash bar kick off the evening at 5:15 p.m. http://www.thechicagocouncil.org

—Musician Genesis Breyer P-Orridge has long been a seminal figure in the world of industrial music. (P-Orridge helped create Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV.) Genesis and his partner-in-crime, Lady Jaye, have also been gender pioneers (via surgeries, etc.) in an attempt to blur their physical identities. They allowed filmmaker Marie Losier to document the process and the resulting film, The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye, is getting its Chicago premiere as part of the Gene Siskel Film Center’s Underground Film Festival. The movie will be shown at the center, 164 N. State, Friday, June 3, and Thursday, June 9. http://www.siskelfilmceneter.com

—Out in the Silence, a documentary from co-directors Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer that focuses on the struggle for LGBT equality in small-town America follows the story of the controversy that erupted when the announcement of Wilson’s impending same sex marriage appeared in the local paper. The film is being shown on Sunday, June 5 at 2:30pm and Monday, June 6 at 7pm at Facets Cinematheque (1517 W. Fullerton Avenue) as part of the ninth annual Chicago Human Rights Watch Film Festival. The co-directors will attend both screenings and participate in post-screening discussions. http://OutinthSilence.com

Check out my archived reviews at http://www.windycitymediagroup.com or http://www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter website.

Artemis Singers concert June 11

Artemis Singers, Chicago’s lesbian feminist chorus, will celebrate Pride month with a concert and dance Saturday, June 11, at Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway.

Featuring songs about dancing and songs to dance to, “Shall We Dance?” is open to the public. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. A dance follows the performance. Tickets are a suggested donation of $15; the price includes admission to both events.

For the June 11 concert, Artemis Singers will perform songs by artists ranging from the Pointer Sisters to Shania Twain, plus two jazz numbers. The program also includes Holly Near’s “Sky Dances” and George Holper’s “Away Ye Merry Lasses?” from the 2010 Sister Singers Network festival that Artemis Singers hosted in Chicago. See http://www.artemissingers.org for more info.
Chaz Bono on transitions, Cher and offensive words

The public has seen Chastity Bono grow up before their very eyes as the daughter of Sonny and Cher. She was outed as lesbian in the ’90s and wrote two books, Family Outing and The End of Innocence. Recently realizing that she was in the wrong body, Chastity changed her name to Chaz and underwent breast-removal surgery, documenting it on the OWN network.

Transition is the new book that chronicles the personal history of the life of Chaz that has not been revealed.

Windy City Times: Hello, Chaz. We met at Howard Brown when you were speaking there in Chicago.
CB: Right, I remember.
WCT: I told you that we would be doing an interview and today is the day. Are you tired of interviews at this point?
CB: Unbelievably so.
WCT: Is there one that you think went particularly well?
CB: I enjoyed the Letterman one a lot. I felt like it was a challenge and it gave me a unique opportunity to really talk about the basics.
WCT: How are you holding up?
CB: A little tired but looking forward to the holiday weekend.
WCT: Are you all over the place at book signings?
CB: I’m not, no. Unfortunately they don’t really do that anymore. It is not cost effective and the two things are not really related. People get confused with “you are gay now, you are straight or you were straight and now you are gay” instead of just looking at it as someone is attracted to women before and still attracted to them now or men before and still attracted to men.
WCT: I watched the documentary Becoming Chaz. World of Wonder is great at producing docs and reality shows.
CB: Yes, they do really good stuff and are very talented.
WCT: How has everyone’s reaction been from the doc?
CB: Great; we have gotten great reviews, very positive reactions. People seem to really like it a lot.
WCT: I liked watching you play video games with RuPaul.
CB: Oh yeah, that was good.
WCT: Do you have a favorite video game right now?
CB: No. It is kind of a lull right now in the video-gaming season. Usually the best time of year for video games is the holiday season, as you would imagine. Sometimes though you will get a nice one in February or March if someone misses their deadline. You might get one or two good games over the summer if you are lucky. I am very unfilled in the gaming world at the moment.
WCT: I just bought the Playstation Move and that is fun.
CB: That is for casual gamers, which is totally great for kids but none of the ones I like to play are motion detection stuff.
WCT: What was the reaction of our brother, Elijah, to your coming out publicly as transgender?
CB: It was difficult at first and then once he was actually around me after I started transitioning, he told me that it was something that sounded like a really big deal but in reality it just wasn’t.
WCT: What is your relationship seems to be getting better with her, right?
CB: Yes.
WCT: You mentioned that you weren’t comfortable taking pictures throughout the book.
CB: Yes, I am comfortable now. It is not my favorite thing. My photo shoots are still kind of a pain. That is just part of my work, but no, I don’t have that same issue that I had before. I used to not like to have my picture taken because I didn’t like the way that I looked.
WCT: You want more facial hair, correct?
CB: I don’t have more because I can’t grow more right now. It takes a long time for facial hair to grow in. I have some but not in the form that one would want to grow it.
WCT: How do you feel about the word “transny”?
CB: I have a problem with it. It is a derogatory statement, in my opinion. I think people shouldn’t use it. A lot of gay men use and think it’s okay to use it; it just isn’t. That is not to say that there are not some transgender people who would not have a problem with their friends saying that, just like lots of people in those settings are fine with it. It is not appropriate with some people and not a good idea. I have gotten on World of Wonder’s case about that with RuPaul’s Drag Race. They have to stop using that on there.
WCT: RuPaul even has a song called “Tranny Chaser.”
CB: Yes, it is really different than I think people realize. Doing drag and being transgender are completely different issues. That line gets blurred sometimes and that word gets used and people need to be aware of it.
WCT: Any word that people are mistreated over is not good.
CB: Right, exactly.
WCT: You and Jenny are engaged currently.
CB: Yes.
WCT: She is a knock out and has a great energy.
CB: Thank you.
WCT: Anything else you want to say about the book?
CB: I would say there is a universal theme to it that people aren’t really getting. It is very much about overcoming fear and growing up.
WCT: You have written other books but this one goes back and explains how you were really feeling.
CB: Absolutely. It is the most I have ever felt like revealing about myself. It is about working through your issues and becoming who you are, whoever that is. For me it was transgender but I think everyone has certain things about themselves that they can’t get to because of fear or issues in the past.


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Memorial Day weekend means lots of vacationers—and it also means the annual attendance of hundreds of International Mr. Leather (IML) enthusiasts. Among the many events were the leather market as well as parties and competitions. Eric Gutierrez, Mr. Leather Europe 2010, was named Mr. IML 2011; Douglas “D” Pamplin, Mr. Mid-Atlantic Leather 2011, was first runner-up and Anthony Rollar, Mr. San Diego Leather 2010, was second runner-up. Jim Deuder was crowned International Mr. Bootblack 2011. Above: Photos of the final competition and the “Pecs and Personality” segment by Verdell Shannon; Below: Photos of the Leather Market by Dave Ouano. Many more online at http://www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and www.facebook.com/nightspots. Also, see more photos in next week’s issue of Nightspots.
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sponsored by
‘Democracy Remixed’: Cathy Cohen on Black youth and LGBT politics

BY ROD MCCULLOM

Cathy J. Cohen offers a rare and unique perspective on the intersection of race, sexuality, social movements and politics. The author, feminist and academic activist is one of the leading voices in LGBT academics and is currently the David and Mary Winton Green Professor in Political Science and the College at the University of Chicago. Cohen is also the deputy provost for graduate education.

Cohen—who is Black, lesbian, partnered and a parent—is the principal investigator on the Black Youth Project, a national research project launched in 2003 that examines the attitudes and culture of African-American youth ages 15 to 25, and how these influence their decision-making on sex, health, and politics. Black youth have largely rejected the narrative of a “post-racial society” and are socially conservative on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and LGBT rights, writes Cohen in her latest book, Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics, published by Oxford University.

“But they can moved with the right incentives and interventions,” Cohen told Windy City Times. “The question is how.”

“There is a narrative out there that says, ‘We have a new generation that is extremely tolerant. They all support same-sex marriage, they support sex education, women’s reproductive rights, 10 years in the future all of these will be non-issues’,” said Cohen. “The data show that is not completely true.”

In an interview with Windy City Times, Cohen discussed Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics and its implications on LGBT politics, as well as some of the negative stereotypes around Black youth.

Windy City Times: Let’s talk about that narrative you brought up on marriage …

Cathy J. Cohen: When our understanding of “young people” is based only on surveys of young whites, we get a distorted view of “youth” thinking. We don’t allow that there are very significant differences in the youth population.

Black youth from the ages of 18 to 25 tend to be the most socially conservative group. I’m not suggesting young Blacks are much more homophobic than everyone else—but some are. The idea is not to demonize them, but think about the necessary, culturally relevant interventions that will allow them to develop. They do think about same-sex issues, gay rights and morality of homosexuality … so we want to move and to organize people around these issues. It’s an important finding in Democracy Remixed.

WCT: What are some of the possible interventions?

Cathy Cohen: [they are doing] … and not only what national LGBT organizations [say] they should do. They have issues and agendas that are important to their entire communities.

Affinity and Gender JUST support the work of young people. Other organizations we can support do not work on exclusively LGBT issues, but work with youth of color and expand their opportunities, such as the Chicago Freedom School.

WCT: Gender JUST has done some very good work with LGBT youth of color in Chicago, especially organizing LGBT youth in Chicago Public Schools.

CC: Absolutely! Affinity has also done some very good work, too, and has a very good youth program. And so has the Chicago Freedom School, which primarily works with youth of color. There are many local organizations doing some excellent work around sexuality, education and the intersection of those issues. If we can highlight that type of leadership, it can go a long way toward reversing some of the findings presented in the book.

WCT: In Democracy Remixed, there is a chapter on what you call “The Obama Effect.”

Cathy Cohen: We have to credit them with the work they are doing … and not only what national LGBT organizations [say] they should do. They have issues and agendas that are important to their entire communities.

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BOOKS

‘The Quest For Brian’

By Jeff Graubart

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— Amos Lassen - Literary Pride, ReviewsByAmosLassen.com

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

1st Prize $1500

Full contest details: TheQuestForBrian.com

The Quest For Brian

A novel by Jeff Graubart

By Amos Lassen - Library Pride, ReviewsByAmosLassen.com

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BY TIM MILLER

Bob Smith's new novel, Remembrance of Things I Forgot (272 pages; Univ. of Wisconsin/Terrace; $26.95) I Forgot has done the impossible—it more than lives up to its blurb!

I have never felt a book so thoroughly fulfill its advance promos as ‘Remembrance of Things I Forgot’ IForgot did in relation to Edmund White’s comment, “If H.G. Wells had been funny and Oscar Wilde obsessed with time travel they might have mated and produced a writer who has written the funniest and wildest ride imaginable through the recent past and near future.”

I have read all of Smith’s earlier memoirs and his first novel, and in this new book his extraordinary gifts as a writer, humorist and keen observer of gay identity have reached new heights.

The novel is built around a notion of a gay man who accesses a handy time machine to go back in time to connect with his young gay self, stop Bush-Cheney in their tracks and to prevent his sister’s suicide. Like all of us raised on Saturday afternoon TV viewings of The Time Machine or The Time Tunnel, Smith has followed his nose into real pay dirt and found a beautiful reach of the time-travel conceit allows the humor and emotion to be wed in moments that are Chekhovian to the max in their simultaneous cynical-while-laughing and laughter-through-tears moments.

Early on in the book, when the main character’s partner—and the inventor of the time machine—tells our narrator he has invented a time machine, he immediately promises to show travel was possible—I sent a condom back to 1979.” I first laughed out loud and then almost wept at the power of that notion of a condom sent back to stop AIDS in 1979. The suspension of disbelief that Smith makes happen via a comic travel narrative device, allows a thrilling set of speculative “what ifs” to happen. There are gorgeous set-pieces from the time travel this brings us throughout the book like a conversation with your younger self or a visit to the museum with a now departed parent.

To add, my own two cents to Edmund White’s blurb, Remembrance of Things I Forgot taps a beautifully and particularly richly and darker vein of American humor and literary traditions much like the later speculative and fantastic novelists such as “The Mysterious Stranger by Mark Twain.

Diagnosed with ALS /Lou Gehrig’s Disease in 1986. I’d never seen it before and was shocked to the core. I have never felt a book so thoroughly fulfill its advance promos as ‘Remembrance of Things I Forgot’ IForgot did in relation to Edmund White’s comment, “If H.G. Wells had been funny and Oscar Wilde obsessed with time travel they might have mated and produced a writer who has written the funniest and wildest ride imaginable through the recent past and near future.”

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Diagnosed with ALS /Lou Gehrig’s Disease in 2006. I’ve also been what I jokingly call in the novel a one-same-sex t h u g e r s t i n g j u e s t from your memoirs, your stand up and your first novel into a charged new creation. What is the balancing act between fiction and materials from your own autobiographic in this work?

Bob Smith: I’ve always thought of my stand-up act as a fictional autobiography and I’ve started to see that my novels are autobiographical fictions. My first novel Selfish and Perverse is a novel, but I did have a very romantic and sexually exciting fling with a hot gay salmon fisherman in Alaska. And in Remembrance, everything about Carol’s suicide is true and the mother is based upon my mother, and most of the opinions are mine, although I’m not quite the opinionated New Yorker as my main character is and I’ve never lost my hair.

Right now, I’m working on a novel set in Ancient Greece and you’d think that strange world would be completely alien—and much of it is—but during my research I read Xenophon’s Symposium and it opens with a comedian who offers to entertain at a dinner party in exchange for a free meal. The comedian boms and I immediately knew I could write about that culture. I’ve told jokes in exchange for free vacations so I could identify with that universe. My new novel is set in the Ancient Greek theater world and in 2500 years that sub-culture hasn’t changed as much as you’d think.

TM: The time-travel concept really sets up a great template to go to amazing places. What lead to this device (and did you watch the TV show “Time Tunnel” as a kid)?

Bob Smith: I’ve always liked time-travel stories, especially the works of Jack Finney. So I wrote a short story where a gay guy goes back in time and meets his younger self. In the intervening years he’s built himself into a hunk and his younger self is attracted. Friends of mine read it and one of them the writer Michael Carroll suggested that it should be a novel. At first, I didn’t see it, then I hit me. There’s a convention in time-travel stories that if you change the past you might alter the future, but the more I thought about time travel, the more convinced I became that everyone would want to change their pasts.

From telling myself to hit on that hot jock in high school I once shared a single bed with, and who I suspected was open to experimenting with man on man action, to trying to prevent my sister’s suicide. Then there would also be the temptations to make money and really alter history—prevent someone from becoming president. But I want to emphasize that Remembrance is a comic novel with a sci-fi launching point. Once the main character is back in the past, I made very effort to have the novel play out realistically—what would you change about your past and how would you go about doing it?

Bob Smith: About six years ago, my brother Jim gave me a photo of myself he’d taken in 1986. I’d never seen it before and was shocked at how handsome I was since I always thought of myself as my high school graduation picture: a geek with big eyeglasses. I immediately joked to friends that I needed a time machine to go back and give me the heads up. That picture was my Proustian Madeleine and later I found the idea of a gay time travel story funny,creepy and novel since you could be sexually attracted to yourself. I hadn’t read a time travel story with a gay protagonist and finally decided to write one.

TM: The novel really combines all the stron-
Lesbian-owned B&B puts a modern twist on the business

By Lisa Klein

Tucked onto a quiet street in Chicago’s Andersonville neighborhood, Nina’s Bed and Breakfast brings a distinctly modern yet homey feel to the city’s accommodation options.

“Most B&Bs have that old feeling,” said co-owner Sheilia Henley. She and her business partner (who wished to remain anonymous in this article) wanted to make theirs more contemporary for the sophisticated traveler looking for something a little bit different. (Incidentally, “Nina” is the nickname of the silent partner, given to her by her brother when he was young because he couldn’t say her actual name correctly.)

After traveling to B&Bs across the country, Henley and her partner realized that “there’s always something missing for the woman traveler.” They decided to open their own B&B to accommodate women’s needs, and did so in Chicago last September.

Although an opposite-sex couple has stayed at Nina’s, the B&B caters specifically to women and lesbian travelers. Henley said they provide things that all women need and won’t have to ask for, including some “special surprises.”

“Our services can match any five-star hotel downtown,” said Henley.

Nina’s is in an old Victorian house, built in 1896, with a completely renovated inside. The two guest rooms are on the top floor and Henley and her business partner live on the bottom.

The 500-square-foot master suite features vaulted ceilings, a sitting area, fireplace and Jacuzzi. It also comes with a personal robe and slippers for each guest.

The smaller, cozy guest room has its own private bathroom across the hall.

Both rooms feature plenty of natural light and modern décor. Coffee, tea and a microwave are available near the entrance.

Guests have access to the newly-renovated kitchen area in the morning, when “everyone congregates around the table” for breakfast, accompanied by the “resident dog,” Rusty. There’s also a sitting porch outside in front of the house and a patio in the back.

Henley, who grew up in Chicago, and her business partner did a lot of research before deciding on the perfect location for their B&B. Henley said their customers are looking for a “unique urban setting,” and get that in Andersonville.

Henley said that about 80 percent of their guests end up never leaving the neighborhood, enjoying walks down the “nice, tree-lined streets,” and browsing the boutiques close-by. If they want to go downtown, the El is down the street, making things easy.

“It makes them feel like they’re at home,” said Henley of Nina’s neighborhood setting.

Henley said they’ve had a wide range of guests visit so far, including women from Panama, Australia and Spain. To her, meeting different types of people is the best part of running a B&B.

Henley and her business partner plan to open two more B&Bs in different cities, staying within unique urban settings.

“It’s been a blessed experience,” Henley said, adding that their goal is for customers to walk away thinking Nina’s was a really unique bed-and-breakfast.

Nina’s B&B is located at 1303 W. Winona St. The summer room rate per night is between $125 and $200. Amenities include DVD players, non-alcoholic beverages, in-room mini refrigerators and off-street parking. Visit http://www.ninasbedandbreakfast.com for more information. Photos by Lisa Klein
Celebrations

Jan Dee’s civil-union stand

Jan Dee Custom Jewelry, 1425 W. Diversey, is showing support for civil unions with a unique window display. Civil unions will take place in Illinois June 2. Photo by Dave Ouano

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**FAMILY TIES Saturday, June 4**

**Meredith Baxter will be at the Printers Row Lit Fest**

Photo by Stephanie Brusig/Sarah Toce

**CIVIL CORE**

**Thursday, Friday, June 2-3**

Mass civil-union ceremonies will take place throughout Chicagoland, marking the Illinois legalization law.

**Photo of Tony Harper and James Abemethy, slated to take part in TCK's June 3 ceremony, by Adam Booska**

**CIVIL CORE**

**Thursday, Friday, June 2-3**

Mass civil-union ceremonies will take place throughout Chicagoland, marking the Illinois legalization law.
The opening night of The Go-Go’s national tour, “La-...
Gay ex-umpire gets into the wealth game

BY ROSS FORMAN

He once worked in professional baseball. Now he’s in the world of prose.

Tyler Hoffman was a minor-league umpire whose last professional game was during the 2000 spring training in Arizona. He then worked on and off for semi-pro and college games from 2001 to 2009 near his home in Vancouver, B.C., but now doesn’t even own any gear any more. “The desire isn’t there,” he said.

Now 35, Hoffman is a financial management advisor for a large wealth advisory firm, for which he has worked since leaving the game and said the book is geared for “anyone wanting to know to live your dream lifestyle today, instead of someday maybe.”

The book had many launch dates, and took twist on it.”

“Professionally, I work with people every day and I hear too often, ‘Oh, I’d love to be able to do that, but don’t have the money.’ I also see people make excuses in their lives for not being where they want to be and thought that if I could share my experience of how I made it, and stayed, in baseball that might make for an interesting book, especially if I put the financial twist on it.”

Hoffman grew up in Qualicum Beach, B.C., and said the book is geared for “anyone wanting more from life or from money.” Due to the sports connection, he admits the male sports fan, age 25 to 55, probably will identify with the tales.

“I don’t really talk about wealth from the conventional standpoint. I talk about how to create the lifestyle you want today instead of someday maybe. Wealth is as much about building the golden nest egg as it is about using it to fund your life now and that’s where my differentiation with this book is.

Will the book help the LGBT community?

Hoffman feels it definitely will. “There are a lot of double-income, no-kid relationships out there and this book will help those couples channel that cash flow,” he said.

Hoffman admitted it took him a long time to truly feel confident that leaving professional baseball was the right decision. “I can say I don’t miss the long road trips, and the lifestyle, but [I] do miss the roar of the crowd. That, I don’t miss the long road trips, and the lifestyle, but [I] do miss the roar of the crowd. That, I will always miss,” he said. “Baseball could never give me the kind of life I have now.”


Red Stars join WPSL

The Chicago Red Stars has announced that it is joining the Women’s Premier Soccer League (WPSL) for the 2011 season, according to a press release.

The Red Stars played during the Women’s Professional Soccer (WPS) league’s 2009 and 2010 seasons; however, the team took a hiatus from WPS to shore up its investment group.

Two home games take place on July 2 and 10 at the Village of Lisle-Benedictine University Sports Complex, 5700 College, Lisle. The full 2011 WPSL schedule and roster additions will be announced soon.

Tickets are $10 for general admission seating. For more information, visit http://www.ChicagoRedStars.com.

Sky season starts June 4

The Chicago Sky women’s basketball team will open its season in June 4 at Indiana, and will conclude Sept. 11 at Seattle—with plenty of action in between those dates as well. The first few games are as follows:

June 4 @ Indiana, 6 p.m.
10 vs. Connecticut, 7:30 p.m.
11 @ Washington, 6 p.m.
17 vs. New York, 7:30 p.m.
19 @ Connecticut, 12 p.m.
21 @ Atlanta, 11 a.m.
23 vs. Connecticut, 7 p.m.
25 vs. Phoenix, 7 p.m.
28 vs. San Antonio, 7 p.m.

See http://www.wnba.com/sky for more information.

The Sky’s Sylvia Fowles. Photo courtesy of the team.
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.

Ray J. Koenig III and Clark Hill PLC

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